

STONE CHURCH NEWS

August 2021

From the Pastor's Desk



"Together, as the Church of the Brethren, we will passionately live and share the radical transformation and holistic peace of Jesus Christ through relationship-based neighborhood engagement. To move us forward, we will develop a culture of calling and equipping disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless."

At the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference in July, the delegate body approved the above vision statement as a guide for who we are called to be as a denomination. The statement represents four years of work and listening. Over 3000 individuals participated in conversations exploring who we are and what ties us together in our faith. People prayed, studied the Bible, and sought to discern together. It was a huge effort to faithfully move forward as a large community of faith.

You may find some places of connection with the above statement - even if you do not feel much connection to the denomination as a whole. To me, it encourages us all to think about several intriguing questions in our ministry and mission. I hope we, the Stone Church Community, engage them with hope and curiosity. This is not an exhaustive list, of course, but here are a few to get us started:

- What is our neighborhood? And what are the needs there? How is our neighborhood shaped by the college? By the prisons? By our online presence?
- What is a culture of calling? Who has called out your gifts? Who around you might need to be called - or affirmed for their giftedness? What gifts do you have that are not being utilized – and how might you offer them?
- Where do you need to be equipped? What do you want to learn? About yourself - about others? About the Bible? What are new ways that we might learn together?
- The vision statement describes disciples as, "innovative, adaptable, and fearless." How do you see yourself described in those words? How might you stretch to more fully embody them?
- The vision statement is rooted in the assumption that living like Jesus leads to transformation and holistic peace. Where is this true in your life and experience? How do you tell that story in your relationships?

The list of wondering and questioning and dreaming could go on and on. And I remain so grateful that I get to dream and wonder and question and share with THIS community - Peacefully, Simply, and Together.

❖Thank You, Thank You, Thank You...❖

The 2020 Stone Church Leadership Team was fairly well caught off guard in mid-March of last year, as were many governments, hospitals, companies, houses of worship and individuals. There was much to do and several immediate decisions to be made, chief among them temporary closure of the beloved Stone Church building itself. The health and welfare of many were in our hands. Know that Leadership accepted the tasks at hand both seriously and proactively with the result that decisions were made expeditiously, but with due process of thought and discussion.

A COVID-19 Response Team was quickly appointed to care for ongoing and future requests for building use. Members of the Team are Sharon Yohn (Chair), Pastor Cindy Lattimer, Marty Keeney, Luke Roth, Brooke Meadows and Daisy Decker. Since none of their meetings have ever been held in person to date, virtually only, I can tell you that I have walked through the room periodically as Daisy was in a COVID-19 Response Team meeting and the work they do is extremely intricate with lots of statistics complete with graphs, provided by Sharon. I can say their discussions and subsequent decisions are made quite empathetically, but for the good of all. I hope no committee or board of any faith community ever again has the somber duty of telling a grieving family they cannot hold a memorial service in their house of worship at present. May it be so.

With loss of building use, Leadership and Pastors charged headlong into planning and holding virtual worship services, team meetings, small group sessions, Bible studies, Advent, Lenten and Ash Wednesday services. That running shoe company would have been proud...we just DID IT! The pastors have been, and continue to be, always at the center and often at the forefront of planning and implementation. So many others have also risen to the tasks at hand.

With the resignation of Debbie Barrette last summer, job postings went out and virtual interviews were held. An administrative assistant search team was formed with Joanne Krugh (Chair), Pastor Ben, Daisy Decker, Jamie White, and Betty Ann Cherry serving. The result was the hiring of Bekah Ford, a most welcome addition to the Stone Church staff, bringing lots of technology, creativity and dedication to the church office and beyond. During the time when Bekah was getting oriented to the job, Daniel Santos lent a hand with the finances. Thank you Daniel!

Many have gone over and above these past 16 months. A very great blessing was that you, the members and friends of Stone Church didn't really need to be told that expenses to fund the ministries of our faith community, as well as repairs to the building, go on even when we are not in the building each Sunday. The Stone Church is in admirable financial condition, praise God! Thank you for that.

So thank you to: Pastors Ben and Cindy; our Leadership Teams (2020 & 2021); our eight Ministry Teams and their chairs; Moderator Rick Laabs; our Minister of Music Marty Keeney; our Custodian Rena Bumgardner; Administrative Assistant Bekah Ford; former Administrative Assistant Deborah Barrette; organist Loren Rhodes; pianist Donna Rhodes; pianist/keyboards Terry Murray; many musicians and soloists in virtual worship services; Andy Murray, studio mixing services bringing our choir together to sing virtually (even at Annual Conference!); the COVID-19 Response Team; greeters, worship leaders, readers, audio/video techs for virtual services; those who have attended virtual Bible studies, small groups, special services; those who have helped with building maintenance, outside landscaping, office duties; those of you who have prayed for our church, each other, our community, our country and our world during the Pandemic; and those who made a phone call, or sent a card to a Stone Church brother or sister. The point is, we have not gotten to this place by the efforts of one or two. It is a total group effort – ALL have answered the call, all have gone above and beyond. This past Sunday, July 18, 2021, we celebrated the first in-person worship service in our Sanctuary since March 2020! We are finding our way through this COVID-19 Pandemic wilderness BY THE GRACE OF GOD, continuing the work of Jesus, Peacefully, Simply and so TOGETHER, even when we are virtual or far from each other. Hallelujah!

Jeff Decker

Stone Church Leadership Team Chair



Executive Director Announcement

In January of this year, Dean and Jerri Heiser Wenger announced their retirement at the end of 2021 after 30 meaningful years of ministry at Camp Blue Diamond as Executive Co-Directors. We are pleased to announce that Brian Bert has been selected as our next Executive Director of Camp Blue

Diamond. Brian will begin this role in January 2022. Brian has served as Program Director since 2008. He has provided leadership and supervision of Camp's summer staff and has been active in program development. He strongly supports the teachings and beliefs of the Church of the Brethren and has had open communication with churches, campers, parents, volunteers, camp staff, and the board. Throughout the Middle PA District, Brian has provided pulpit supply, served as District Moderator, and has served as moderator to several churches. This past year, Brian navigated Camp through the difficult challenge of Covid and virtual summer camp. He continues to do so, and we celebrate that in-person summer camp is back this year. Brian has a genuine love for the ministry of Camp Blue Diamond and desires to lead Camp to new successes and experiences. He has an extensive knowledge of the operation of Camp Blue Diamond, and we are confident that he will embrace the position of Executive Director with excitement and commitment.

It is our prayer and desire that you will encourage and support Brian as he begins this new chapter in his life and the future of Camp. Please continue to pray for the ministry of Camp Blue Diamond.

Blessings to All,

Babs Detwiler

Chair, Board of Directors

David Meadows

Chair, Search Committee

Camp Blue Diamond Annual Dinners

Friday, August 6 and Saturday, August 7 at 6:00pm

Join us for a Welcome-Back-To-Camp Picnic celebration! Since we weren't able to have our Annual Dinners in the spring, we're planning a special picnic on the Lodge lawn. Gabe Imler, Brethren Brass, and the Tim & Duane Show will share singing, stories, and special talents! Emcees will be summer song leader Gabe Imler and his brother Kendrick. Support Camp, visit with friends, and enjoy a Chicken BBQ dinner with all the fixings. Discover how Camp survived Covid, what's happening at CBD now, and what the future holds.

Tickets are \$50 per person and can be purchased from Camp or through our Stone Church waiters: David Meadows (Friday) and Amanda Helfrich (Saturday). Payment can also be made in the Stone Church Office. Please make checks out to Camp Blue Diamond.

Brethren Open Golf Tournament – August 10

Bring your friends and enjoy a great day of golf while helping to raise funds for Middle PA District and Camp Blue Diamond. Sign-in at Iron Masters Country Club is from 11:30am – 12:30pm for a 1:00pm start. Cost is \$80 per golfer, which includes 18 holes, cart, and picnic dinner or grab-and-go at 5:30pm. *Registration deadline is August 2. **More info on the church bulletin board and at www.campbluediamond.org.***

Upcoming Events

Annual Dinners

August 6 & 7

Brethren Open Golf Tournament

August 10

Family Camp

August 20-22

Heritage Fair 2021

September 18

Have questions?

Contact your Camp Representative, David Meadows.



Gene's Jottings

"Songs from the Heart"

From time to time we hear a song that tugs at our heartstrings. I recently heard one of those I want to share.

It is a spiritual sung in a 1941 movie called *Sullivan's Travels*:

"When Israel was in Egypt's land,
oppressed so hard they could not stand,
God spoke to Moses, go down Moses, way down in Egypt's land,
tell ole Pharoah, let my people go.
Thus spoke the Lord, let my people go."

The song speaks to God relieving the people who are imprisoned. I think of my own physical situation where for the last 3 years I've been tied up in my house. I think also about the loss of my wife, Alberta. I really miss her and coming to Stone Church together... three years - unable to walk, losing my wife - who was a strong link to Stone Church.

Still, I've seen glimpses of relief - like God relieved the Israelites - I've felt God working through people like Marty Keeney who has been a good friend, and through Bruce Lidston who has been a tremendous help in transportation, taking me to appointments. I have felt like the church has been there for me - being part of God's deliverance, setting the captives free.

"With us in spirit..."

Below are members of our church family who, though they are not often able to join us in worship, remain with us in spirit. Remember them in your prayers, and with cards and visits! Please contact the church office (814-643-3390 or stonechurch@verizon.net) to add others you know.

DeLois Fluke
11325 Raystown Rd.
Huntingdon, PA 16652

Thelma Wallace
5754 Wallace Dr.
Huntingdon, PA 16652

Gene Goshorn
14155 Hill Valley Rd.
Mt. Union PA 17066

Lydia Price
c/o Charla and Greg Chiapelli
597 Sechler Rd.
Somerset, Pa 15501

Westminster Woods

John Bowser
Sue Martin
Denny Rock
John Keiper



August Birthdays

1—Eddie Crader

1—Terry Fultz

1—Luke Roth

2—Sharon Yohn

5—Clay Pheasant

5—Finley Uhrich *10

8—Nina Meadows *15

8—Owen Wetzal

13—Fiona McBrayer *15

15—Roxann Yon

17—Robert Ghaner

20—Dick Landrum

22—Otto Krugh

23—Anne Swigart

24—Jordan Soliday

25—Jim Bookhamer III

25—Morgan Knepp

26—Sheila McMeen

26—Emily Yohn

28—David Meadows

29—Todd Hammer

30—Everett Lattimer *8

31—Bob Wagoner

August Anniversaries

1—Katelyn & Ryan Oser

2—Peg & Randall Yoder

4—Bob & Laurie McMin

7—Clay & Judy Pheasant

8—Fiona & Antonio Phillippe-Grugan

11—Dean Wenger & Jerriann Heiser

15—Bill & Maylin Musser

16—Luke & Kim Roth

23—Celia & Dan Cook-Huffman *35

24—Mark & Meta Meckstroth

27—Anita & Doug Soliday

31—Ben Steines & Stacia-Fe Gillen

Grocery Gift Cards— Every card helps our church!

(We get 5% to use in our ministries!)

Buy your groceries at Weis or Giant using a grocery gift card purchased through Stone Church and Stone Church gets a donation of 5% back from the grocery store! To get your grocery gift cards, simply contact Cheryl Ritchey or contact the church office! Cards are available in denominations of \$25, \$50, and \$100.



Men's Breakfast

August 14th — 8:00 AM

Enjoy fellowship, jokes, stories and a light reflection. Join the regular attendees, who look forward to seeing the gallery of faces and hearing the latest joke. If you are interested in attending, send your email address to Rick Laabs and he will send you an invitation. Watch the Friday Flash for information on where and how we will be meeting (virtually or in-person). If you have questions, call Rick..

Prayer Shawls

The prayer shawl ministry provides comfort and love from the Stone Church congregation to those who experience challenging times. The shawls are tangible reminders of God's ever-present hope and peace freely given to us. Challenges may cloud our awareness of God's continual presence, but a shawl is a wonderful reminder. Placed around shoulders or across a lap, a prayer shawl provides a comforting touch. We are journeying through a most unusual year filled with social unrest, political stress, COVID and maybe stress that is unique to you. The prayer shawl ministry offers shawls to those who may be feeling additional stress, sadness, or loneliness this season. If you would like a shawl, please reach out to Pastor Cindy, Pastor Ben, or Donna Rhodes. We will arrange for a safe delivery to you.



Spotlight on Service

Witness Team: A Conversation with All Team Members

Q. What do you find most fulfilling about serving through this team?

A. I find it fulfilling to work with a dedicated group of people who are interested in how to help our congregation extend the presence of Christ through into our Huntingdon Community and beyond. I appreciate having a better understanding of the areas supported by Stone Church, both within our church and beyond. The satisfaction in taking care of necessary Witness Team responsibilities comes from understanding them as working to carry out values seen in Jesus' teachings. I appreciate the opportunity to share the love of God with the community by responding to needs. Additionally, I appreciate our larger outreach to the nation and world through service. I also find it helpful that team members are regularly encouraged to focus on "the core values of Jesus' teaching and practice." It's easy to get distracted by a current trend in a community's effort to serve. It's important to maintain a devotion to Jesus' living example. One example of following Jesus' example is the commitment to maintaining or building up the dignity of those being served. This team prioritizes the invitation to dream, to imagine possibilities for new ways of serving without first naming constraints.

Q. What are you most excited about in the life of this team and for this team's future?

*A. I am excited about our work to make sure people have food security and to address the issue of institutional racism (starting with the **It's a Small World Book Project**). In addition, it is a pleasure to be a part of a congregation where people desire a strong outreach to ministries that expand our ability to move beyond the community in continuing the work of Jesus. Looking forward I am excited to work for social justice, grow in ways to be peacemakers, build relationships with other races and the marginalized, minister to students at Juniata, nurture discipleship for ourselves and others in the congregation, realize our ability to positively address needs of people beyond our own church family, and expand our church family's circle of inclusion to those who might not feel comfortable among us automatically.*

Q. Where could you use some additional help?

A. There are several areas in which we could use additional help:

- *Donations toward our **It's a Small World Book Project**.*
- *Ideas, energy, and perspectives of a more diverse team. All but one of our members are retirees. Specifically we would value some younger folks who are interested in continuing the work of Jesus to join us in helping our congregation to be faithful in our witness and service to our community and beyond*
- *Assistance with outreach to Juniata students as well as food insecurity issues*
- *Prayers for all of us to examine how we can be more faithfully following Jesus in our daily lives.*
- *The opportunity remains to help with the community meal prepared, served, and shared every Thursday. Currently, we could use help with delivering meals to folks who are not ambulatory and, in the future, with preparation, serving, and sharing the weekly meal with community members.*

Q. If folks are interested in helping, whom should they contact and how?

A. Contact any Witness Team member. The current Team consists of Randy Yoder (Team Leader), Mark Meckstroth, Sandy Loughlin, Dale Wampler, Martha Swigart, Pam Grugan, and Pastors Cindy and Ben.



What is a deacon?

"Deacons are called to be dedicated caregivers who use their spiritual gifts in a shared ministry of concern for the total well-being of God's people."

*—from the 1997 Annual Conference statement,
Deacon Ministry in the Church of the Brethren*

The Stone Church Deacons continue to find ways to be effective caregivers.

Currently, our structure uses sub-groups to utilize our spiritual gifts and energy more specifically in our caregiving. We have developed the following sub-groups within the deacon team: Greeting Cards; Prepare & Assist for Love Feast/Communion; Transportation, Visitation, Assist with Anointing; Prepare & Deliver Meals; Prayer; Assist with Baptisms; Bible Study Leaders.

It is important to add that deacons are not perfect people, but they are spiritually healthy people. Joan Deeter, in the Brethren publication *Called to Caregiving*, has said: "Those best qualified to serve as deacons will be those who have themselves known brokenness, who have grown strong at the broken places, who have known God's strength most powerfully because of their own weakness, and who are willing to risk sharing their stories. . . Those most ready to serve as deacons are those who have experienced the joy of rebirth."

*You are urged to prayerfully consider names of people you think would be good deacons for our congregation. **The Stone Church Deacons are members of the church**, called out from the body to be dedicated caregivers using spiritual gifts to support the Stone Church pastors and our community of faith.*

During the worship service on Sunday, August 22 you will be asked to write down names of church members you would like to call or "re-call" to this position. Please feel free to send names to the church office (prior to August 22) or use the chat thread if attending virtually August 22.

The Deacon Discernment Team will collect the suggested names and prayerfully discern which members are being called to the deacon role for this time by the Holy Spirit through the church body. Those members will be contacted by the Deacon Discernment Team and informed of the call. The names of those who accept the call will be shared with the congregation and affirmed at a date to be determined.

Those serving as active deacons (until year listed):

| DEACON | TERM ENDS |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Jeff Decker | 2021—may be called to serve again |
| Daisy Decker | 2021—may be called to serve again |
| Carol Fultz | 2022 |
| Marty Keeney | 2023 |
| Joanne Krugh | 2023 |
| Bruce Lidston | 2022 |
| Carolyn Lidston | 2022 |
| Andy Murray | 2023 |
| Barb Parlett | 2022 |
| Barb Purdy | 2021—may be called to serve again |
| Cheryl Ritchey | 2021—may be called to serve again |

The Heritage Fair and How You can Help

Stone Church has always been a big supporter of Heritage Fair, and yet it is entirely possible for you to know little to none about what it is! Held at Camp Blue Diamond every year, this event serves as one of the main fundraisers for the Camp and the Middle Pennsylvania District. This year, we will gather on September 18, 2021. There will be food, children's activities, and an auction with the District Quilt being sold. Dunk tank, crafts and demonstrations. It's been a long year and we are celebrating being able to join together with church friends and family. Make plans to join in the fun!

Stone Church typically takes up a special offering as a part of how we support this important event. We will gather our gifts during worship on August 15 - or you may send them in to the office anytime between now and then. Our hope is that you take some time to consider how the ministries of Camp Blue Diamond and the Middle Pennsylvania District impact your lives. Below are some suggestions to lead you in that exercise. We hope you will put your gift in an envelope and label it with the ministries that are guiding your giving - just as a fun way of sharing together!

Do YOU know what your DOLLARS DO in Middle Pennsylvania District?

-Camp Blue Diamond offers programs for kids, youth, families, and individuals to enjoy and appreciate God's creation, to learn about the environment around them, to try new adventures, and to grow in body, heart, and spirit. ***If you have ever been to CBD or had a good experience at camp - please consider giving \$10 for each time camping has had a positive impact in your life.***

-The District Office helps facilitate pastoral placements in churches. ***If you have ever had a pastor that made a difference in your life - consider giving \$10 to Heritage Fair***

-The District Office facilitates the credentialing of ministers - ensuring that they have created the necessary educational requirements and also offering opportunities for Continuing Education. ***If you appreciate education - consider giving \$5 to Heritage Fair***

-There is a ministry for truckers run through the Middle PA District! This ministry offers support to travelers in a broad range of situations - whether it's a listening ear or a need for emergency assistance. ***If you have ever been on a long road trip - consider giving \$2 to Heritage Fair for each trip.***

-The Middle PA District helps to support small congregations in our area. These congregations have vital and flourishing ministries in their communities but small attendance. ***If you love small but mighty teams - consider giving \$20 to Heritage Fair***

-Continuing to call out gifted leadership is crucial to the ongoing work of the church. The Middle PA District participates with other COB Districts to help individuals discern a call into the ministry. ***If you have ever had your unique gifts affirmed and used in fulfilling ways - consider giving \$10 to Heritage Fair***

-The District offers support to local church youth programs for district wide youth ministry - that helps young people understand that they are part of something much bigger than just their local congregation. These programs create friendships, expose young people to a broader diversity of people, and help them to learn and grow. ***If you have a middle-schooler or high schooler in your home - please consider giving \$5 each to Heritage Fair. If you ever were a middle schooler or high-schooler and were thankful for your youth group - consider giving \$20 to Heritage Fair***



TRAIL THOUGHTS

TREKKING TOWARD GOD'S ADVENTUROUS FUTURE

A QUARTERLY PASTORAL LETTER FROM PAUL MUNDEY, MODERATOR, CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

SPRING/SUMMER 2021

HOPE

GREETINGS IN THE STRONG NAME OF JESUS!

Will Willmon tells of an Episcopal friend committed to eradicating apartheid in South Africa. After months of intense effort, including weeks of lobbying in Washington, D.C., a breakthrough felt distant and dim. Commiserating with colleagues at the Episcopal Church Center in New York City, Willmon's friend was discouraged along with her compatriots; all seemed for naught. But then, unexpectedly, the door to their meeting room flung open, and in walked famed anti-apartheid leader Bishop Desmond Tutu. Tutu sensed the anguish in the room but didn't drop his customary exuberant countenance; instead, he accentuated it. "Well, chappies," Tutu exclaimed, "Why the cast-down faces? Why are you looking so sad? Come on; we've got the resurrection. Let's get busy!"

During my two years as Moderator, I've encountered any number of cast-down faces. It's been a difficult season, marked by an onslaught of pandemic, schism, racism, and violence. But I'm with Tutu: the heart of the Gospel is a Jesus who rises above despair. Such a response doesn't minimize strain and sorrow but keeps it in perspective; lament does not cancel resurrection. As Glenn Packiam notes:

"Lament is not our final prayer. It is a prayer *in the meantime*. Most of the lament psalms end with a 'vow to praise'... Because Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, we know that sorrow is not how the story ends. The song may be in a minor motif now, but one day it will resolve in a major chord."¹

I challenge us to sound God's major chord, even as we muddle through a minor motif. The Anabaptists, key influencers of our faith tradition, spoke of "walking in the resurrection." Though there's a future element to resurrection, our forerunners believed there's also a present-tense reality—*now*. The Apostle Paul concurs.

"It stands to reason, doesn't it, that if the alive-and-present God who raised Jesus from the dead moves into your life, he'll do the same thing *in you* that he did in Jesus, *bringing you alive* to himself? When God lives and breathes in you (and he does, as surely as he did in Jesus), you are delivered from that dead life. With his Spirit living in you, your body will be as alive as Christ's!" (Romans 8:11 MSG, emphasis added)

Our current season of life and faith is arduous, taxing us in compound ways. But Paul is on to something: God is breathing into us, nevertheless. Can you sense God's breath moving...animating? The classic evidence is God's encounter with the prophet Ezekiel.

"The hand of the Lord was on me...and placed me in the midst of the valley, and it was full of bones... He said to me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' I said to him, 'Sovereign Lord, you know.' Then he said to me, 'Prophesy over these bones.'... So I prophesied...I heard a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to bone. As I watched, I saw tendons on them, then muscles appeared, and skin covered over them from above, but there was no breath in them. He said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath'... So I prophesied as I was commanded, and the breath came into them; they lived and stood on their feet." (Ezekiel 37:1-10 NET)

I challenge us to “prophesy to the breath,” believing God not only rattles but infuses with the Spirit, empowering us to stand. Jurgen Moltmann is best known for his theology of hope, a belief system advancing God’s resurrection ability today. Among Moltmann’s resurrection convictions is a revisualization of the church as a fellowship of friends.

“Friendship [in Christ] is a new relationship, which goes beyond the social roles of those involved... The community of brethren is really the fellowship of friends who live in the friendship of Jesus and spread friendliness....*by meeting the forsaken with affection and the despised with respect.* Its brothers and sisters cannot choose each other.”² (emphasis added)

Continuing, Moltmann concludes: “The church will not overcome its present crisis through reform of...its ministries. It will overcome this crisis through *the rebirth...of fellowship and friendship among the rank and file*”³ (emphasis added). I call us to a rebirth of friendship in Christ, a resurrection of affection and respect. For as brothers and sisters in Jesus, we don’t choose each other; Christ chooses us, calling us to live together, *even* amid our diversity.

The Human Library is a European movement promoting understanding among diverse persons.⁴ The concept is bold and innovative but straightforward: “borrow” a person much like you borrow a book. The purpose: to learn from someone you normally wouldn’t engage with, especially persons you tend to minimize or normally don’t encounter. For example, you might borrow a single parent if you’ve always lived within a traditional family, or a homeless person if you’ve always had food and shelter. This approach got me thinking: how might a Human Library be “stocked” in the church; what “books,” what categories of people would be eye-opening to have on our “shelves”? Certainly, single parents and the homeless—but I’d love for a progressive believer to be able to borrow a conservative believer; a person puzzled by women in ministry to be able to borrow a woman preacher. You catch my drift. The purpose of “borrowing” and listening is not necessarily to change our convictions but to soften harsh or indifferent hearts, becoming newly awash in understanding—even empathy—toward those we don’t know or tend to disregard.

And so, I call us to walk in newness of life, in resurrection, calling forth dry bones and hearts to live! For “If all we get out of Christ is a little inspiration for a few short years, we’re a pretty sorry lot. But the truth is that Christ *has* been raised, the first in a long legacy of those who are going to leave the cemeteries” (1 Corinthians 15:19-20 MSG). Where is life deadened for you, cast down, sad? Where is your spirit eroded, thin, and limping? Christ *has* left the cemetery. Life *can* be raised. Hope *is* alive. Let’s get busy!

With expectation,



Paul Munday, Moderator, Church of the Brethren

Discussion Starters / Questions

1. Glenn Packiam notes: “Lament is not our final prayer. It is a prayer *in the meantime*...Because Jesus is risen from the dead.” How do you keep honesty (lament) and hope (resurrection) in proper balance, avoiding being either too naïve or too pessimistic?
2. Reread Romans 8:11. Have you experienced God bringing you alive to himself through the resurrection power of Jesus? Describe the experience and the difference it made/makes.
3. Jurgen Moltmann believes we must reimagine the church as a fellowship of friends meeting “the forsaken with affection and the despised with respect.” What steps can your congregation take to become a fuller fellowship of friends?
4. Moderator Paul tells of the Human Library. Imagine such a library existed in your congregation, district, denomination. Who’s a person you’d be open to “borrowing” and learning from? Who would be difficult for you to “borrow” and learn from? Why?

To Dig Deeper

Timothy Keller. *Hope In Times of Fear*. New York: Viking, 2021.

N.T. Wright. *Surprised by Hope*. New York: Harper One, 2008.

¹ Glenn Packiam. “Five Things to Know About Lament,” N.T. Wright Online. <https://www.ntwrightonline.org/five-things-to-know-about-lament/>

² Jurgen Moltmann. *The Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993, p. 316.

³ Ibid. p. 317.

⁴ <https://humanlibrary.org>



A Review of Our Work and Upcoming Events

So, you wanna help heal racism? Consider yourself signed up! Here's what we've been working on so far...

- We read books by Jemar Tisby and Drew Hart early in the spring semester.
- We attended a Zoom presentation by Ibram X. Kendi, author of *How to Be an Antiracist*, March 3.
- The Church of the Brethren and Brethren Faith in Action Fund Committee awarded our *It's A Small World Book Project* proposal a \$750 grant April 6th.
- Eric Bishop, Chair of the Bethany Seminary Board of Trustees, preached for

us April 11th .

- We attended the Mount Union Women's Prayer Breakfasts in May, June, and July.
- Joan Rogers, member of the Bethel AME Church, presented for us May 9th.
- We completed the African American History Challenge in May.
- Amy Nathan, co-author of the children's book *A Ride to Remember*, made a Zoom presentation for us June 13th.
- We attended a Juneteenth celebration at the Bethel AME Church June 19th.
- We donated an *It's A Small World* book collection to the Huntingdon County Library June 7th .
- We've donated an *It's A Small World* book collection to the Mount Union Community Library in July 13th

Here's what's to come, and YOU'RE INVITED....

Mount Union's TON OF BRICKS FESTIVAL and CANAL ERA DAYS

**Saturday, August 21, 2021
10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.
Linear Park & Water Street**

Stone Church will contribute to Mount Union's community celebration with a public presentation of our *It's A Small World Book Project* display, multiple Story Time readers, and an *It's A Small World* poster activity for children of every age. You're encouraged to come out to celebrate with our neighbors as we take another step in our journey to heal our racism.

Save the Date: Welcome Back to College Students

Every year we joyously welcome college students back into our midst at the end of summer. Please save Sunday, August 29, 2021 as a date to re-connect with returning students and welcome brand new students into the life of our church. Details for our celebration will be in future Friday Flashes and in the announcement time. This time of fellowship and relationship building is truly part of how we are Jesus in this neighborhood, so be sure to make plans now to be a part of it all!

Stone Church of the Brethren

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STONE CHURCH NEWS

August 2021

It's a Small World Book Project— Volunteer to be a part of our stand at the Mount Union Ton of Bricks Festival. We will be showing off the book collection we donated to Mt. Union Library! Or attend the event and enjoy some family fun.

Deacon Call— It is time to prayerfully consider who you feel would be good deacons for our congregation! Please read on for details on how you can submit names on August 22nd during worship.

Heritage Fair— Learn how you can donate to support Camp Blue Diamond and the Middle PA District office!