



# The Vineyard

*A publication to encourage and motivate participation in the family of God and an aid in ministry for the members of Myerstown United Church of Christ.*

November 2019

Volume 38, Issue 10

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## Can These Bones Live?

God took Ezekiel to a valley filled with dry bones. They were in piles and broken and totally dead! As Zeke took in the utter and



complete devastation, I imagine his jaw dropped to his knees. And then God asks, “Can these bone live?” My response would have been “are you kidding, God?” Zeke says, “You’re the boss; only you know.”

I imagine Zeke may have been skeptical. If he were, he didn’t show it. He did exactly as God directed him, step-by-step. And lo and behold, “them bones, them bones, them dry bones” got all connected. Body tissues formed. Yet they were still a pile of lifeless bones.

Then God told Zeke to summon the winds from the four corners of the Earth. Those lifeless bodies began to breathe and stand and talk and live AGAIN! Truly a magnificent vision to have happen in front of his eyes.

What if God had taken Ezekiel to Myerstown United Church of Christ? What if God had asked him, “Can these bones live?” Zeke may have had

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to review what had been happening for the past few years before answering.

In 2011 [the most recent UCC Yearbook in the office], the following statistics are recorded:

- Membership-513
- Church School –120
- Attendance-188
- New members-10
- Deaths-8
- Members removed-160

I can't tell you what the current recorded membership size is for worship or church school.

What I know is that the average October attendance at the early service was 20 and the late, 50. That would be 70 total. Seventy is 37.2% of 188. Said differently, attendance now is two-thirds less than 8 years ago.

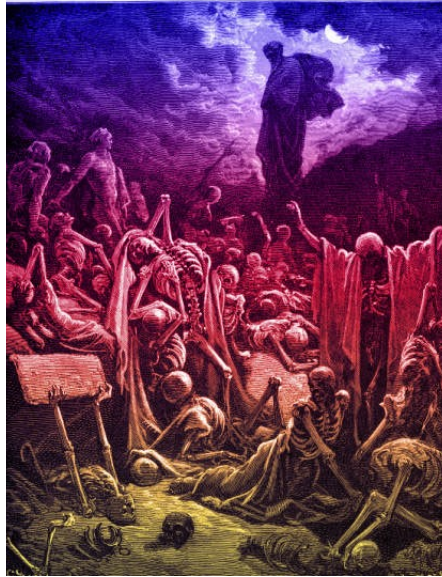
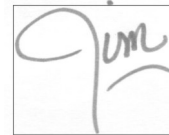
The question we need to ask ourselves is "Can these bones live?" Truly, God knows the answer, and I believe God will blow life into us. Keep in

mind: Zeke had to do the work; God did not do it for him.

My hope is that no one interprets this in terms of the congregation being lazy or doing nothing. Many, if not most, in this congregation are extremely diligent in the work they do continually for Myerstown UCC. We need to plan

how share our good news as we spread the Good News. It's a togetherness thing, I think.

Blessings,



ones who have died. What kind of bridge to the community can we establish for Advent?

The All Saints Worship experience, Tables of Abundance: Gifts from the Past, was a bridge into the community. We had the opportunity to invite friends, neighbors, and strangers to provide names of loved



# Annual Meeting

November 10, 2019

There will be one worship service on the 10th that begins at 9:00 am.

The annual congregational meeting will follow immediately after the service.



- Council**
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Member
- Personnel**
- Member
- Elder**



**Job 1**  
Do you like to be quiet at meetings and listen to what others are saying about each topic?

**Job 2**  
Do you have a sense of compassion for others - particularly those who could use support?

**Job 3**  
Are you able to listen to both sides of a story and help everyone come to an acceptable decision?

**Job 4**  
Are you willing to step in when the person in charge is not available?

**Job 5**  
Are you able to assist people in being productive including speaking the truth with love?

November 10	Jim Yoder
November 17	Peter Schmiechen
November 24	Peter Hook
Jim Yoder will be preaching all of Advent	



## Can you believe it?

Christians have been singing *Joy to the World* for 300 years. Our entire Advent season will revolve around the words from this classic hymn the Advent Wreath Lighting, a devotion-al, book study.



There is a 10-day booklet published by *Our Daily Bread* and one from Luther Seminary that was initially published in 2017; Advent started on Dec 3 that year! Both will be distributed.



### *Book Study*

The group will meet during the small group time on a Sunday morning. Jim Diehm will co-facilitate. There is a possibility of another group meeting on a Wednesday evening around 6 pm. The name of the book is a secret. It costs \$4.25 and can be ordered through the church office. There is also a Kindle version.

### *Sunday Morning Themes*

- Prepare Him Room: Hopeful Joy
- Repeat the Sounding Joy: Loving Joy
- Make the Blessings Known: Unabashed Joy
- Make the Nations Prove: Peaceful Joy
- The Lord is Come: Incarnate Joy

# Two Hats



Sherlock Holmes is known for his iconic deerstalker hat. Usually worn in rural areas for hunting, the hat is now associated with detectives. Holmes has been referred to as the “deerstalker man.

One of the things I have discovered quickly is that sometimes I need to be a detective when it comes to information. It is truly helpful when information comes to me without the search.

I have also discovered that wearing two hats can be confusing. It’s hard for me to know which person someone is talking.

Generally, on a Sunday morning, I think it’s the Pastor with whom the other is attempting to engage. Then all of a sudden, someone says can you put this in the bulletin for next week.

Clearly, that person is talking to the Church Secretary. Most of the email messages are sent to the secretary hat. Then all of a sudden someone provides an update about a member with the request, “Can you go visit him?”

Well, the Church Secretary doesn’t do any visiting. AND, if that request

comes to the office on a Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, or Sunday, no one looks at it before Monday, Wednesday, or Friday. Those are the secretary days.

The Pastor checks his email every day and sometimes more than once a day. When information comes to him that should go to the Secretary, he returns it to the sender asking the sender to resend the message to the Secretary.

Bi-vocational ministry can be hard. Just because I wear two hats, doesn’t mean they are both on all the time. Think in terms of two different people each wearing his own hat.

That’s how it will be when a new pastor is called.



## Prayer List

Nancy Brown

Rosene Duffy

Larry Eisenhauer

Ellen Goodyear

Ruthann Snoko

Joyce Mitstifer

Jewel Fessler

Linda Feaser

Suzanne Fritsch

Bill Gracely

Ralph Woynarowski

Rosalla Hollenbach

Joanne Frantz

David Mock

James Haines

Heather & Elvin Perez

Steve Norford

# Around Town

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST SAYS

## Thank You!

To the members of

MYERSTOWN UCC

For your 2018 contribution of

\$15,249

For Basic Support of

**Our Church's Wider Mission**

### Changing Lives

  
John C. Derhauer  
General Minister and President  
United Church of Christ

  
Rev. Ann N. Graves  
Acting Conference Minister  
Penn Central Conference



## UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST HOMES

30 N. 31<sup>st</sup> Street, Camp Hill, PA 17011  
(717) 303-1502 • (717) 303-1607 FAX  
www.ucc-homes.org

October 25, 2019

Myerstown UCC  
310 West Main Avenue  
Myerstown, PA 17067

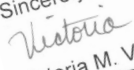
Dear Members of Myerstown UCC:

Penn Central Conference has recently notified us of your 10/07/2019 gift of \$1,250.00 from the people of Myerstown UCC which was placed in the Benevolent Fund. Without congregations like yours, so many people would not be able to receive the assistance they need.

UCC Homes' greatest area of need continues to be the securing of sufficient funding to meet the growing financial need of residents who are unable to pay the cost of their care and who do not have access to governmental assistance programs. We are able to meet this need because of your commitment to our ministry to the elderly.

Please convey our thanks to the members of your congregation and consider Helping people, reaching out a helping hand to someone who needs our care is what UCC Homes is all about. Because of your continued support in this effort, it is what you are about also.

Sincerely,

  
Victoria M. Velez  
Director of Public Relations  
and Fund Development

## THANK YOU!

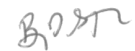


UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST  
a just world for all

Dear Myerstown United Church of Christ,

Thank you for the beacon of light you are shining on Lebanon County with your recent gift of \$392.50. Your gifts of time, talent and treasure should point people to this Light – **Jesus!** Here at LCCM we are using your gifts to distribute tangible goods to our neighbors in need, and, at the same time, sharing the heart of God with them.

Thank you for trusting us to use your gifts to honor and glorify our Lord Jesus Christ and to assist those who are unable to help themselves at this time. God bless.



Bryan D. Smith  
Executive Director

LCCM continues to thrive under the leadership of Bryan Smith, the new Executive Director. He has been meeting with and developing relationships with other organizations in the county as well as churches who are

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# Around Town

**Community Thanksgiving Service**  
November 24th 7pm

Poplar Run Theater on Main Street

## ***Myerstown Holiday Parade***

November 30th

Tree Lighting Service to follow with  
Pastor Jim providing the message.

## ***“Nine Lessons and Carols”***

Friedens Lutheran Church

Sunday, December 15th @ 4 pm

if you would like to participate,  
rehearsals are December 12, 7 pm  
& December 15, 1:30 pm

For more information, contact Pastor  
Robert Wallace 717-866-4910

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# LCCM

partners with LCCM. We will plan to have him join us and share LCCM updates at some time in the coming year. The present event is the information and fundraising one to be held Nov.21. This is a dinner event where information about LCCM is shared, entertainment is provided and a silent auction is held for baskets that are donated by churches and individuals. MUCC has been very generous in donating funds for a basket which will contain gift cards from various businesses in the area. If you are interested in attending this event and learning more about LCCM see Carolyn Williams. Your continued support of this mission is appreciated

## ***Veteran's Concert***

The Keystone H & L Company is hosting the 2nd Veteran's Concert for the Eastern Lebanon County Area on Saturday November 9, 2019 at 7:00 PM in the



sanctuary of the Myerstown United Methodist Church. The Lebanon Community Concert Band will present 9 the concert with world renowned pianist, Elena Sergejevna Lebedeva Millar as a guest soloist. Tickets will be available at the door for \$10.00 each.



On Sunday, December 15 at 3:00 pm the Lebanon County Choral Society will present their winter concert, "Caroling, Caroling!" featuring the Alfred Burt Carols, here at Myerstown UCC. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.LCCSmusic.org](http://www.LCCSmusic.org) or by talking to Darryl Brown or Charles and Carolyn Williams, member of LCCS..

LCCS seeks to nurture appreciation of challenging choral music by preparing public performances that combine accessibility with high artistic standards. There is a Youth Chorus for students in grades 3 through 8, as well as, an Adult Chorus, for singers in grade 9 through adult. Neither chorus requires an audition. Singers who are interested in joining either chorus for our spring season are invited to contact the director at [adultchorusLCCS@gmail.com](mailto:adultchorusLCCS@gmail.com)



## *Troop 20 Annual Food Drive*

November 9th through November 16th



## **Angel Tree Ministry**

One of the ways our congregation reaches out with the love of Christ to those in need is through our "Angel Tree" ministry. Each November and continuing into the beginning of December, the Christian Education Committee sets up a tree in our Gathering area. On the tree are placed "angels" with a needed item written on the angels. The needs change from year to year and are those suggested by the Lebanon County Community Ministries. Our tree will this year, be set up on November 10 and will continue to stay up until December 8. Those who would like to



participate in the Angel Tree will pick an angel off the tree, buy the specific item, and place it under the tree in the Gathering area. Things that are purchased do not need to be wrapped as this will make it easier for LCCM to allocate the gifts more easily. If you have questions, please speak to Mark Herr, Holly Rosen, Angie Bicher, or Marcia Bicher.



# *From Julius Muthengi*

Dear Prayer Partners,

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Agnes and I count it a great privilege to have you as our friends and partners in the ministry. I trust all is well with you as it is with us. As many of you know, our friend Jack Reed and his wife( when she was alive,) have played a major role in our lives and ministry over the years. Each time I visited the US the Reeds were my hosts. Also, when friends send gifts to help us Jack has made sure that these gifts are sent to us in order to help supplement what comes through Campus crusade for Christ. As I have mentioned in the past, our support level is still a little over 70%. Out of this amount, Campus Crusade takes 12%, and when the money reaches here, 30% goes towards the government tax, leaving with very little to live on!

Let me now share with you a critical prayer need. As I plan to visit friends in the US next year Lord willing I need a host person/family and church, especially during my stay in Pennsylvania. Our friend Jack has been facing health and other challenges. Besides, his age is quite advanced and he cannot continue doing what he has been doing for us any longer. He is, however, willing to help sending gifts to us which come through him (and also his church for those who need tax deduction receipts). I know all what I wanted to communicate with you may not be clear through this e-mail!. My request is that you pray for this need, and if the Lord leads you to help me or us in this matter, I suggest that you write to me for any further clarification. You can also call our friend Jack at 717-365-3272 (home) or 717-439-8742 (cell). Thank you so much beloved for your willingness to stand with us in this ministry. I will be writing to you regarding my visit to the US Lord willing in the next one month or so. God bless you.

Your friend in Christ,

*Julius*

**Julius Muthengi, Ph.D.**

Professor of Biblical & Theological Studies/Intercultural Studies  
International Leadership University, Kenya



# Worship Assistants

## *November 3*

**8 am** Open: Cal Beamesderfer Greeter: Shirley Krall Worship Leader: William Arnold  
Communion Servers: William and Betty Arnold **10 am**  
Greeter: Ed & Candy Hibshman Worship Leaders: Steve & Marianne Fritsch  
Sound: Paulie McQuate Communion Servers: Youth, Charles & Carolyn Williams  
Ushers: Youth, Kenny Patrick Counting Team - Carol & Ted Batdorf, Darryl Brown

## *November 10*

**9 am** Open: Mark Herr Greeter: Jim and Beth Diehm Worship Leader: Doug Bohannon  
Sound - Paulie McQuate Ushers: Ryan & Cory Leppo, Bob Dash, Kenny Patrick  
Counting Team: Kathy Grose, Charles & Carolyn Williams

## *November 17*

**8 am** Open: Marcia Bicher Greeter: Nancy Weaber Worship Leader: Wanda Rabold  
**10 am**  
Greeter: Pat & Trudy Yeager Worship Leader: Margo McQuate Sound: Bob Dash  
Usher: Doug, Stephanie, Braden Bohannon, Kenny Patrick  
Counting Team: Lois Werner, Sara Zeller, Sally Kulp

## *November 24*

**8 am** Open: William and Betty Arnold Greeter: Shirley Krall Worship Leader: Sally Kulp  
**10 am**  
Greeter: Sara Zeller Worship Leader: Kristi Fields Sound: Bob Dash  
Usher & Counting Team: Ed & Candy Hibshman, Terry & Suzie Schott

## *December 1*

**8 am** Open: Cal Beamesderfer Greeter: Sue Harvey Worship Leader: William Arnold  
Communion Servers: Jackie Shaak, Wanda Rabold **10 am**  
Greeter - Dawn Hassler Worship Leader: Charles & Carolyn Williams  
Sound: Paulie McQuate Usher - Travis, Angie, Gabb, Gavin Bicher, Kenny Patrick  
Communion Servers - Ed & Candy Hibshman, Steve & Marianne Fritsch  
Counting Team: Ted & Carol Batdorf, Darryl Brown, Marie Hibshman