

Trustee Update

The roof project is finished. We also installed a new attic fan after the roof was finished to protect the new asphalt shingles on the Sunday School wing of the church, which previously were slate.

The fire alarm system project is completed. We also installed a 'Knox Box' on the wall outside of the office entry, which holds a key for the church and a key for the alarm system. The Milford Fire Company has a key for the 'Knox Box', so that if there is ever an alarm, they will have access to the building without breaking down any doors.

You may have noticed that several of the movable walls in the Fellowship Hall have been recovered. We ordered the same color vinyl as when we recovered several of the panels a few years ago. At that time a new color was chosen because the original color was no longer available. Unfortunately, the new vinyl does not exactly match what was used a few years ago, either because of fading of

the panels that were recovered several years ago, or because the new vinyl is from a different production run at the factory that produces the vinyl. The company that installs and recovers the panels thinks that the difference is more due to it being a different production lot than fading. As I write this article, we are debating whether we should purchase enough vinyl now to recover all of the panels with vinyl from the same lot as what was put on most recently. The plan would then be to store the vinyl and recover the rest of the panels in stages as needed due to damage or wear. This would probably happen over the course of several years, but would eventually result in having all of the panels matching again. We have also ordered a new folding door for the closet where we store the tables and chairs to more closely match the new panel color. The vinyl we used for the panels is not available for the folding door, but there is a color available that is very close.

This 'n' That

By Arlene Yothers

The Care & Share Shoppes in Souderton has a Big Sale Day every third Friday of the month. All the stores sell almost everything at half price. If you go shopping at any of the stores on your birthday, have proof of your birthday, your purchases are half price! AND again, if you can volunteer, see Suzanne Kratz, she can help you through the process. If you come to the clothing store on the third Tuesday of the month, you might see someone from our congregation volunteering. Yes, you are invited to join us that day too.

Thank you for your contributions to the Souderton Mennonite Home Auxiliary Benevolent Fund Drive. These funds help the residents that have been depleted of their personal funds. Also, The Chicken Barbeque is coming August 25. Mark your calendars and come join the fun

at SMH! Please bring your baked goods for that event, to the home on Fri. or Sat. morning before 9 am. If you are able to help, let me know.

There were about 60 runners/walkers at the first 5 K event for the Worm Project. They didn't reach the \$10,000 goal, but it was close. It was held to bring awareness of the Worm Project to more people in the community, and I think that happened.

The Mennonite Heritage Center will be holding a Used Book Sale July 19 to 26. If you have books to donate, they will accept them before July 13. They are closed regularly on Monday and also on July 10. I can take them, if you let me know. There are many good activities going on at the Heritage Center. There is an Open Croquet time on Sundays at 2 pm. An Exhibit "Quilting Through the Generations" is

The floor in the Kitchen is showing its age. Some of the seams are coming apart, and we actually have one of the seams at the main entrance to the kitchen held down with duct tape at this point. If finances allow, we will be looking at replacing the floor later this year.

We will be replacing one of the counters in the Nursery which is in bad repair. We also replaced the faucet in the sink in the Nursery which was dripping and was so old that we couldn't find a new stem to fix the old faucet.

We are also looking at the possibility of installing a defibrillator in the church somewhere. No final decision has been made at this time.

As always, if you see something that needs the Trustee's attention, please either fill out a 'blue slip' that is located on Carl's desk, or let one of the Trustee's know. (Ken Longacre, Terry Landis, Linda Martin, Will Sadler)

on display until October 18. On Sunday, Sept. 9 at 2 pm, there will be a program: Researching Family Homesteads. October 6 will be the Apple Butter Frolic. There are other workshops that are available to the public if you are interested in history and expanding your mind.



Swamp Mennonite Church
2125 Rosedale Road
Quakertown, PA
18951-4013
Email: info@justswamp.com
www.facebook.com
Phone: (215) 536-7928



From Pastor Nathan

For several weeks now I have been meditating on Psalm 130. The Psalmist is calling on God "out of the depths", seeking God's mercy and attentive ear. He says he is waiting for Yahweh with his whole being, and encourages all of God's people to put their hope in Yahweh and his unfailing love, because with him is complete redemption. In between this we find these statements: "If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared."

Two things stick out to me here. First, is that the Psalmist uses two different names to refer to God. English translations use "Lord" for both of these, so it is lost a bit in translation. The verse actually reads, "If you, Yahweh, kept a record of sins, Adonai, who could stand?" Yahweh is God's personal name throughout the Old Testament. It is the name God uses to refer to himself. Adonai is another name for God that is actually an official title, it literally means "lord" or "king" and would have been used for rulers as well. It would be like someone saying to Trump, "If you, Donald, kept a record of debts, Mr. President, who could stand?" The Psalmist reveals a personal relationship with God, referring to him by his personal name - he is on a first name basis with God - but he also reveals a level of respect and reverence for God, acknowledging that this is a relationship with multiple dimensions - he also recognizes God's official capacity as "king" or "lord" of the whole world. Think about this, through the work of Jesus, through the redemption that God offers us, we have a personal relationship with the ruler and king of the universe. We

can cry "out of the depths" to the creator of every living thing. We can plead with our lord for mercy, knowing that he loves us and knows us by name, and that we can call him by name as well.

The second interesting thing follows this theme. In the next sentence the Psalmist continues, "But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared." Now this is not what we would expect! We might expect to say, "With you there is forgiveness, that you may be loved" or adored or even praised, but feared? How is it that God's forgiveness leads to fear? That God's mercy leads to trembling? The NIV translates this phrase a bit differently saying, "But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you." Either translation is sufficient, but I think it is helpful to realize that the wording implies that God's forgiveness leads to fear. I think that this connects back to the first point I made.

When we realize that, apart from God's sustaining grace and forgiving mercy and love we would be decimated and destroyed, it leads us to a healthy fear of God. Because of his love and mercy we also love God in return, because God comes to us and walks with us in personal relationship, we also know and love him personally, even as a friend. But we must never get confused and think that this is a relationship of equals. God became human in the person of Jesus to offer us forgiveness, reconciliation, and redemption, but we must never become confused and believe that God is human. God is much more than a human being; God is the creator of the universe; God is the supreme being through whom all power for life begins; God is the ultimate power; God is the blessed controller of all

things. God is love, and so we must not be afraid of him, but God is the greatest power in the universe, so we must fear him. This is not a fear that leads to cowering, backing into a corner, or becoming less of ourselves, this is a fear that leads to worship, reverence, and understanding that we can only truly be ourselves in His presence.

God listens to our cries for mercy. If he kept a record of sins, who could stand? But thanks be to God, with him there is forgiveness. So we live before him with a realistic fear, loving him as our father, trusting him as our savior, and worshipping him as our God.



VBS 2018
August 6-10
9:00 AM - 12 noon
~~~~~  
Picnic  
Friday, August 10  
@ 6:15 PM

## Water Yourself!

By Pastor Tami

I don't know about you, but I love plants. I love to see them bloom in the springtime. I love to smell their sweet aromas. I love the different colors they portray. However, as I have confessed before, I am a HORRIBLE gardener. I kill just about everything that is brought into my house. Anytime I think about sprucing up a room, the one thing that always comes to mind is adding a few plants. However, my husband's first response is always, "Are you sure you want live ones? You know you always kill them!"

Now, the reason I have a hard time keeping plants alive is because I constantly forget one essential thing...I never think about the roots! You see I don't remember that the roots need to do their job, which is sucking in water to take precious nutrients to the rest of the plant. And if you are like me, you probably don't ever stop to ponder on the roots of the plants and trees around you. We never consider them to be the beauty of the plant or the tree. However, without the roots plants would die. There would be no lovely greens or vibrant colors. There would just be different shades of brown. Its roots are vital to a plant's health.

We too are called to nourish our roots in God each day. Jeremiah 17 says, "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord.

*They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.*" For each of us, this nourishment can come in many forms. Maybe it's a daily quiet time for prayer and scripture reading before the busy day begins. Maybe it's an object you carry around with you so that each time you touch it, you remember to pray. Maybe it's taking time to be in nature, singing praises to the Lord as you garden, bike, walk or swing your children at the park. Whatever that time looks like for you, be reminded that it is one of the very things that keeps you centered and alive in Christ. Small habits make for strong believers.

So this summer I invite you to look at your own root system. Are all parts of your life green with beautiful, fragrant flowers? Vibrant and full of life? Or are there areas that need work and are brown, crumbling and brittle? **WHERE** are you rooted and **WHO** are you rooted in? Each of us needs a good, solid, ever-growing root system that reaches deep into spiritual soil for the nourishment and stability that God has graciously provided through His word and through each other.

As a church, we believe it is important to take time to gather as a

body of believers, as we sing, pray, listen to testimonies and dig deeper into God's Word. However, it's also important for us to think about how our root system is doing too. Consider these questions: How is our root system growing/not growing as a congregation? How deep are our roots in Christ? Do we consciously look for ways each day to give nourishment to our roots so that our relationship with Christ and others may be stronger?" When you see examples of the church body being God's light to others, take a moment and let them know how they've been a blessing to those around them. Words of encouragement and a kind smile can go a long way to helping our root system mature and become stronger.

May our prayer for one another be: "Lord as we go out into a world that will challenge us at every turn, may we be reminded to sink our roots deeper into You. Christ touch our hearts each day with your love. Take us into your faithful hands and warm us, purify us, soothe us, and bring us closer to you. Challenge us each step of the way to draw more on your strength and less on our own. May our roots grow healthier each day as we take nourishment from your word and each other and help us to use our gifts to bring life to others. In Christ's precious name we pray, Amen!"

## Blood Drive Update

By Jodie Foley

The next Miller-Keystone blood drive is Thursday, July 26 from 3:30-7:30 PM.

After several low turn outs, April's blood drive had outstanding results; however, there were some issues that Miller-Keystone staff handled poorly. I have worked with our coordinator to prevent these things from happening. They have doubled our appointment

times to accommodate walk-ins, as well as doubled the chairs, we will now have 6, and an increase in staff. For their efforts, Miller-Keystone has asked us to do our part. If you have an appointment, please keep your appointment time, OR contact me, and I'll make adjustments in the schedule.

It takes 450 donors to meet the daily needs of transfusion patients

within the 22 local hospitals served by Miller-Keystone. It takes less than an hour to donate, and your blood can help up to three patients (cancer, accident, organ transplant, etc.). If all eligible donors gave at least twice a year, it would help prevent blood shortages. Please sign up today, or see me if you have questions. Let's save lives!

## Church Board Summary

Ken reported that the financial audit for 2017 was completed and there were no issues. In addition, he updated several Trustee projects including the fire alarm system, the roofing project and repairs to the moveable wall panels in the Fellowship Hall. The trustees are hoping to hold off on replacing the boiler for another year or two and to look into future replacement of the flooring in the kitchen as seams are coming up.

Saturday, October 27 was tentatively set for the Fall Leadership Retreat here at Swamp. Church Board and Ministry Team members will meet from 9 am-3 pm. Church

Board approved the list of individuals selected to participate in the Natural Church Development Survey later this year. Pastor Nathan will send an e-mail to each person with follow-up later. The Youth Task Force is planning to send a questionnaire to parents and youth to complete. A Columbarium Committee has been formed consisting of Jay Geissinger, Wendell Gehman, Jodie Foley, Nancy Delp, and Terry Landis. John Drescher-Lehman expressed an interest in talking with the Board about spiritual shepherding options. In a future meeting the following questions from the Lead Pastor report will be discussed: What are our goals

for our members? In what ways are we giving individual spiritual care? Who is responsible for this care?

The list of names submitted for the Mennonite Education Plan in the 2018-19 School Year was approved. It was suggested to encourage and recommend Mennonite Colleges to parents for those considering higher education. Due to recent inquiries, a discussion ensued regarding the possibility of long-term facility rental usage. Pastor Nathan will have more conversation before proceeding any further.

## Ministry Team Highlights

Pastor Tami opened her devotion from the book titled, "Faithful Presence" with prayer and asked everyone to think about when each was young and describe what church meant. Noted that children are a part of "the body of Christ" and need to be included and participate in the service.

A number of good and encouraging events in our church life, activities, and programs were discussed including: the youth auction; recent sermon topics; the June 3<sup>rd</sup> Worship Gathering; recent baptisms in the creek; and the sense of community for the church cleaning workday.

A list of items for consideration was addressed including: the Leadership Retreat scheduled for Saturday, October 27<sup>th</sup> together with the Church Board, which will include reviewing the results of the Natural Church Development Survey and the discussion of goal(s) for the next year; come up with ideas about how to improve and encourage increased participation in the process of foot washing; the possibility of having a retreat involving the whole congregation; the ongoing planning of the annual Outdoor Service held in September; potential educational topics for both Sunday School and Wednesday Evenings classes

including "Study/Interpret the Bible", "Grief Share" and "Everence Personal Finance" by placing an insert in the bulletin asking members of the congregation to pick topics of interest before pursuing which classes to proceed with.

Members are in favor of proceeding in some capacity to work with Nate Sims and the Cru Ministry; continue the process of new website development with the textured background; the due date for Growth Matters articles for the next issue and Pastor Nathan will send potential dates for remaining 2018 Ministry Team meetings to members to discern.

## Ken Medema in Concert

Hosted by Ripple  
Sunday, July 22 at 4 PM  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
38 S. 8th Street  
Allentown, PA

All proceeds will support Ripple

