

STONE CHURCH NEWS

April 2021

From the Pastor's Desk



"[My Aunt Deborah] read the Scripture to me like a daily newspaper and I suppose that's the way she thought of it, as something going on happening eternally but always exciting and new. Every Easter, Jesus really rose from the dead, an explosion, expected but nonetheless new. It wasn't two thousand years ago to her; it was now. And she planted something of that in me."

-Ethan Allen Hawley, from John Steinbeck's novel, The Winter of Our Discontent

Every year at this time, we tell the story. We tell the story of that terrible wonderful week with all its ups and downs. The triumphal entry with palm branches waving and shouts of "Hosanna!" ringing in the air. Jesus' last supper with his disciples - his friends. Fear and betrayal in the garden. The cross at Golgotha... And then, finally, the empty tomb.

We tell the story - but it's more than that. We don't just remember it; we re-live it, "exciting and new." We wave palm branches in a parade of our own. We gather in the evening to share a meal, sharing the bread and the cup as we look ahead with uncertainty at the future. We stand vigil at the foot of the cross, hearing Jesus' last words again for the first time. We behold with wonder the mystery of the empty tomb.

Even in this strange year, we have the opportunity to re-live the story:

- On **Palm Sunday** we will create our own Parade of giving and celebration. Approximately 10 minutes after Sunday morning worship ends (around 11:47AM), you are invited to bring donations of non-perishable food items to the church. You can drop off your donation at the corner of our property by Stone Church Drive and Moore Street, and then follow our "parade route" collecting a palm branch to wave as you move toward the prayer wall and add prayers, after which you will move around to the 17th street side of the church to pick up supplies for Holy Week including Soup and Communion Bread for our Maundy Thursday service.
- Then on **Maundy Thursday** we will gather over Zoom for our Love Feast at 6pm on April 1. The deacons are providing soup and bread, so that we can truly share this meal, even from our own homes. We will break bread, even as Christ did with his disciples, taking communion together as a family of faith.
- On **Good Friday**, we will join with churches from around our community, in an online service following the seven last words of Jesus. Pastor Ben will be opening the service with a reflection on the first word. We will send out a link once it is available.
- On **Holy Saturday**, we will have a day of service for anyone who wants to participate. Typically we serve one another within this community through footwashing on Thursday. As we are unable to wash one another's feet, we still want for there to be a way to offer and receive service from each other in community. Please sign up to serve by contacting Pastor Ben. A simple list of ways you might offer kindness and care will be in the Friday Flash.
- And on **Easter Sunday**, we will celebrate in worship the risen Lord. There will be a Sunrise Service on Zoom at 6:46AM. If you are able, take your computer or phone outside to join together in the gathering Light. We will celebrate again at our normal worship time on zoom at 10:45AM

Amidst all the challenges of the past year, sometimes the world has felt hopelessly broken. Life with this church family - living the events of this Holy Week together - reminds us that the story isn't finished yet, even when all seems lost.

"The little gray whisper of my Aunt Deborah came to me [on the Saturday between Good Friday and Easter.] 'Of course, Jesus is dead. This is the only day in the world's days when He is dead.... But tomorrow. Just wait until tomorrow. Then you'll see something.'"

Stone Church Leadership Team Meeting “Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.”

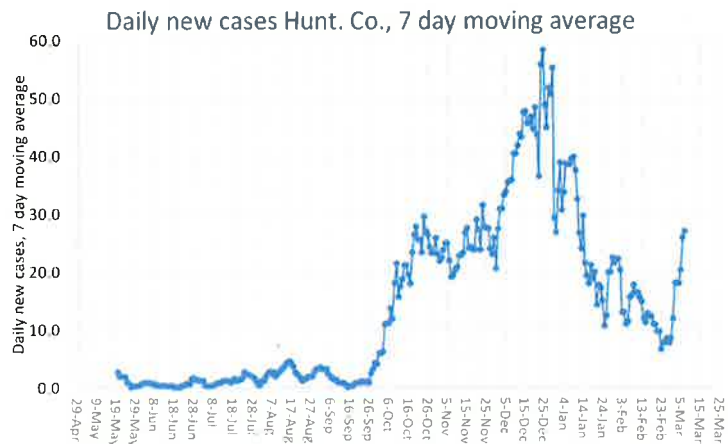
This month, in place of an article on the events of leadership team, please enjoy a personal reflection from Sharon Yohn, Chair of the COVID-19 Response Team



It's Thursday, March 11, and things are looking up. We've just had warm days, the crocuses are coming up, and we're looking forward to Easter and the events of Holy Week. More and more people are getting vaccinated and it's starting to feel like an end to this endless physical isolation from friends is in sight. I confess to feelings of freedom, lightness, and a desire to not be all that careful about that pesky virus. Surely the worst danger has passed?

Unfortunately, allowing our emotions – our frustration, impatience, and desire to be with the people we love – to drive our decisions can be a dangerous prospect indeed. While cases are certainly lower than at the start of the New Year, there are still many cases in the county. While the vaccine makes me feel more optimistic, the mere existence of the vaccine does not yet protect those of us who are unvaccinated, and those who are vaccinated can still carry and transmit the virus.

Recent data shows an increase in cases in Huntington County, illustrating the need to continue to maintain those precautions of which we have all grown so tired. While some of those new cases are certainly from a recent outbreak in the prison, it is a critical reminder for us to stay cautious, especially as new, more contagious forms of the virus are spreading.



This doesn't mean, however, that we shouldn't embrace the energy and joy that can come from the arrival of spring, the increasing sunlight and the warmer temperatures! Warm weather makes it easier to be outside, making it safer to be near (but not too near) each other. There continue to be many ways to engage and to be involved with your church community on-line.

Daily new cases in Huntington County over time. The data have been smoothed by using a seven-day average.

We are indeed grateful that many of the most vulnerable in our community have had the opportunity to be protected through vaccination. Now we need to be patient *just a bit longer* until we reach the critical herd immunity and all of us, young and old, can gather without fear. Your COVID-19 response team will continue to monitor the current studies, case numbers, and CDC recommendations to evaluate when and how we can gather safely. We're all tired of waiting, but unfortunately, our time in the COVID wilderness is not yet complete. Fortunately, we are blessed with a supportive and loving community of faith. We may not be able to embrace each other literally yet, but I hope we can continue to embrace each other in faith, support and love.



Summer Camp 2021

UPDATE: With the pandemic slowing down and folks getting their shots, CBD is excited to announce there will be summer camp in 2021! Changes will include extra handwashing stations, temperature checks upon arrival, more activities in cabin groups, moving many inside activities outside, and

wearing masks when we can't social distance. But don't fret, campers will still do all the fun stuff like nature activities, crafts, music, campfires, cook-outs, swimming, canoeing, Bible Discovery, coffeehouse, the giant swing, the climbing tower and more! Now is the time to sign up. We have to keep camps smaller in 2021, so if you want to come, don't hesitate. Online registration is open at www.campbluediamond.org!

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>.

RV Campground & Cabins

Need a place for vacation this summer? CBD's campground and the Lakeside and Rising Sun cabins are open. The campground has 44 trailer sites, 2 tent sites and a primitive cabin. All sites include a table, fire ring and water. Both 30- and 50-amp service are available on each site, and a few sites have sewage hook-up. The Washhouse offers toilets, sinks and showers. A dump station, dumpster, firewood and ice are available. Smoking, vaping, alcohol are not allowed, but pets on leashes are. Camp's Family Campground has a family oriented, quiet atmosphere. It is a great place to relax, enjoy nature and have family time. A Wi-Fi hotspot is available in the campground parking lot. A lake and sandy beach are open to guests for swimming and canoeing. Hiking, beach volleyball, biking and fishing are available too.

Both Lakeside and Rising Sun cabin have 3 bedrooms, a living/dining room, kitchen, 2 bathrooms, a loft, central AC and heat, and aTV/DVD. They are handicapped accessible. The kitchen has a refrigerator, microwave, oven, dishwasher, coffeemaker, dishes and pots and pans, making it ideal for family vacations. There are 6 sets of bunk beds in each cabin, with 3 of the bottom beds being doubles. Lakeside and Rising Sun require a 2-night stay, the fee is a minimum of \$156/night (six guests or less). You can learn more about the Family Campground or Lakeside and Rising Sun at www.campbluediamond.org. You may also contact Camp at 814-667-2355 or campbluediamond@verizon.net.

Upcoming Events

Quilt & Craft Camp (*full*)

April 23-25

Father/Son Retreat for grades K-8

May 7-8

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

"Aughwick-Germany Valley Brethren Church"

If you spoke German and lived near Shirleysburg in 1802, you could have joined Christian Long, his wife Elizabeth Baker, and two other couples and organized the district's very first Church of the Brethren.

Only 20 years ago, the Aughwick-Germany Valley Church of the Brethren celebrated its bicentennial. And the woman (later to become my wife) Alberta Haught was the speaker. Alberta was the daughter of the 45th pastor of the church, from 1957 til 1967, the Rev. Albert M. Haught. Albert later served as Pastor of Visitation at Stone Church.

Preachers Jacob Lutz and Christian Long (who wed Jacob's sister, Catherine) preached in German, which made it difficult to spread the Gospel to the neighboring English. Early worship was held in members' homes, as was the custom. Rooms were provided in members' homes as the homes were built. A nearby school was used for meetings in the early 1830s, when there were 25 members,

A church building 65 by 40 feet costing about \$800 was started in 1836, composed of Blacklog Mountain stone. It was the first Brethren church building in the district.

The church pews were elevated and separated by a solid rail through the center. Boys and men were to sit on the left and the women and girls on the right. The Shirleysburg Herald of 1861 reported: "Dunkard love feast to be held at Germany Valley, to last from 10 a.m. one day until noon the next." In the church attic, reached by winding stairs, were "rope and spool" beds where congregants stayed overnight. Some slept on the church benches. Backs were added to the benches in 1872 when new pews were installed.

Love Feast continues to play an important role in our lives together as Brethren and followers of Jesus. It will look very different from that Love Feast our forebears in faith held 150 years ago - but it promises to be very meaningful. We hope you'll join us.

"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

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
Denny Rock
John Keiper



April Birthdays

1—Cory Buterbaugh
3—Pam Adams
5—Emma Musser
6—Joanne Krugh
7—Melissa McBrayer
9—Robert Beck *8
9—Amanda Helfrich

11—Katie Dickey
11—Mark Meckstroth
13—Brenda Furry
13—Meghan Wright *21
14—Betty Ann Cherry
14—Razinah Rahman
14—Kim Roth
16—Denny Rock

19—Carolyn Lidston
22—Samuel Closz *7
22—Dean Wenger
22—Sara White *25
26—Martha Swigart
27—Natalie Buterbaugh *3
30—John Keiper
30—Seneca Miller *8

April Anniversaries

16—Kenny & Donna Evans

22—Greg & Yvonne Stein

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

April 17 — 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.



Spotlight on Service

Hospitality & Fellowship Team: A Conversation with Jeannie Lashlee, Team Chair

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

A. Helping to plan and carry out events is not only fun and meaningful, but important because I believe that we are stronger together.

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

A. I am definitely looking forward to being a part of events in which we can be together in person.

Q. Where could you use some additional help?

A. Our group is small. As the new chair of Hospitality, I struggle to plan virtual events that keep us safe from potentially spreading COVID (using the technology and resources). Our team would also appreciate input and ideas for events.

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

A. People can contact anyone on the Hospitality & Fellowship Team or me, Jeannie Lashlee.

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 with other 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.

Gifts Discernment Survey

Are you worried you missed your favorite Gifts Discernment survey this past February? Fear no more, we have not forgotten you! You all are the heart of the church and we will be looking for your help soon, so please stay tuned!

Visit our Lenten Prayer Wall

This Lent, we invite you to come to God in prayer again & 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.



Holy Saturday - Service Day

One of the rhythms of our congregation is to serve one another on Maundy Thursday by washing each other's feet. We practice the humility and generosity we want to live out in the world on each other. Since we are unable to wash feet this year - we wanted to create a way to serve one another during Holy Week. You can sign up to serve one or two other households in our faith community. The service would be simple and at your convenience - hopefully being completed on or around Holy Saturday (April 3).

Some ideas of things you may do for another household are: decorate their driveway with encouraging messages and sidewalk chalk, hide Easter eggs in their yard for them to find, send a card, drop off sweets, drop off flowers.....there are many simple things we could do to connect and cheer and serve each other in this time.

You can sign up to participate by emailing Pastor Ben. He will send you the name and address of someone in our faith community to serve. When you sign up, please indicate if you are willing to serve 1 or 2 households!

Stone Church of the Brethren
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STONE CHURCH NEWS

April 2021

Palm Sunday – After Zoom worship, drive over to the Stone Church to participate in the parade and pick up Holy Week supplies. Don't forget your mask!

Maundy Thursday – Join us on Zoom for our virtual LoveFeast.

Good Friday – We will join with other local churches for a virtual service.

Holy Saturday – Contact Pastor Ben to be part of our day of service celebration.

Easter Sunday – A sunrise service and Easter worship will both be held over Zoom.