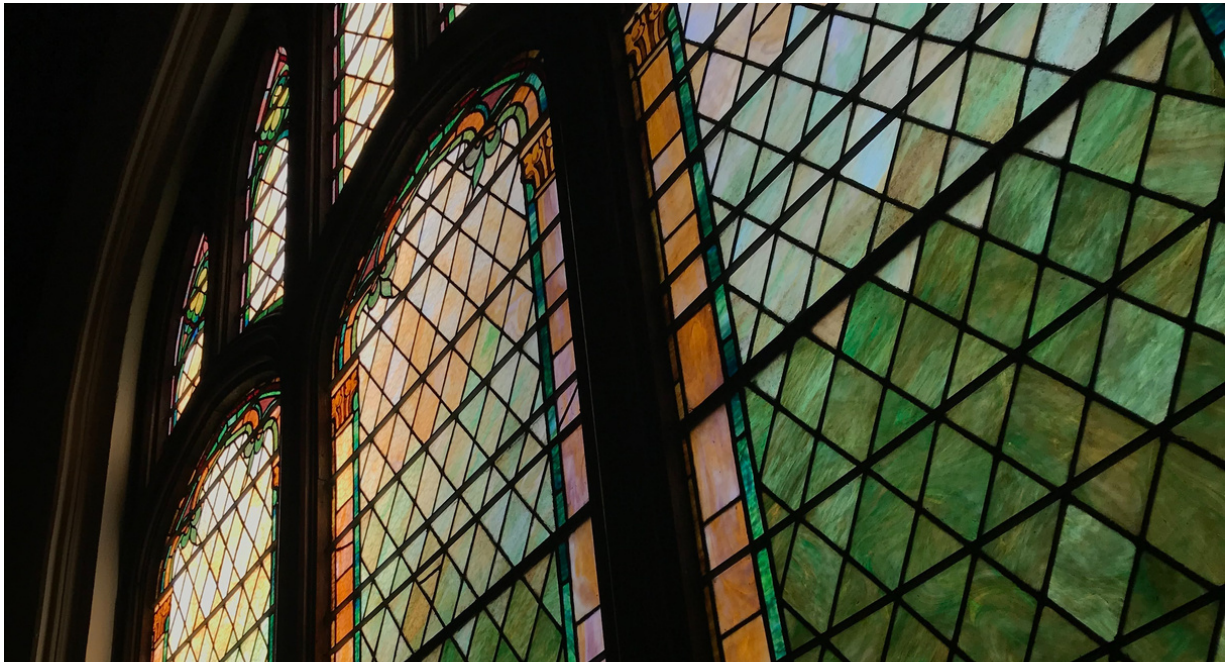


OCTOBER 2023

# *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

I am so grateful for this community.

Astra Taylor wrote an essay in the New York Times (from her forthcoming book *The Age of Insecurity*) that included a section on the roots of the word, "insecurity":

*"As the British political theorist Mark Neocleous has noted, the modern word "insecurity" entered the English lexicon in the 17th century, just as our market-driven society was coming into being. Capitalism thrives on bad feelings. Discontented people buy more stuff — an insight the old American trade magazine, "Printers' Ink" stated bluntly in 1930: "Satisfied customers are not as profitable as discontented ones." It's hard to imagine any advertising or marketing department telling us that we're actually OK, and that it is the world, not us, that needs changing. All the while, manufactured insecurity encourages us to amass money and objects as surrogates for the kinds of security that cannot actually be commodified — connection, meaning, purpose, contentment, safety, self-esteem, dignity and respect — but which can only truly be found in **community** with others."*

This church family is a gift - a true community of people doing life together, supporting one another, and others beyond our walls. It is a blessing and an antidote to some of the insecurity around us.

This month in the life of our church family, we're drawing on the wisdom of the group - hearing from some of the "Experts Among Us" as part of a new series. It's a chance to pick the brains of those who have studied and thought deeply on particular topics of interest at the intersection of life and faith. On Sunday, October 1st, Henry Thurston-Griswold will lead a conversation after church on the question of "Who is my neighbor?" in a global society, reflecting particularly on issues of colonialism, immigration, and what it means to be a global citizen.

Later in this newsletter, you can read about ways that we as a community of faith are able to do more together in caring for our neighbors than any one of us could do alone. And you'll read about opportunities to go deeper - in fellowship, study, service, and worship together.

This community is something I don't take for granted. We are all stewards of it - having received it from the generations gone before, and cultivating it for generations yet to come. On October 15th, we begin our new Stewardship Series - reflecting together on the ways we can continue to be faithful stewards - of our time, of our privilege, our work, our social capital, and our finances - in continuing to grow this beautiful and lifegiving community we share.



## Upcoming Events

### Experts Among Us

*Join in-person THIS Sunday, October 1st, after worship  
This event will take place in the Fellowship Hall.*

One of the gifts of this church community is being surrounded by incredible people who bring wisdom and insight into our midst. Next week we'll begin a new non-consecutive series entitled 21st Century Faith. With each session, we'll explore the ways our 21st century experience impacts our understanding of what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus. On October 1st, we'll be exploring the question of "Who is my neighbor?" in the context of a global society.

Then AFTER worship, we'll hear from some of the "Experts Among Us". Henry Thurston-Griswold will lead a conversation downstairs in the Fellowship Hall around issues of immigration and life in a global society. Sandwiches and snacks will be provided!

### Sci-Fi Book Club

*Held in-person on Sunday, October 8th, after worship*

Special Guest Steve Schweitzer, the Dean of Bethany Seminary will be joining us in worship, asking the question *What Would Wakanda Do?* The contemporary reference offers a gateway into new insights around the Prophet Isaiah and the book of James.

As part of Steve's visit, those who are interested can join in our one-time "Sci-Fi Book Club". We'll share a short story in next week's Friday Flash. If you're interested, you can read it, and then join us after the service at OIP for lunch and discussion. (We don't want cost to be a barrier to anyone participating! We will pass a basket at the meal for folks to give what they are able, and then the church will cover whatever's left!) Stay tuned for the story selection next week and plan to join us!

## Taize Worship Returns!

OCTOBER 1, 2023 AT 6 PM

We are pleased to announce the return of Taize worship on Sunday the first of October at 6 pm. Many of you have been asking when this might happen. We have not shared this form of worship since before the pandemic, and many of us miss it. It will be great to get back to this for those who are familiar. In this first service, there will also be some focus on loss and grief as so many in our community are suffering illness and loss of family and friends.

And...

We are hopeful that those of you less familiar with this worship style will lean in and find meaning as well. It is in line with Pastor Cindy's recent message of being intentional about taking time to center and share space with the Spirit. This worship tradition and much of the music was developed in Taize, France at a monastery. The worship includes scripture, music, silence, and prayer. Musical components are simple to catch on to and are repeated such that the meditative feel is nurtured. Please consider joining us for a calming, spirit-filled time of worship that fosters a centered soul for entering the coming week.

## Events - Continued

### Mount Union Area Ladies' Prayer Breakfast

*Held in-person on Saturday, October 7 at 8 am.*

*This event will be held at Bethel A.M.E. Church in Mount Union.*

You are invited together with others from our church to be a part of this monthly gathering of women from churches from around our area. The speaker will be Mary Jo Dannells.Santiago. Contact Pam Grugan if you have any questions.

### Older Adult Luncheon

*Held in-person on Tuesday, October 10 at 12 pm.*

*This event will be held at Donna's Restaurant.*

The September Older Adult Luncheon was held in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, September 13th at 11 am. Our brunch was generously prepared by Rick Laabs and was enjoyed by 19 people. We will be at Donna's Restaurant on **Tuesday, October 10th at 12 pm.** Do not let cost prevent you from attending. We will pass a basket for everyone to give as they can and then the church covers the rest. When we meet at Donna's it is the second *Tuesday* of the month at noon, but when we meet at church it is the second *Wednesday* of the month at 11. Hope to see you.

### New Community Project

David Radcliff has been a part of the Church of the Brethren for many years. His New Community Project offers some incredible opportunities to be a part of making a difference in the world. See below for some of the ways you can get connected:

- **2024 New Community Project Learning Tours – Go. Meet. Learn. Grow. Change yourself – and your world:** These trips will take participants of all ages to: Nepal in January (human trafficking, Himalaya, a wildlife park, NCP support of girls and women); the Ecuadorian Amazon in early June (amazing wildlife, inspiring native leaders, threats from palm oil and oil drilling); Lybrook, NM in late June (native Dineh craftspeople and traditional healers, work projects, Chaco Culture historical ruins, impacts of fracking); Denali/Kenai Fjords National Parks in late July/early August (big mountains, big critters, climate impacts, seacoast experience); Arctic Village right after Denali (learn about Gwich'in life and culture in the shadow of the Brooks Range).
- **Fall Campaign: Return & Rebuild – South Sudan:** Hundreds of thousands of people fled South Sudan over the past decade due to conflict and insecurity. They are now returning home and ready to rebuild their lives and communities. However, they are pretty much starting over from scratch and are really in need of assistance. Thus, NCP's fall Return and Rebuild campaign. It focuses on women – who are the most impoverished, with many being single mothers – and girls, who have been through a lot. "Our parents hid us under the bed when the militias were nearby."

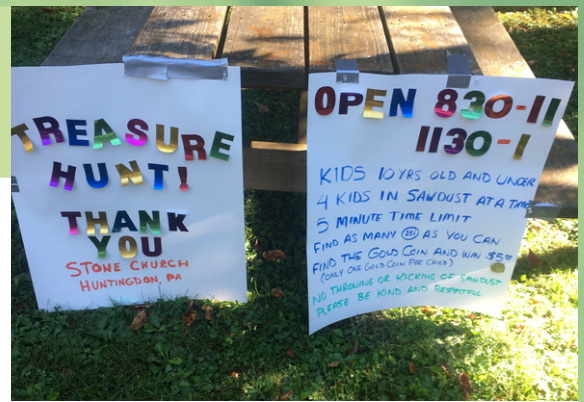
The opportunities for support are many and varied and range from \$70 for a pair of goats to \$200 to send an orphan girl to school for a year to \$3000 for latrines for a women's center to \$15,000 for a second school bus for the school we built back in 2014. Not to mention sewing machines, a clinic, microloans and trees.



# Heritage Fair 2023

WRITTEN BY JEANNIE LASHLEE

Stone Church was represented at Camp Blue Diamond and Middle PA District's annual Heritage Fair held Saturday, September, 16. Paul Hoover and Jeannie Lashlee operated the sawdust pile again this year which was a hit with children and parents.



The sawdust pile event involves coins and tokens hidden in a pile of sawdust that children can root through and keep what they find! This year, tokens were added. Lucky recipients of the tokens won a prize of \$5!



Like last year, many children were heard saying that they planned on spending the money they found on other activities in the Children's Area at Heritage Fair. And, money raised at Heritage Fair goes towards the support of Camp Blue Diamond as well as ministries of the Middle PA District. The event was funded by Witness Team.

## Gene's Jottings

WRITTEN BY GENE GOSHORN

If you thought October was just Trick or Treat, you missed out on honey bee threats to our food supply, a fire in the Dakotas; and, in Christianity, All Saints' Day, the origin of which cannot be traced with certainty but is known as a tribute to all martyrs, saints and the Blessed Mary from Oct. 31 to Nov. 2 (All Souls' Day).

A feast of all martyrs was originally kept on May 13. These observances were moved to Nov. 1 by Pope Gregory IV in 837 and known as All Hallows -- its eve still known as Halloween.

The fire in the Dakotas at the end of last year wiped out a structure used by Native American Veterans Association to store clothing, kindling, food and other supplies for needy veterans. The "Footprints" announcement of the disaster carried the words "We will be known forever by THE TRACKS we leave."

In the year 2022-2023, American honey beekeepers lost 48.2 percent of their managed hives -- bees needed to propagate up to a third of our food supply. Honey bees alone pollinate more than 100 crops, including vegetables, nuts, berries, citrus and melons. Weather, climate change, spraying of new pesticides and lack of biodiversity are listed as causes of bee troubles. Worker bees simply abandon their hives, leaving their queens and larvae to die on their own and alone. The emergence of "colony collapse disorder" as the phenomenon came to be known, prompted the university of Auburn in Alabama and the University of Maryland to team up to survey American beekeepers on rates of colony collapse.

So when you think of October, Remember the honey bees.

# 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** before worship. 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. Join in person or over Zoom!
- ***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. Join in person or over Zoom!
- ***Membership Class:*** This is a 6 week class where we talk about the beliefs, practices, structure, history of the church, and more. We will also learn more about one another. Many people choose to officially join the church or to be baptized after this class - *but that is not a requirement*. ***We had nearly a dozen people in our first session on September 24th!*** If you missed that session, but are still interested in joining - it's not too late! Reach out to Pastor Ben for more information.

## A Note From the Finance Team

Over the next month the finance team will be asking you to pledge your giving for 2024. Having a clear picture of the incoming funds through individual giving allows the team to create and present the best budget for the coming year. The budget is one way we support the Church's ministry, and live into the vision we all have for our church community.

There are multiple ways to pledge, one of which is to go to the Church's website and click on "Giving" and follow the link to the 2024 pledge. Another way is to just call the office and let Rowan know.

We would also like to update you on how we are doing with the budget for the 2023 year. As of September 17th, when this was written, the income brought in this year has been \$190,897, where our expenses have been \$223,075. *So, we are currently behind by \$32,178.* This is not a yet concerning to the Finance Team due to seasonal variations in giving, but the team is watching and will report in future months if they do become concerned.



# Beyond the Offering Plate:

## Toward a Holistic Approach to Stewardship

STEWARDSHIP SERIES: OCTOBER 15 - NOVEMBER 12

"To be a steward means that I care for my full becoming as a human person, that I develop God's image in me, the imago Dei."  
- Kathleen Cahalan

Drawing from a book by the same name that was edited by Adam J. Copeland, our Stewardship Series this Fall, *Beyond the Offering Plate* seeks to expand our vision of stewardship. It is not that stewardship does not involve the ways we think about and share our finances - it certainly does! But we miss out if we end there. In his introduction, Copeland writes of a friend who lamented:

*Every once in a while, I discover that a word has kind of been hijacked. This happened to the words "orthodox" and "evangelical." When people hear either word, they have a narrow, specific meaning that pops to mind, and that meaning usually doesn't work for me. "Stewardship" has had the same fate. This grand word with sweeping implications for lives of living in communion with all creation, caring for the gifts God has given us...we have decided it really mostly applies to our money. What a total bummer.*

Over the course of 5 weeks, we will invite one another to look more broadly at stewardship; to think on our stewardship of money and finances, as well as our relationships, our privilege, our time, our community, and our work. During the series, we will be inviting you to pledge to the church so that we can plan ahead and dream big about the mission of Stone Church. But we also want you to make commitments to yourself, to God, to each other that shape the multitude of resources we have. Copeland writes, "Stewardship is a lived concept, most often resulting in sharing that surprises, compassion that complicates, and love that inspires." We dare to hope that can come true among us!



## We Need Your Life Hacks!

During our stewardship series, *Beyond the Offering Plate: A Holistic Approach to Stewardship*, we will have boards in the back of the sanctuary so that you can share the ways you have

found success at stewarding your time, your work, your relationships, your money. Please take a moment to write down responses to the following prompts so that others can benefit from your wisdom. AND take a moment each week to read the wisdom of those around you. Here are the weekly themes:

**October 15** - Stewardship of Time: Clocks, Calendars, and Cathedrals

How do you make sure the things that matter most in your life get enough time?

**October 22** - Stewardship of Privilege: Toward the Stewardship of Incarnation

What resources have been meaningful to you as you think about systems of privilege?

**October 29** - Stewardship of Work: Called to Service

What tools have you used in discerning vocation in your life?

**November 5** - Stewardship of Community: Investing Social Capital as an act of faith

What practices do you have that keep you connected to others? And/or, What do others do to stay connected to you?

**November 12** - Stewardship of Money and Finances: Practicing Generosity as a way of life

How do you make sure giving (of time and money) is a regular part of your life? And what are your gratitude practices?



# Food Pantry Ribbon Cutting

Every third Sunday of the Month, we roll out the Red Wagon. The children collect your donations on the way up for the children's time and fill the wagon with food - your donations to help care for hungry people in our community. On September 11th, the local Food Pantry had a ribbon cutting ceremony as they opened their new distribution center - downtown near Portstown Park.



The new facility allows for easier unloading of trucks and greater accessibility for patrons - with no stairs required. Members of the community who meet the income requirements can show up once a month and receive 4 days worth of food for their families. (The stack of food on the left is a distribution for a family of 4.)



In addition to the food pictured from the Pennsylvania Food Bank and the donations of organizations like our church, the Food Pantry also partners with local businesses like GIANT, Weis, Wal-Mart, and Panera Bread from State College, giving away the unsold bakery items that otherwise would have to be thrown away.



4 days worth of food doesn't get you through the month - but it certainly makes a difference. Every bit helps. And your generosity is part of what makes this possible. The need is great! Volunteers reported a steady rise in families served as Pandemic era supports have continued to expire. Thanks for doing your part to care for our neighbors!



# News From CAMP

WRITTEN BY DAVID MEADOWS

## **THANK YOU – Heritage Fair**

Thanks to everyone who made Heritage Fair 2023 a big success! Around 38 churches participated with booths, activities, items for the auction, or gave a donation toward the Fair. More than \$24,000 was raised for Camp and the Middle PA District, with more still to come in.

This event could not happen without the hundreds of volunteers who parked cars, helped with the auction, served and cooked food, ran children's activities, worked the bank, took a turn in the dunk tank, entertained or did one of a myriad of other jobs! The first ever Polar Bear Plunge and Communion Bread Contest were a huge success! Congrats to Clover Creek CoB for winning the Best Communion Bread. We look forward to seeing everyone next year for another wonderful day! Special thanks to Jeannie Lashlee and Paul Hoover, who represented Stone Church by coordinating the sawdust pile in the children's area. Kids of all ages enjoyed searching for coins while parents enjoyed memories of this fun tradition from their past!

## **Feeding America – Summer Camp Project**

Every summer, the Camp Board's Program Committee chooses a summer project for campers, parents, staff, and board members to support through financial donations. It's a reminder to all of us that our community reaches beyond our friends at Camp and home.

This year, our camp project was to raise money for Feeding America. Feeding America is a nationwide network of food banks, pantries, and community organizations seeking to end hunger in America. Did you know that 119 billion pounds of food are wasted each year in America? This food waste occurs at all stages of production, from manufacturing and transportation, to the food we simply don't eat in our own homes. Feeding America works to obtain food that would otherwise be thrown away due to poor sales, slight manufacturing defects, etc. and distributes it to their food banks and pantries across the country. Since donating a single dollar helps to provide 10 meals to folks who would otherwise go without. Camp Blue Diamond supporters were able to help provide 9,000 meals. Thank you to everyone who donated!

## **Summer Camp By The Numbers**

- 325 Total Campers
- 225 Middle PA District Campers (from 28 churches)
- 3 American Baptist Campers
- 11 Other COB Campers
- 27 Campers of other Denominations
- 59 Campers with no Church Affiliation
- 34 Scholarships Given Totaling \$5,528.05

## **Upcoming Events**

- Fall Outdoor School - Sep 25 – Nov 3
- Youth Retreat - Jan 26 - 28
- Jr. High Retreat - Feb 23 - 25
- Junior High - Mar 1 - 3

Have questions?  
Contact your Camp  
Representative, David  
Meadows.

# Staying in Community

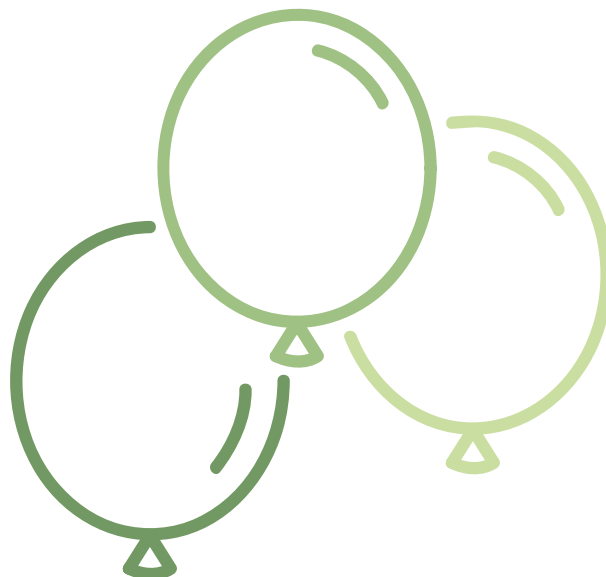
*FIND WAYS TO CELEBRATE YOUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS BELOW!*

## October Birthdays

5th - Melissa Trout  
6th - Marty Keeney  
8th - Reagan Oser  
9th - Myrna Landrum  
9th - Max Paterson  
9th - Yvonne Stein  
12th - Quinera Bumgardner  
12th - Joanne Laabs  
12th - Donna Rhodes  
12th - Jim Tuten  
16th - Bob Weld  
17th - Tom Tuten  
17th - Jamie White  
18th - Janis Jones  
19th - Gavin Musser  
20th - Heather Hicks  
20th - Maylin Musser  
23rd - Henry Elder  
23rd - Chip Gibboney  
23rd - Barb Moyer  
24th - Rebecca Weld  
25th - Aaron Rhodes  
26th - Kathryn Beck  
27th - Dante Fisher  
27th - Sue Martin  
29th - Thelma Wallace  
30th - Laurie McMinn  
30th - Judy Pheasant  
31st - Darlene Bumgardner  
31st - Maggie Lashlee

## October Anniversaries

6th - Joanne & Rick Laabs  
13th - Jon & Roxann Yon  
17th - Ryan Wetzel & Sarah Worley  
21st - Brenda & Monte Furry  
26th - John Wright & Lori Schouppe-Wright



## 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

Louise Smith  
11642 Station Road  
Huntingdon, PA 16652

Westminster Woods  
Sue Martin