

AUGUST 2023

The Stone Church Newsletter

The monthly publication of the Stone Church of the Brethren



Our Welcome Statement

ADOPTED BY OUR CONGREGATION JANUARY 2012

Stone Church of the Brethren is a Christ-centered community, which celebrates every individual as a unique and beloved child of God.

We welcome all regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, ethnicity, physical or mental ability, economic circumstance, or current relationship with God.

We invite your active participation in the life of this congregation, as together we continue to grow in grace and seek justice for God's creation.

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From the Pastors' Desk

The ping pong table at my parents' house is completely covered with them. There's the one where Beverly and I are in matching dresses and barretts. The one where Keith has us in a headlock. The one with my my grandad laughing by his birthday cake. Loose photos, photos in frames, candids, and school pictures. Memories and moments all laid out to be sorted and organized. Faces of ones who have brought life and happiness to our family. Faces of ones we miss. Faces of love.

At the end of August, we will begin a new worship series called, *Faces of our Faith: **Bold** and Untold Stories*. We'll look at several lesser known stories in the Bible that center around particular people of faith. The team at Sanctified Art who created the series have this to offer about what to expect: "There are many heroes of the faith, people we admire and wish to be. However, there are even more ordinary people of faith—those doing what they can with what they have to make a difference...As we journey with these characters, may they remind us that we all play a role in shaping God's story of redemption and grace. May they awaken us to the faces of our faith in our world today. May they encourage us to know that no action is ever too small to make a difference."

As we think about the ordinary things we do that can make a difference, there are so many ways for us to connect together in the work of the church during August. We are having an all-Church Retreat on August 12 in order to fellowship, dream, and plan for the fall semester. In our new Leadership Team model, this retreat functions as a way to make smaller, shorter term commitments that enhance the life of the church. The half day event promises to be an uplifting time for all. There is more information elsewhere in the newsletter - so please keep reading and please make plans to attend!

The Witness team is excited to hang a new piece of art in our Narthex that is intended to reflect our Welcome Statement in visual form. The hope is for the art to go up by the end of August and for us to have a service to bless it in September. Hopefully some familiar faces of faith who have accompanied us on the journey toward our welcome statement and living most fully into it will also be with us to celebrate.

Many of the faces within our pews have been on adventures this summer: to Camp Blue Diamond, National Junior High Conference, and Annual Conference. We will take some time to hear some stories and reflect on the growth that comes from these adventures away before our summer ends. We will also take time to bless the school year and the students, teachers, and administrators adding that daily rhythm back to their lives. We have small gifts for each student to carry with them to school that we will give out on August 20 in worship.

As the summer winds down, I hope you'll take some time to reconnect with the faithful faces that make up our Stone Church Family. There is so much to be inspired by! We look forward to engaging with you in curiosity, openness, and growth in this season. And whether it is at the retreat, or in worship, or in some other community event, we can't wait to see each of your faces!



FACES
OF OUR
FAITH
BOLD & UNTOLD STORIES

Upcoming Events

Mount Union Area Ladies' Prayer Breakfast

Held in-person on Saturday, August 5 at 8 am.

This event will be held at Payne Church

The next Mount Union Area Ladies' Prayer Breakfast will be held at Payne Church at 9th and Moore Streets, Huntingdon. The speaker will be Pam Thomas. Contact Pam Grugan if you have any questions.

Older Adult Luncheon

Held in-person on Tuesday, August 8 at 12 pm.

This event will be held at Donna's Restaurant.

Eighteen people gathered for lunch in Donna's backroom on July 11. From the sounds heard in the room, I know a good time was had by all in attendance. Each person orders what they want to eat from the menu. That ranged from soup, to full meals, breakfast items, sandwiches, salads and pie! If you haven't joined us yet, please come for good food and fellowship on

August 8 at noon at Donna's. Our September meeting will be in Fellowship Hall on Wednesday the 13, at 11:00, when Rick Laabs will be providing brunch for us.

Stone Church Fall Retreat

Held in-person on Saturday, August 12 at 8:45 am.

This event will be held in the Fellowship Hall.

Who's invited? Everyone! Have fun, get involved, and enjoy great fellowship all while helping the church family you love.

What will we be doing? Eating breakfast snacks, learning about fall worship themes, brainstorming about event ideas for the fall, drinking coffee and tea, sharing ideas on how to make team meetings effective and rewarding, enjoying each other's company, exploring the new Stone Church google drive to learn where to find information (with help on how to use Google Drive), and eating lunch together.

I want to come! What do I need to do? Please RSVP by calling or emailing the church office, or leaving a note in the attendance pad at church, and let us know if you are planning on staying for lunch. This will help us plan for food. But if you decide at the last minute, please come anyway! If childcare would be helpful, please let us know.

Worship Time Change!

Our Sunday morning schedule will return to regular hours as the summer ends. On Sunday August 27th, Sunday school will be at 9:30AM for all ages and worship will begin at 10:45 am. We look forward to seeing you there!

Fall Welcome Meal

Held in-person on Sunday, August 27 immediately after worship.

This event will be held in the Fellowship Hall.

Fall is coming, with all the energy and excitement that the cooler air and start of the school year brings! What better way to celebrate than with your Stone Church family? Enjoy food, good company, and some fun ways to learn more about the exciting activities and opportunities at Stone Church. Hope to see you there!

Lemonade on the Lawn

Held in-person on Sunday, August 20 after worship.

This event will be held on the Stone Church Lawn

Be sure to stick around after our special Sharing our Summer worship service for some snacks and fellowship, sharing a sweet treat and sharing stories of your own summer adventures with those around you - strengthening the relationships that knit our church family together.

Sojourners Sunday School - More than "a Diasability"

WRITTEN BY LAURA WHITE

Are you committed to helping make Stone Church a more deeply authentic home for persons with a variety of disabilities? Wondering how to do that with faithfulness, sensitivity, and a heart for justice? The Sojourners Sunday School class will resume **Sunday, August 27th**, to study a new book that promises to be challenging and thought-provoking in these regards: **From Inclusion to Justice: Disability, Ministry, and Congregational Leadership**. Says the publisher:

American Christianity tends to view disabled persons as problems to be solved rather than people with experiences and gifts that enrich the church. Churches have generated policies, programs, and curricula geared toward "including" disabled people while still maintaining "able-bodied" theologies, ministries, care, and leadership. Ableism—not lack of ramps, of finances, or of accessible worship—is the biggest obstacle for disabled ministry in America. In *From Inclusion to Justice*, Erin Raffety argues that what our churches need is not more programs for disabled people but rather the pastoral tools to repent of able-bodied theologies and practices, listen to people with disabilities, lament ableism and injustice, and be transformed by God's ministry through disabled leadership. Without a paradigm shift from ministries of inclusion to ministries of justice, our practical theology falls short.

Drawing on ethnographic research with congregations and families, pastoral experience with disabled people, teaching in theological education, and parenting a disabled child, Raffety, an able-bodied Christian writing to able-bodied churches, confesses her struggle to repent from ableism in hopes of convincing others to do the same. At the same time, Raffety draws on her interactions with disabled Christian leaders to testify to what God is still doing in the pews and the pulpit, uplifting and amplifying the ministry and leadership of people with disabilities as a vision toward justice in the kingdom of God.

The class will meet in a hybrid format, with a time of fellowship at 9:15 and the book discussion at 9:30. Leadership will be shared among class participants (with an opt-out option for those who wish). As an added bonus, the author, Erin Raffety, is a personal friend of Pastors Ben and Cindy and has graciously agreed to be a (virtual) guest at one of our sessions!

For details about how to order the book at a discount and to be added to the class email list, please contact Laura White. We hope you'll consider joining us, even if you're unable to attend every week and/or you don't have time to do the readings. We anticipate a lively conversation and would love to have your voice be a part of it!

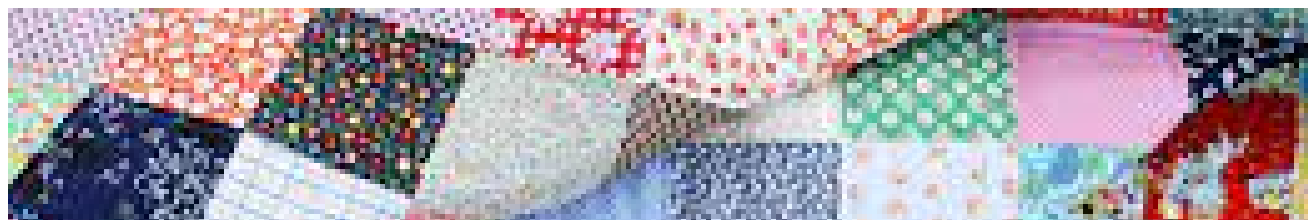
Christian Education Spotlight!

This Fall's Sunday School classes give you an opportunity to dig deeper and grow in your faith understanding, and in your connections to each other. Classes gather in person and over Zoom on Sunday Mornings at **9:30 am** before worship. It all starts on **August 27th**. Don't miss out! There are great opportunities available for all ages:

- ***Becoming a People of God:*** Our Sunday School class for *kids of all ages* meets in the Llamacats Room, down the hall from the office. It's a chance to learn Bible Stories and build friendships through crafts and games!
- ***Biblical Leftovers Bible Study:*** Rick Laabs leads this Bible Study for teens and adults - taking us on a deeper dive into the Bible Stories we read each Sunday morning in worship. It's a chance to really explore and digest the scriptures together. This gathering is open to anyone. You don't need to be a Biblical Scholar in order to notice and explore connections you hadn't seen before!
- ***Sojourners Book Study:*** Be a part of this group of thoughtful people reflecting together on the intersections between faith and society. This Fall we're reading *From Inclusion to Justice*, by Erin Raffety which explores the ways we can be part of a more authentic community for persons with a variety of disabilities. See the full description from facilitator Laura White later in this Newsletter!

Coming Soon: Welcome Statement Quilt

For over a year, the Witness Team has been working with artists to create a visual representation of our Welcome Statement to be placed in the narthex. It is uniquely Stone Church and also a piece of art for ALL. The project is in its final stitches! Stay tuned for more information about when it will be hung, ways to engage and enjoy the piece, and a time to celebrate and bless the art. Looking ahead with excitement, hope, gratitude, and of course, welcome!



Deacons "On Call"

WRITTEN BY PATTI PATERSON

Did you know that when the Pastors are away on business or personal time off, the Deacons are "on call" for them? This is a great way to care for the needs of the church and to relieve the Pastors from ALL their worries for our flock while they are away at conference or just trying to relax or learn. The Deacons divide up the duties amongst ourselves, and we also have a list of "Pastors on Call" that we can utilize. The church office will have these names and give them out as needed. Just another great way to serve our congregation and our pastors.

Upcoming Leadership Structural Changes

WRITTEN BY SHARON YOHN

Modified Leadership Structure Passes Unanimously at Forum

A motion to modify the leadership structure of Stone Church passed unanimously and with much excitement at the June 25th Congregational Forum. These changes will reduce the workload on ministry team and deacon chairs, hopefully making it easier to fill these positions.

So what's changed? One of the biggest changes is the decrease in size of the Leadership Team, which will now be composed of the officers of the church (chair, vice-chair, moderator, treasurer, clerk) and a member at large. The second biggest change is the addition of seasonal retreats. These retreats are an opportunity for growth of skills that help us better serve the church and community, planning and coordination, and fellowship with our church family. Learn more about our first retreat elsewhere in this newsletter!

Want to know more?

To improve communication and transparency, Stone Church has moved to using a Google Drive for information such as team meeting notes, reports, and other information. Click the link to access the drive, or, if you are reading this on paper, look at the bottom of the Friday Flash for the link.

Stone Gardens in Full Bloom

WRITTEN BY EMILY ELDER

The Stone Gardens are maintained by group efforts coordinated by Cindy Clarke. This year, a different approach was employed to divide the labor among the many green-thumbs we have at Stone. Cindy sent emails to those on the volunteer list and we signed up for 2 separate weeks in the summer. During those weeks, the individual (or family) has the freedom to pick an hour or two that best suits their schedule for that week. This new plan seems to be going well and Cindy reports that "it takes the burden of responsibility off me for the week - forces me to lay back and trust that everyone else can do the job!". Many appreciate the freedom this division of labor has brought the gardening crew. As it says in Psalms 128:2 "You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be happy and it shall go well with you." This division of work allows us all to commit time and talents to the glory of God! The gardens are looking great thanks to the hands of many!

If you are looking to get involved, we still have a few weeks open in August-September. There will also be a "Fall Clean Up Date" to come, which will be a set date that hopefully many folks can attend and work alongside each other much like our "Spring Mulching Day" that was well attended! Please contact Cindy Clarke or the church office if you are willing to get involved.

A Note of Thanks

WRITTEN BY CHERYL WASHBURN

Dear Stone Church Family,

I would like to thank the Stone Church family for all the support, comfort, and care that they gave to me, in so many ways, at the time of my husband's passing.

I appreciated the support of the ministers and office staff and all the many helpers for the lunch after the memorial service. Thank you for the many cards and words of comfort you gave to me and also to my family.

You all make me so thankful to be a part of this Stone Church family.

With appreciation ,
Cheryl Washburn

Gene's Jottings

WRITTEN BY GENE GOSHORN

Did you ever wonder what it would have been like to have been a member of that early Brethren congregation? Well, through the autobiography of an early church member we can get a glimpse of the past. Mrs. Wealthy Clark Burkholder was born in 1849 near Broad Top City, Huntingdon County, and, as fate would have it, she moved to Germany Valley at the age of 12. The following is a portion taken from her book, entitled "Some Things I Remember":

"At the age of twelve we moved near Shirleysburg on a farm, some 20 miles away from my birthplace. Here we were in a Brethren community and in the Aughwick Congregation. At that time there was one meeting house...the old stone church in Germany Valley, about the oldest one in the District, and, at one time it was the Banner congregation of the Middle District of Pa. Regular services were held in Germany Valley every two weeks. By this arrangement all were better supplied with services, and in those early days people went to church in rockaways, on horseback, in wagons, and afoot. Walking was very fashionable. We girls thought nothing of walking two or three miles to any kind of service. There were a number of ministers, too, but sometimes several would be at the meeting. They would have good singing, but all the music was by human voice...no instruments.

This was the first time I had ever seen any of the Dunkard people. I had heard of them only to know they were a very plain and rather queer set of folks...in fact, I was prejudiced against them and said they would not suit me. But there we were, with families on each side: one a good old minister and a lovely daughter, and we found we were among excellent neighbors, who seemed to show more than an ordinary interest in the family moving into their midst. Our schoolhouse was near and we were anxious to see these oddly dressed folks, as we then thought, and see how they conducted their meetings. We went and went again and found we were entirely mistaken...they were as kind, good and Christianlike as other churches."

Staying in Community

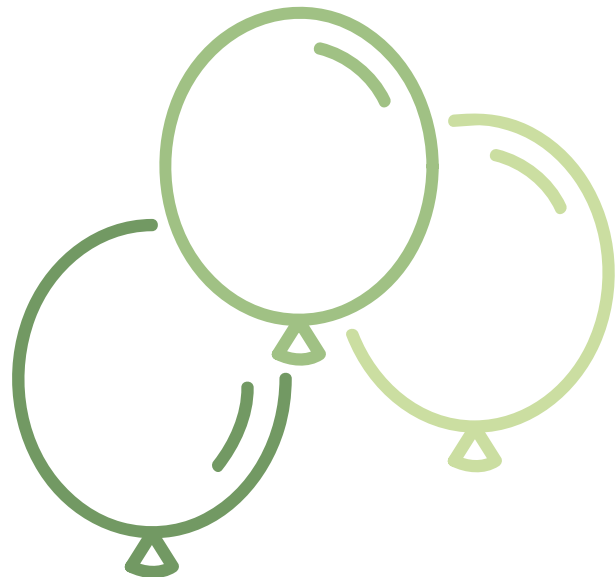
FIND WAYS TO CELEBRATE YOUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS BELOW!

August Birthdays

1st - Eddie Crader
1st - Terry Fultz
1st - Luke Roth
2nd- Sharon Yohn
5th - Clay Pheasant
5th - Finley Uhrich
8th - Nina Meadows
8th - Owen Wetzel
13th - Fiona McBrayer
15th - Roxann Yon
20th- Dick Landrum
22nd - Otto Krugh
23rd - Anne Swigart
24th - Jordan Soliday
25th - Jim Bookhamer
25th - Morgan Knepp
26th - Sheila McMeen
26th - Emily Yohn
28th - David Meadows
29th - Todd Hammer
30th - Everett Lattimer

August Anniversaries

1st - Katelyn & Ryan Oser
4th- Bob & Laurie McMinn
7th - Clay & Judy Pheasant
8th - Tony & Fiona Phillippe-Grugan
11th - Dean Wenger & Jerriann Heiser
15th - Bill & Maylin Musser
16nd - Kim & Luke Roth
23rd - Celia & Dan Cook-Huffman
24th - Mark & Meta Meckstroth
27th - Anita & Doug Soliday
31st - Ben Steines & Stacia-Fe Gillen



Homebound Members

*USE THE ADDRESSES BELOW TO REACH OUT TO THOSE IN OUR
COMMUNITY THAT ARE UNABLE TO JOIN US IN-PERSON*

DeLois Fluke
11325 Raystown Rd.
Huntingdon, PA 16652

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

Westminster Woods
Sue Martin
John Keiper

Louise Smith
11642 Station Road
Huntingdon, PA 16652