

# STONE CHURCH NEWS

March 2021

## From the Pastor's Desk



"Again?!" seems to be a refrain for me this season - and not just because of our worship series! The weather is forcing school to be remote today, even though it was supposed to be in-person - Again?! The twins can't go to daycare today because of runny noses - Again?! The dog needs to be walked in sub-freezing temperatures - Again?! I planned more to do in this week than was physically possible - Again?! I feel stressed and overwhelmed - Again?! Everyone is hungry and I need to work on supper - Again?! The laundry room looks like an explosion happened and no one has clean masks - Again?!

I am feeling the, "AGAIN?!" of pandemic life in a lot of negative ways these days. So I find myself trying to lean into Lisle Gwynn Garrity's words:

"As we began working on *Again & Again*, our brainstorming led us to hone in on the ampersand, an ancient symbol with thousands of visual iterations. No matter how the ampersand appears, its meaning still translates. After some quick research, we learned that the ampersand was first used in graffiti in Pompeii—a city buried in volcanic ash, and yet whose story lives on. This changed how we looked at the theme; the ampersand began to represent God's holy 'and.' When we feel helpless and hopeless, 'and' encourages us to lift our weary eyes to search for more. In a culture overrun by extremes, either/or thinking, and polarizing politics, this holy 'and' reminds me that we are always more—that there is always more. We are broken *and* beautiful. Joy *and* grief can coexist. Historical, systemic oppression persists *and* God is guiding us closer to liberation and wholeness. The future feels bleakly uncertain *and* we are granted sacred moments that sustain us in the present. This Lent, let us practice the power of 'and'—especially when 'again?!' feels like our never-ending cry of lament."

If I take a deep breath and am honest with myself, I feel that holy "&" as well. I am tired & the dreaming we are doing on Witness Team and in Sojourners about racial justice work is invigorating. Life is hard & I work with amazing people who pitch in, have each others' backs, and serve well. Winter is dark and cold & there are bulbs sprouting bright green on my window sills. There is a lot going on & I am so excited to look ahead to Holy Week and Easter with this community.

How about you? When you cry out, "Again?!" can you find "&" as well?

## Stone Church Leadership Team Meeting

### **"Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together."**

As we approach the one year anniversary of when all church services, meetings, and other events transitioned to virtual, I've been thinking a lot about the word, "virtual", and how that now applies to our congregation.



According to the Oxford English Dictionary, virtual can mean three things:

1. almost or nearly as described, but not completely or according to strict definition
2. not physically existing as such but made by software to appear to do so
3. carried out, accessed, or stored by means of a computer, especially over a network

The third definition certainly describes the current situation, but what about the first two? Do our virtual services make us just virtually a church? Do our community, our relationships, and our faith not really exist because we can't meet in person?

As I participated in the Leadership Team meeting this month, it was clear to me that the answers to those questions are a resounding "No." Despite the limitation on meeting in person, the teams are active and many ways to connect to our faith community are already in place or being planned for the future.

By the time you read this, you will probably have already received your Lenten kit. These kits help us not only feel closer to our own church community, but have also been provided to Juniata College students of any faith, helping strengthen the church – college ties. This was possible only due to generous donations by members of our congregation, who put their love, time, and resources into this physical means of feeling united.

As we have been more physically isolated, it has sometimes felt harder to reach out to the broader community. Fortunately, we have a talented Witness team who is putting their considerable talent into exploring how we can continue the work of Jesus, even in these times. One result of this is that the team is currently applying for a Church of the Brethren multicultural grant to provide books and activities to local schools and the library dealing with racism. Look to hear more about this initiative in the future!

It is easy to feel isolated from the congregation when we can't meet in our building on Sunday mornings. Therefore, our volunteer teams and amazing staff have been working hard to find ways to make it easier to connect with our church family. Small groups are meeting again throughout Lent, Donna Rhodes is leading a weekly Lenten devotional time, mid-week Bible studies continue, the Sojourners are offering a Sunday morning book study, and the men's breakfast continues to meet monthly. And it is easier than ever to take advantage of these opportunities, since you can do it from the comfort of your own home!

After reflecting on the vibrant and engaged faith community that is the Stone Church family, I've decided to stop using the word "virtual" for our activities. While the events do take place online, meeting one of the definitions, we are not virtually a church – we are a real, active community, staying connected and supporting one another, and even reaching out to the broader community despite the challenges of these times. I hope that each of you take the opportunity to participate in one of the many activities taking place, because while it may need to be online, the interactions and relationships are certainly not virtual.



### **Executive Director Search**

Camp Blue Diamond is seeking a gifted and visionary individual with a passion for outdoor ministry to serve as the next Executive Director. Duties include development and operation of the camp and family campground; financial management; promotion and fundraising; coordination of summer

camp, retreats, rentals, events; hosting Outdoor School; supervision of staff and volunteers. The Executive Director is accountable to the Board of Directors. Qualifications include skills in administration, organization, communication, hospitality, and leadership, along with knowledge of marketing, program development, computer skills, and finance. Bachelor's Degree and camp leadership experience required. Applicant should be a Christian and member of the Church of the Brethren or have an appreciation and understanding of Brethren beliefs and values. For more info, visit [www.campbluediamond.org/openings%2Fapplications](http://www.campbluediamond.org/openings%2Fapplications).

### **Hiring Summer Staff--Apply Now!**

Might you or someone you know be interested in joining the summer staff? Camp is hiring counselors, maintenance workers, and other positions. Program Staff must be at least 18 yrs. old, and maintenance workers must be at least 16. Staff members must be committed Christians, enjoy children and youth, and be able to live in harmony with others. Aside from being fun, working at camp is a great learning experience too. Staff members grow in faith as well as leadership and communication skills. For those interested in teaching, ministry, social work or just being a parent, it's terrific on the job training! Pay is based on experience and ranges from \$200-\$250/week, plus room and board. The camp season for 2021 will be from June 7 - July 31. Applications are available at <https://campbluediamond.org/summer-staff>.

### **Summer Camp 2021**

Online registration is open at [www.campbluediamond.org](http://www.campbluediamond.org)! Brochures were sent to all past campers in January. If you or someone you know need a brochure, contact David Meadows using the info below or view the information online.

### **Winter Weekend Retreats now Daylong Retreats**

Children and youth from grades 3 through 1 will still have an opportunity to visit Camp, see friends and counselors safely this winter! The Junior, Jr. High, and Youth retreats have all been changed to daylong gatherings that will run from approximately 10am – 7pm. Social distancing, face masks, and safe practices will be practiced. For more info, visit <https://campbluediamond.org/retreats-%26-events>.

### **Upcoming Events**

Daylong Jr. High Retreat for grades 6-8	February 20
Daylong Junior Retreat for grades 3-5	March 6
Daylong Youth Retreat for grades 9-12	March 20
Quilt & Craft Camp	April 23-25
Annual Dinners ( <i>pending updates</i> )	May 1 & 2
Father/Son Retreat for grades K-8	May 7-8
Senior Adult Day	June 4
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*

*"The Rev. Billy Graham"*

When I was about 11 years old, I would lie on the floor in front of my grandfather's stand-up radio and listen to Billy Graham and George Beverly preach and sing and Charles E. Fuller preaching Heavenly Sunshine on The Old Fashioned Revival Hour.

Man, could those preachers preach!!

I found those programs great to listen to - which brings me to one of my favorite seasons of the year: Spring. The season begins March 20 and Palm Sunday is March 28. As a child, I liked getting palms on Palm Sunday Mom dressed me up special on Palm Sunday and I remember Mom looking extra fancy in her new pink polka dot dress - which brings me to heaven.

Charles E. Fuller once announced that he would be speaking the following Sunday on "Heaven." During that week, a beautiful letter arrived from an old man who was very ill. Following is a part of the letter:

"Next Sunday you are to talk about Heaven. I am interested in that land, because I have held a clear title to a bit of property there for over 55 years. I did not buy it. It was given to me without money and without price, but the donor purchased it for me at tremendous sacrifice. I am not holding it for speculation since the title is not transferable. It is not a vacant lot. For more than half a century I have been sending materials out of which the greatest architect and builder of the universe has been building a home for me which will never need to be remodeled or repaired because it will suit me perfectly, individually, and will never grow old.

Termites can never undermine its foundations for they rest on the rock of ages. Fire cannot destroy it. Floods cannot wash it away. No locks or bolts will ever be placed upon its doors, for no vicious person can ever enter that land where my dwelling stands. It is now almost completed and ready for me to enter in and abide in peace eternally...."

Matthew, in chapter six, tells us to "Lay up treasures in heaven. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on Earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal..."

## March Birthdays

2—Chuck Yohn	16—Sarah Worley	26—Taylor Boyer *9
6—Paul Elder	17—Tim Launtz	26—Carol Oldring
7—Lydia Price *96	23—Lori Fagan	27—Chris Gibboney
12—Oscar Tuten	24—Shelby Anders	27—Charlie Paterson
14—Beau Buterbaugh *1	25—Brandon Conaway *25	29—Jon Yorke
15—Seppi Grugan *25	26—Knox Boyer *9	30—Anita Soliday

## March Anniversaries

24—Phillip & Patricia Paterson

### 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 leave a message at the church office! Cards are available in denominations of \$25, \$50, and \$100.



## Men's Breakfast via Zoom

March 20 — 8:00 AM

Prepare your favorite breakfast and join the gathering virtually by Zoom. 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 a Zoom invitation. 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. We approach the holiday season which will be different than we traditionally experience as we continue to practice social distancing and families may not gather as is customary. 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.



## Come One, Come All to Bingo Night!

COVID may stop us from getting together in the same space, but we can still gather together virtually. The Hospitality & Fellowship Team is planning a **Virtual Bingo Night for Saturday March 13 from 6:30-7:30pm**. Keep your eye on the Friday Flash for the zoom link as well as a link to download/print your bingo card.

This is an opportunity to informally catch up with each other and maybe win a prize! Speaking of prizes, there will be "white elephant prizes" up for grabs. If you would like to donate a prize (think anything smaller than a breadbox that you have lying around and needs a new home), please contact Jeannie Lashlee for details.

## Are you interested in serving the Stone Church community?

Did you like planning events? Are you good at organizing and planning? Do you like working on a team of people? *Then you should join the Hospitality & Fellowship Team!* Our Hospitality & Fellowship Team is in need of members. Would you consider helping to plan an event or contributing ideas? If so, please contact Jeannie Lashlee, team chair.

## "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](mailto:stonechurch@verizon.net)) to add others you know.

DeLois Fluke  
11325 Raystown Rd.  
Huntingdon, PA 16652

Jean Prendergast  
930 Mifflin Street  
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

John Keiper  
160 Aspen Lane  
Apt. 204  
Huntingdon, PA 16652

### Westminster Woods

John Bowser

Sue Martin



## **Mark your calendars for Holy Week!**

The details for these events will be shared soon, but we want you to have the dates now.

- March 28 - Palm Sunday Parade
- April 1 - Love Feast Service on Zoom
- April 2 - Good Friday Service with Forum of Churches to be Live Streamed
- April 4 - Easter Sunday

## **Make sure you visit our Lenten Prayer Wall**

This Lent, we invite you to come to God in prayer again and again, weaving your prayers in with those of our larger community. Woven together, our prayers form the shape of an ampersand, an ancient symbol that, used here, represents God's holy "and."

When we feel helpless and hopeless, God's holy "and" encourages us to lift our weary eyes to search for more. In a culture overrun by extremes, either/or thinking, and polarizing politics, this holy & reminds us that we are always more—that there is always more. We are broken & beautiful. Joy & grief can coexist. Historical, systemic oppression persists & God is guiding us closer to liberation and wholeness.

This Lent, let us practice the power of "and"—especially when "again?!" feels like our never-ending cry of lament. Within the ampersand, our prayers are held together and transformed into beauty.

Supplies for the prayer wall are found in your kit AND at the wall itself - along with prompts for prayers. There will also be prayer prompts during Sunday morning worship.



**Stone Church of the Brethren**  
1623 Moore Street  
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**March 2021**

**Lenten Art Devotional** – Tuesdays at 7pm. Reflect on the stories of lent through beautiful original works of art together with members of our church family.

**Sunday Story Time for Kids** – Sundays at 10am. Bring your child each week throughout lent to story time with Teacher Becky!

**Keep reading and find out the many ways to stay connected this month!**