

2017 Member Meeting

Lowell Gehman called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He opened noting that the ship (church) was heading in the right direction. While the congregation had endured the pain of losses during the past year and a half, we have been blessed in so many ways that have led the congregation to listen to God's call. This was followed by prayer.

Minutes

The minutes of last year's Member Meeting from December 6, 2016 were reviewed. A motion for approval of the 2016 Member Meeting Minutes as presented, was made by Barry Gehman and seconded by Quincy Longacre. The motion passed.

Ministry Team Reports

In addition to the written Ministry Reports, Lowell mentioned that under Minister of Youth and Young Adults Report, a task force was appointed by Church Board to complete a recommendation for the future course of this particular ministry. In addition, Brent Gehman clarified that the Mission Outreach for Rolando and Andrea Zelaya was not listed as a specified line item under the church wide ministries portion of the budget because it is coming from the separate Mission Outreach offering.

Trustee's

Ken Longacre, Jr. thanked the members of the Playground & Pavilion Committee for their dedicated work on the project completed earlier this year. In addition, he noted that price quotes had been received for the next major project – a new roof over the offices and Sunday School rooms. Finally, he asked for input from members about a future project of upgrading the projection system in the sanctuary, which

included several options including a new projector, elimination of the screen in front of the cross, and larger flat screen televisions.

Lead Pastor's Report

Pastor Nathan thanked the members of the Ministry Team for their work and dedication. In addition, he encouraged all members to consider asking a regular attendee that is not a member, to become one. Addie Gehman and Quincy Longacre shared their respective experiences as sponsors of new members.

By-Law Change Proposal

Lowell addressed the By-Law Change Proposal under Section 2.1 Reception of Members. A motion to vote on the By-Law Change Proposal as presented was made by Quincy Longacre and seconded by Robert Gehman, Sr. The motion passed. A ballot vote was taken, collected and counted by Laura Rush and Will Sadler.

Budget

Ken proceeded to thank everyone for their faithful giving this year. He then reviewed the 2018 proposed budget line-by-line asking for questions and comments after each section. One notation was highlighted under the Independent Ministries section that Life with God was coming to an end. At this time, upon the recommendation of Pastor Nathan and Pastor Tami, it was decided to consider replacing the ending ministry with Ripple Church, located in Allentown. A motion for approval of the 2018 Budget as presented with the deletion of Life with God Ministries and addition of Ripple Church in its place was made by Cindy Longacre and seconded by Katie Longacre. The motion passed.

This was followed with a closing prayer and adjournment of the Member Meeting at 8:15 PM.



Events Calendar

Saturday, March 10

- Bus Trip to Gordonville Mud Sale (departing at 6:30 AM)
- Spring Social - 6:30 PM

Wednesday, March 14

- Ladies' Breakfast - 8:30 AM at Souderton Mennonite Home

Tuesday, March 20

- Care & Share Day - 9 AM

Wednesday, March 21

- Pinewood Derby Saturday, March 24
- Quakertown Easter Egg Hunt - 10 AM

Sunday, March 25

PALM SUNDAY
Sunday-Thursday, March 25-29

- Senior High Missions Trip

Thursday, March 29

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Friday, March 30

GOOD FRIDAY

- Good Friday Service - 7 PM

Sunday, April 1

EASTER

- Easter Sunrise Service - 7 AM (light breakfast follows)

All events are here at Swamp unless otherwise noted. Check monthly calendar for meeting dates and times.

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From Pastor Nathan

Confession Must Lead to Repentance

As a child I struggled with lying. Rarely would I tell an outright lie, but when I had the opportunity to tell "my version" of the story, I would twist the facts just enough to make myself look better. In fact, I remember times when I would do something wrong and one of my brothers would go to tell mom. I would race them so I could tell on myself, giving mom my version of the story first.

This went on until I was around 10 years old in fifth grade. My subtle twisting of the truth had turned into such a web of dishonesty that I felt like I couldn't even be myself anymore. Some chapel messages at Quakertown Christian School about dishonesty and a specific Adventures in Odyssey episode struck me, and I began to realize that I needed to stop lying and work on telling the truth.

I remember riding the bus for several weeks, contemplating the web I had woven and how bad it would make me look if I were to start telling the truth. But while I wanted to be different going forward, my lies had built on themselves in a such a way that if I were to tell the truth in one area the whole web of dishonesty would unravel. So, I had to make the conscious decision to change and begin telling the truth even if it hurt, even if it was embarrassing, and even if it made me look like an idiot.

Looking back, I now realize that this is repentance. Repentance isn't just admitting we've done bad things or that we are doing bad things, it is making conscious

changes to our life even when it hurts us.

Sometimes repentance doesn't just hurt us, sometimes it hurts those closest to us, those who were benefitting from our sin. If your boss has you fudging numbers at work and you have been going along with it, repenting by no longer fudging those numbers has the ability to hurt your boss. Sometimes we choose not to do the right thing because we think of all of the possible ramifications. But which is more important, what your boss thinks or what God thinks, your relationship with your boss or your relationship with God? More than that, while doing the right thing in the short term will hurt your boss, in the long-term doing the right thing is better for everyone involved, whether they are able to see it now or not.

The same thing happens with people who find themselves tied up in an inappropriate relationship with someone who isn't their spouse. You come to a point where you realize you are in the wrong, that you have done things you shouldn't have, but making a change at this point will be painful. It will be difficult for you because of how your emotions are wrapped up in the relationship. It will be difficult for your spouse if you are honest about what is going on. And it will be difficult for the person you have built this relationship with, when you suddenly cut things off.

But repentance is saying, "It doesn't matter how hard it is, it doesn't matter how much it hurts, it doesn't matter how many people it

affects, I am going to do the right thing because I want to be like Jesus, because I want to be in Jesus and have Jesus in me." Repentance is changing no matter how many people it affects, because you genuinely believe that Jesus is the Lord of creation and you are choosing to make him the lord of your life; because you genuinely believe that Jesus has done everything necessary to restore you to right relationship with God, and you want to be in right relationship with God.

In 2 Corinthians 6, Paul essentially says "What can righteousness and wickedness have in common? What kind of friendship can the light have with darkness? So we should purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, setting ourselves apart from wickedness out of reverence for God." 1 Corinthians 6 has a similar theme. "God raised Jesus from the dead, and he will raise us in the same way, so your bodies are part of Christ's body. So, if you use your body for unwholesome acts (Paul addresses prostitution specifically), you are bringing God into that unrighteousness. For your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies."

Repentance is so wanting to be united with God in spirit that you choose to distance yourself from everything in the flesh that is dishonoring and displeasing to God. Not because doing this earns you God's favor, not because God loves you less when you are sinning, but because you cannot be united at the same time to sin and to God.

Lenten Reflections from Pastor Tami

Looking for ways to deepen your relationship with God and with others throughout this Lenten Season? Why not take time to put these simple ideas into practice? Share this experience and what you are learning with another.

March 5-11: The Beatitudes (Read Matthew 5:1-11)

- **Monday: Blessed are the poor in spirit...** Jesus proclaims that those who find little hope in this world will find their place in the heavenly kingdom. Ask God to give you strength as you begin a new week.
- **Tuesday: Blessed are those who mourn...** Say a prayer for those in your community who are grieving the loss of loved ones. May God bring them peace.
- **Wednesday: Blessed are the meek...** Say a prayer of thanks for those people in your life who model humility. Consider finding some small way to let them know that you appreciate them.
- **Thursday: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst...** Ask God to make you aware of voices that are calling for justice and righteousness. Pray for the openness to listen and learn from them.
- **Friday: Blessed are the merciful...Blessed are the peacemakers...** Ask God to show you ways that you can be an active force for mercy and peace in your community.
- **Saturday: Blessed are the pure in heart...** Be honest with God about your doubts and your struggles. Ask God to reveal and remove those things that hinder your relationship with Him and others.
- **Sunday: Blessed are those who are persecuted...** Ask God for the courage to live a life that reflects your faith in everything you do. Say a prayer for those around the world who face persecution.

March 12-18: Fruits of the Spirit (Read Galatians 5:16-6:10)

- **Monday: Love...** Where do you see God's love? Can you show this love to someone today?
- **Tuesday: Joy...** When have you felt God's joy? Can you bring God's joy to someone today?
- **Wednesday: Peace...** How do you live out God's peace? Can you speak God's peace to someone today?
- **Thursday: Patience...** What does God's patience look like? How can you show patience today?
- **Friday: Kindness, Generosity...** When has God shown you kindness? Can you pass that onto another?
- **Saturday: Faithfulness, Gentleness...** Who has shown you faithfulness? Show them your appreciation.
- **Sunday: Self-Control...** Where in life do you need help with self-control? Ask God for extra strength.

March 19-25: Spiritual Disciplines (Take time to reflect on each Psalm. What stands out to you?)

- **Monday: Practicing Prayer...** Psalm 86
- **Tuesday: Practicing Your Word...** Psalm 145
- **Wednesday: Practicing gratitude...** Psalm 138
- **Thursday: Practicing Giving...** Psalm 116
- **Friday: Practicing Servitude...** Psalm 27
- **Saturday: Practicing Sabbath...** Psalm 23
- **Sunday: Practicing Worship...** Psalm 150

March 26-31: Jesus' Life and Ministry (Reading parts of Matthew)

- **Monday: Jesus' Baptism (Mat. 3)** Reflect on your baptism. How has this event changed you?
- **Tuesday: Jesus' Teachings (Mat. 22: 34-40)** What teaching of Jesus has impacted your life the most?
- **Wednesday: Jesus' Miracles (Mat. 9:18-34)** Share when God performed a miracle in your life.
- **Thursday: Jesus & Communion (Mat. 26:1-30)** Why is Communion so meaningful to you?
- **Friday: Jesus' Crucifixion (Mat. 27:32-62)** Attend our Good Friday Service @7pm.
- **Saturday: Jesus defeats sin and death (Mat. 28)** Praise God for the many ways you have grown during this Lenten Season!

How can you share this joy with others?

Ideas taken from: www.defininggrace.com/worship/worshipresources/2018-lent-prayer-calendar

Church Board Update

Lowell Gehman opened the January 18th meeting and proceeded to offer his devotion by talking about inner circles, reconciliation and attitude of submission. He then asked for roundtable discussion followed with Scripture from Matthew 18 and a prayer. The minutes from the November 2nd meeting were reviewed and approved.

Pastor Nathan spoke about a process for addressing announcements and future changes to the website. He then distributed copies of a Fall Sunday School Schedule draft and Sermon Schedule Outline.

Ken noted that giving in 2017 had exceeded expectations and that MEP giving for the 2017-2018 school year is ahead of schedule. On another item, he spoke of the Medical Release and Activity Release forms noting that our insurance company does not

require this information, but recommended that we should have one copy of each form completed by parents each year. Under the Trustees, he reported that the roof over the Sunday School and office area will be replaced in the Spring. The projection project in the Sanctuary has been completed, along with the usual maintenance and repairs.

A variety of other topics were addressed including a review of the 2017 Member Meeting Minutes. Lowell advised that Julie has agreed to perform the annual financial audit. Will noted the Youth Task Force should have a report by the March meeting. Laura Rush was appointed as Corporate Secretary. Robert Delp, Barry Gehman, and Linda Jaindl were appointed to the MEP Team. Nathan reviewed the edits to the Church Board Policy Manual and would be sending an updated copy

with additional changes for further review and approval at the next meeting.

In addition, it was decided to ask Larry Geissinger and Vanessa Troyer to serve as delegates to the Franconia Conference. Lowell announced that the Memo of Understanding was approved for signing. Nathan spoke of recent conversations both he and Pastor Tami have had with Pastor Kathy Yoder of West Swamp Mennonite Church about ways to develop a closer relationship between both churches.

Finally, Ken addressed insurance rates for the playground and whether to consider it as a private vs. public facility. It was decided to encourage members of the congregation to engage in friendly interaction with guests using the facility.

Ministry Team Update

Recent Ministry Team meetings started with a devotional from the book, "Faithful Presence" followed by Scripture and an opening prayer.

There were a variety of replies when asked if each person had seen someone or a group share more about themselves over the past month.

A variety of topics and requests were discussed including a request for assistance from East Swamp to help with stuffing of eggs for the upcoming Easter Egg Hunt to be held in Quakertown; recent conversations with members about the possibility of creating a new picture directory; attending the RIPPLE Church Appreciation Dinner on April 29; a new process

to keep completed Youth Registration Forms current; proposed Guidelines for Communicating Information to the Congregation and changing the process for cancellation of the Wednesday Evening Programs due to anticipated winter weather conditions.

Several events were added to the calendar including:

- MCC Meat Canner - Monday-Wednesday, April 2-4
- Sharing Sunday - April 29
- Covenant Sunday - May 20
- Vacation Bible School - Monday-Friday, August 6-10
- Backpack Blessing - Sunday, August 26
- Youth Auction date needs to be determined.

Finally, the 2018 Church Structure under Ministry Team was reviewed and revised with further discussion to follow.

