The Widow/Widower Summertime Picnic by Kathy Werner

All had a great time at the home of John and Kathy Werner on the weekend of July 24. The Widow/Widowers chose which day suited them best. By gathering in smaller groups, they got to meet others in a relaxed atmosphere. Our Valet men parked each car in a way that all could just pull out and go when the evening ended and no one was parked in. Thanks to you both, Rob Schaffer and Fred Moyer.

Our theme had a patriotic flare due to the fact we, as a nation, celebrated God's gift of 250 years of freedom. Many sported "their colors" as several served in the various military units. We thank them for their service to our Country.

After a welcome to the "newbies", Kathy shared some interesting facts about July 4. For example, the Declaration of Independence was actually signed into being on July 2? However, Congress formally adopted it on July 4. The Liberty Bell has not been rung since Feb 26, 1846, George Washington's birthday, due to a hairline fracture that became a large crack that could not be repaired. It is now "tapped" 13 times each July 4 to represent the 13 Colonies. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on July 4, 1826 and James Monroe died on July 4, 1831. Calvin Coolidge was the only President born on July 4, 1872. The National Hot Dog and Sausage Council report that Americans consume over 150 million hot dogs on this day. One World Trade Center, built where the Twin Towers stood, is exactly 1,776 feet tall in honor of the year of our Independence. Just a few interesting facts.

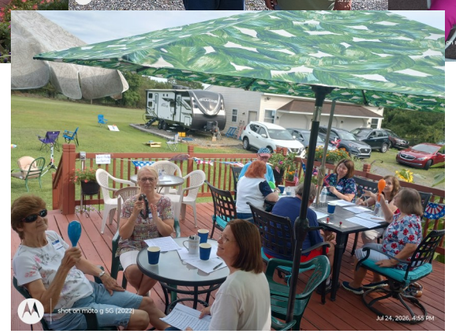
Following that historical knowledge, Kathy passed around sand blocks, wood sticks, symbols, drums, maracas, triangles and other noise makers and we sang some old songs…Land of Dixie, Oh Susanna, When Johnny comes Marching home and then she led us in God Bless America on her horn. We made sure the golfers out back heard us.

As always the food was plentiful and delicious. Chicken Barbeque, along with almost anything else your heart desired. And we can't forget the desserts! No one went away hungry!

The playground was set with Croquet, ring toss, bocce ball, corn hole, lawn darts and table Yahtzee. This helped with digestion. Some folks left before dark, others stayed until the patio lights came on.

Both days were filled with fun, friends, laughter and God's Blessings. Check out the poster on the bulletin board.

The next event will be held on Saturday, October 24. If you know of a widow or widower who might be interested in joining us, please give them my number or give Kathy their information and she will contact them with a personal invite, BECAUSE, this path is full of highs and lows and they just might need a friend who has previously traveled this road, to come up beside them and lend a hand of support.



Ministry Highlights by Pastor Tracy

Pastor Nathan and I met for our August Ministry Team meeting, and he started out by reading Romans 12. He asked what came to mind as he read. I couldn't help but reflect on the fact that there was so much significant teaching in that one chapter. It felt like the Cliff's Notes for the Christian life.

Just like that chapter in Romans is chock full (of good stuff!), it's so easy for our lives and our church life to be chock full… of good stuff. Summer allows us to pull back a bit (if we let it). We've had several really good things happen this summer, like outdoor services, child protection training, jr. youth retreat and other youth events, widow/widower picnic (read Kathy's article!), etc. But I'd like to highlight just two things- Summer ViBeS and the Sunday School elective.

Summer ViBeS

God blessed us with many gifts as we experimented with something new this summer.

The gift of collaboration as a team of people came together to dream with excitement, and plan and see those plans come to fruition with many of them serving behind the scenes.

The gift of community as people of all ages came together to fellowship and enjoy each other's company. Some from Swamp and some who were invited to see what this church community is all about, and to see Jesus through the huddle times and normal conversation.

The gift of creation as we were able to be outside soaking in the sunshine and the breeze, soaking in the rain once and then soaking in God's sign of faithfulness, grace, and mercy in the form of a beautiful double rainbow in the sky.

The gift of comradery and fun as people played pickleball, volleyball, cornhole, slip 'n' slide kickball, and other games where competition was outweighed by laughter.

The gift of collecting for a cause as people overflowed a shopping cart with generous donations for the Quakertown food pantry.

The gift of creativity as people used their gifts, talents, and resources to provide live music, activities for the kids, yummy snacks, rhyming one calls, and special highlights like a bounce house, hot air balloons taking off, and watching the fireworks finale.

Summer ViBeS was truly a gift, and we are grateful for God's hand of blessing on it.

Sunday School Elective

Jim King and I had the privilege of teaching a five week "class" this summer. It became much more than just a class for Jim and I, and I believe that sentiment would be shared by some others in the class as well. We considered together the teachings of Henri Nouwen, who viewed the Christian life as a journey rooted in our identity as the beloved of God that is expressed and experienced through solitude, community, and service.

We had such rich and meaningful times of learning, wrestling, wondering, and sharing with vulnerability and authenticity in that safe space together. It left me/us wanting more. I continue to dwell on the question- what's next?

If you would like to learn more about what we explored together in the class, I encourage you to check out Jim's website- awalkingstick.com

Fall… here we come!

Youth Benefit Dinner & Auction

The Swamp Mennonite Youth Benefit Dinner & Auction will be held on Saturday, October 10.

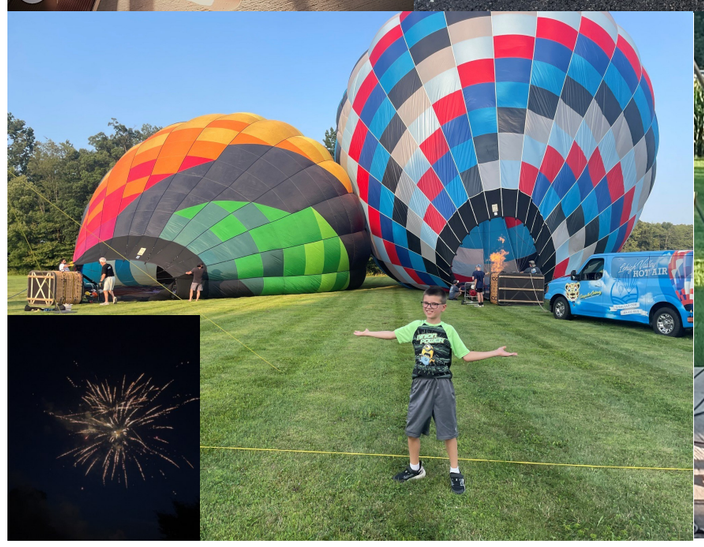
The evening will open with a buffet-style meal being served beginning at 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. The auction will get underway at 7:15 pm.

Come out for an enjoyable evening of fellowship with a delicious meal and bidding to help support our youth for their trip being planned for next summer!

If you wish to contribute items for the auction, please be sure to advise your intended donations early so they can be included in a list that will be published before the event.

For more information about the upcoming event, please contact Pastor Tracy or a Youth Sponsor.

Good ViBe-rationS!



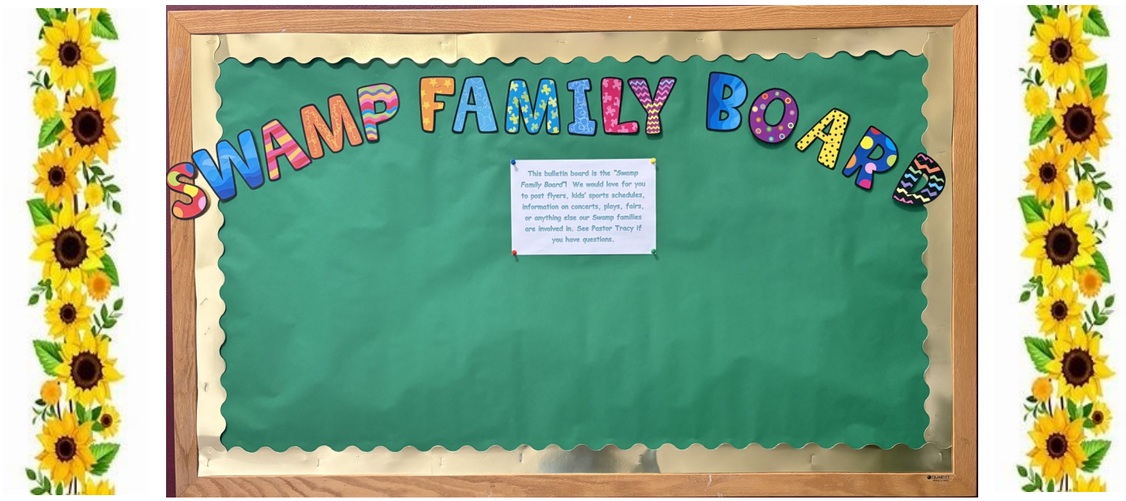
Restructuring Mission Outreach by Pastor Nathan & Pastor Tracy

We are taking steps to clarify how we relate to needs and organizations outside of our congregation. In our covenant, we say that we walk with those in need. We also say that we look to partner and collaborate with churches and organizations that are working towards the kingdom. There has been confusion over who oversees these two aspects of ministry. It is not always clear what decisions are made by Mission Outreach, Ministry Team, Finance Committee, or ministry liaisons.

After hearing feedback from some ministry liaisons and meeting with Bill Longacre and Wendell Gehman representing the Mission Outreach Committee and Finance Committee, the approach that seemed best was to restructure "Mission" and "Outreach":

- "Mission" will be called ***Kingdom Partner Liaisons***
  - Focused on long-term support for organizations, missionaries, and ministries
  - Financial support for these partnerships will be included in the Swamp budget
  - Includes a team of ministry liaisons who will meet a couple of times a year- once in early fall for equipping, assessing current and potential partnerships, as well as budget planning, etc. They will also meet as needed throughout the year to vet new opportunities for ministry partnerships
  - In order for a ministry/organization to be approved for ongoing long-term support, there must be a liaison in place for that ministry
- "Outreach" will be called ***Community Support Team/Fund***
  - This is formerly the Mission Outreach Committee/Fund
  - Focused on short-term needs/giving, primarily in our local community
  - Requests will be funneled through the Community Support Team
    - They will meet as needed to assess/approve support and/or forward to the Kingdom Partner Liaisons for consideration of longer-term partnership
    - Could include short-term support for organizations/missionaries as a way of vetting potential long-term support

Swamp Family Bulletin Board



The bulletin board in the fellowship hall is the "Swamp Family Board"! We would love for you to post flyers, kids' sports schedules, information on concerts, plays, fairs, or anything else our Swamp families are involved in. See Pastor Tracy with questions.