

# STONE CHURCH NEWS

February 2021

## From the Pastor's Desk



When I worked at the hospital, they called it “the Superbowl” for chaplains. Every year, folks from throughout the hospital - patients, nurses, doctors, and staff - would flock to the little chapel on *Ash Wednesday*. They would come to receive the mark of the ashes, and to be reminded “that we are dust, and to dust we shall return.” It was a sentiment that was felt keenly in that place, where folks were aware of just how fragile - and precious - life truly is. After a year of life in the midst of a Pandemic, we are *all* aware of the fragility and sacredness of this life.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent in the life of the Church. After the expectant waiting of Advent, the glad tidings of Christmas and the revelations of Epiphany, churches around the world move into this strange season. Lent is that time in the life of the church when we journey together with Jesus and his disciples toward the cross.

“In Lent,” writes Lisle Gwynn Garrety, “we’re reminded that, again and again, suffering and brokenness find us. We doubt again, we lament again, we mess up again, [as individuals and as a society]... And yet, in the midst of the motion blur chaos of our lives, God offers a sacred refrain: ‘I choose you, I love you, I will lead you to repair.’ Again and again, God breaks the cycle and offers us a new way forward.”

And so, our theme for this Lenten season will be ***Again & Again***, reading stories of Jesus and God’s faithfulness, trusting that even in this year of brokenness, God is working in us and through us - again and again showing us a new way forward.

*There will be so many opportunities to connect:*

- **Lenten Kits** - We’ll distribute kits after worship on *February 14th*, as we did for Advent, full of resources to help you engage this season in the life of our church.
- **Ash Wednesday Service** - On *February 17th at 7pm*.
- **Lenten Art Devotional Series** - Donna Rhodes will be hosting a weekly time of reflection throughout the Lenten Season, reflecting together on works of art. *Tuesdays at 7pm*.
- **Fellowship Small Groups** - A new round of groups put together by our Christian Ed team to foster supportive relationships and cultivate connections within our church family.
- **Story Time for Children** - Becky Plane will be starting a new series especially for our children, *Sundays at 4pm beginning on February 21st*.
- **Lenten Prayer Wall** – located on the church grounds, you are invited to add your prayers as often as you choose – weaving them in and among the prayers of your siblings in the faith.
- **Holy Week** - And of course, as we approach the end of March, you can look for opportunities to worship together on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter.

These opportunities are all in addition to our regular worship, Sojourners Sunday School, and mid-week Bible Studies that are continuing to meet. We are so grateful for the opportunity to share this fragile and *precious* life together with each of you. We hope you will come alongside throughout this season, as we journey together with Jesus and his disciples toward the cross - and beyond.

## **FROM YOUR COVID RESPONSE TEAM**

Many of us are breathing a sigh of relief as we put the year 2020 behind us. And we are excited to hope that there may be an end to masks and social distancing in sight as COVID-19 vaccines become more widely available. This may leave you wondering – when will we be back in the sanctuary? Unfortunately, it will still likely be months. Our team is closely monitoring information on the proportion of people vaccinated locally, and the recommendations on behaviors after vaccination.

Health experts are currently studying the protections that the vaccines provide. Extensive tests have shown that the available vaccines are both safe and very effective at preventing people from being sick, but more information is needed before we know if a vaccinated individual can still act as a non-symptomatic carrier and put others at risk.

What does all this mean for our Stone Church community? For now, it is critical to maintain the behaviors that reduce the risk of COVID transmission – wearing masks and keeping distance from others. This is necessary whether or not you have been vaccinated. Despite the hope that a vaccine brings, cases are still high in the region and it is just as important as ever to be careful. It also means we will need to be patient. There is much uncertainty about when vaccines will be available to the general public in this area, but it is likely to be months, not weeks. After looking at the available information, the COVID-19 Response Team is predicting that we will continue to have virtual services at least through Easter.

As your COVID-19 Response team, know that we will continue to monitor the situation and keep you informed. We too are looking forward to gathering together in person again, and are longing for in-person connection. We need, however, to continue to love all those in our community by prioritizing the health and safety of each individual, including the most vulnerable. For now, we encourage you to stay safe and continue to connect through worship services, Bible Study, small groups, and the many other events occurring virtually.

Warmly,

Your Stone Church COVID Response Team

Sharon Yohn, Chair

Daisy Decker

Marty Keeney

Cindy Lattimer

Brooke Meadows

Luke Roth

## **FROM YOUR FINANCE TEAM**

### **2021 Budget Approved by Congregation**

The congregation approved the proposed 2021 budget during the January 17th forum. For 2021, income is projected at \$270,000 while expenses are set at \$288,870. The projected deficit of \$18,870 will be more than covered by the PPP loan which Stone Church received in late 2020 in the amount of \$31,394. We expect this loan to be fully forgiven as a part of the Cares Act program. We are hopeful that as progress is made to resolve the COVID-19 crisis that giving will increase.

Last year ended with revenue falling short of expectations but expenses were also below budget. At year end, income exceeded expenses allowing us to restore \$5,000 of support for Witness outreach.

For more information and details regarding the 2021 budget see the tables included near the end of the newsletter. For even further detail on 2021 or the 2020 year end results please reach out to any finance team member or go to .



### **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 one, contact David Meadows using the info below or view the information online. Take advantage of the early-bird registration fee before March 1, which will be especially important if Camp needs to limit the number of campers per session.

What will Summer Camp look like in light of our current circumstances? Camp staff have shared this update about Summer Camp 2021: *"We are excited about the Summer Camp 2021 season, but we are mindful that it will look different as we navigate the realities of COVID-19. There are still many unanswered questions, but considerations will be given to limiting the number of campers per session, operating in strict Family Groups (keeping the same small group of staff and campers together for all activities), hiring additional staff, and adding health and sanitation protocols. If affordable rapid testing is available we may be able to operate much as we have in the past, but it's too soon to know if testing will be an option."*

### **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***

### ***"Love Your Neighbor"***

Do you have a favorite Bible verse? Personally, I've always liked what 1 Corinthians has to say about *love*. Specifically I like 1 Corinthians 16:14:

"Let all that you do be done in *love*."

Of course, Corinthians is followed by John 3:16:

"For God so *loved* the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

John continues in John 4:8:

"Anyone who does not *love* does not *know* God, because God *is love*."

And Peter tells us in 1 Peter 4:8 to:

"...keep *loving* one another earnestly, above all, since *love* covers a multitude of sins."

Since Christianity teaches that love covers a multitude of sins, I can only hope it covers a multitude of mine. Yes, it's true; I have sinned. But the scriptures above, and the Ten Commandments, remind us that unfettered love is the ultimate goal.

When we read the Ten Commandments, certainly we are to love God supremely, but we are to also love our neighbors. The last six of the Ten Commandments are summarized in the words "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." You are not to cheat your neighbor, nor rob him. In righteousness you shall not judge your neighbor. You shall not hate your neighbor, nor take private vengeance, nor bear sin because of them. Loving our neighbor would include sharing with the poor, compassion, the pursuit of absolute justice in our relationships with others. Our Lord taught that we should do to others as we would have them do to us. (Does anybody hear a Golden Rule here?)

### **A Special Thank You from the Worship Team**

Greetings! As our team prepared its year-end written report for the January 17th Congregational Forum, there were many new people to thank in this pandemic "Zoom" world. As stated verbally at forum, we are so grateful for the musical and technological talents of Loren and Donna Rhodes. Terry Murray's magical musicality is enhanced by husband Andy's tech-savvy support. We would also be remiss to not recognize Joanne Krugh's keyboard gifts. (Keith Sutton's band-width prohibits his virtual participation, but we hope to hear his organ playing again soon.) We are blessed to have such talent in our congregation. A great big THANK YOU to all of our keyboard players, who bring a sense of normalcy to virtual worship!

## February Birthdays

3—Doris Comerford *91	14—Zachary Cloz *3	17—John Wright
7—Anne Rice	14—Meta Meckstroth	18—Phil Paterson
7—Cheryl Ritchey	14—Karen Morgan	19—Donna Evans
7—Greg Stein	15—Monty Furry	27—Gene Goshorn
7—Joanne Thurston-Griswold	15—Laura White	28—William Meloy
8—Bob Oldring	17—Sophie Fisher-Sneath *10	28—Norm Siems

## February Anniversaries

3—Bill & Lori Fagan	19—Ron & Barbara Detwiler *55
4—Bob & Virginia Biber	

## 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

**February 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.

## FROM YOUR FINANCE TEAM: Details on the 2021 Budget

Included below are two tables representing the 2021 approved Stone Church of the Brethren approved budget. Should you be interested in exploring this budget (and 2020 finances) in more detail you can access various excel sheets and finance team presentations here:

INCOME LINE	2021 Budget
Giving, Pledged	\$233,000.00
Giving, Not Pledged	\$26,000.00
Offering plate cash	\$2,000.00
Trust Income	\$6,800.00
Dividends (AT&T)	\$1,200.00
Int from Endowment General Budget (C1)	\$1,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$270,000.00</b>

Budget Summary	2021 Budget
Christian Ed Team	2,850.00
Church Property	39,200.00
Deacons	1,550.00
Fellowship + Older Adult	975.00
Worship Team	5,560.00
Witness Team	40,060.00
Personnel & Administration	198,675.00
Expenditures Total	288,870.00
Income Total	270,000.00
<b>NET (showing expected deficit)</b>	<b>(18,870.00)</b>

## "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  
Denny Rock



Do you want a 2021 Church Directory mailed to you? Directories will be handed out along with the Lenten Kits on February 14<sup>th</sup>. However, if you would like one mailed to you instead please call the church office at 814-643-3390 and notify Bekah.

# FEBRUARY 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
February is Black History Month!	1	2 Worship Team Meeting- 12pm Witness Team Meeting- 7pm	3 Bible Study-7pm	4	5	6
Virtual Worship- 10:45am	8	9 Bible Study- 7pm	10 Leadership Team Meeting- 7pm	11	12	13
Virtual Worship- 10:45am Lenten Kit Hand-Out - after morning worship	15	16 Lenten Art Devotional Series - 7pm	17 Ash Wednesday Service - 7pm	18	19	20 Men's Breakfast - 8am
Virtual Worship- 10:45am *Food Pantry Sunday* Story Time for Children - 4pm	22	23 Lenten Art Devotional Series - 7pm Finance Team Meeting- 7pm	24 Bible Study- 7pm	25	26	27
Virtual Worship- 10:45am Story Time for Children - 4pm	28					

**Stone Church of the Brethren**  
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# STONE CHURCH NEWS

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**Pick up Lenten Kits Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>** - Kits will be available for pick-up outside the church after the virtual Sunday morning service

**Attend Lenten Devotional** – Attend devotional time with art on Tuesdays

**Sunday Story Time for Kids** – Bring your child to story time on Sundays at 4 pm

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