

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.*

hello AUGUST

August 2019

Volume 38, Issue 7

Pastor's Thoughts . . .

I want to begin this, my final Pastor's column, by expressing my thanks to the members of Myerstown UCC. Serving as Interim Pastor has been a blessing and an opportunity for which I am grateful to have had. I will be leaving this position with many fond memories and experiences. I also want to share two expanded thoughts regarding congregational life and practice.

The first thought has regards how we communicate. The second has focuses upon proper boundaries within a congregation. In many ways, both serve to reinforce each other and serve as the basis of congregational health and vitality. When practiced genuinely, the occurrence of conflict is greatly lessened.

In the past year efforts have been undertaken to create a more transparent and open administration of the church. Though there are some issues which must be held close to the vest until decisions are made, much progress has been made in more fully involving and informing the congregation on matters affecting congregational life. It is encouraged to continue developing open and gracious lines for sharing information, concerns and for solving problems.

Effective communication within a congregation is addressed as being gracious and bringing blessing and reconciliation to all circumstances. In both the book of Proverbs and in Matthew, such traits are underscored. Nowhere is harsh, acrimonious or derogatory speech ever justified. In fact, St Paul states it this way, "When angry do not give in to the temptation to sin." (Ephesians 4: 26) And, the book of James underscores that in any and all speech, "Be slow to speak and quick to listen." Yes, listening for understanding is critical to communication.

Members of congregations will have many occasions to be in discussion. Some topics will be easy and some far more difficult. But, in all cases the scriptures encourage direct, open and honest expressions. There should be every effort to speak for oneself and where speaking for another, then acknowledge for whom you are speaking. Never say things such as, "Well other people say..."; or other cloudy phrasing.

And, be willing and eager to listen for other's point of view or explanation. Never assume you know what was intended and please, never ascribe motives for which there is no direct evidence. And, of course, gossip, slander or bullying speech is always to be avoided. And, avoid passing along information unless the concerned person has given permission for you to share information. We gather as a congregation in order to support one another in fellowship, not to be nosey.

Be quick to congratulate, say thank you, and I am sorry. If all of this sounds like something taught in kindergarten, you are correct. But it never ceases to amaze me how many times members of congregations lose sight of these principles of communication.

Boundaries can best be summed up by the Golden Rule. “Do unto others, as you would have done to you.” A healthy respect for boundaries: respecting privacy, honoring confidences, having clear expectations, being open to collaborate on issues and never assuming knowledge without clear confirmation are but a few boundaries

Keep in mind, a pastor is not a news source. The pastor is not here to answer questions of curiosity. Concern about another member’s wellbeing is best handled by speaking directly to the person or one responsible for them.

Also important is appreciate that the pastor has many concerns before them at any given moment. Prioritizing is often required and so some matters may well be delayed. But that does not indicate the pastor does not regard the tabled matter as unimportant.

And, every member of the church will err. Whether it is a typo, a misdirected piece of information, an honest forgetting to do a certain thing; these are all behaviors common to all members. Again, “So unto other....” is critical to respect for boundaries. Staff and members alike will make mistakes. And, most people if approached graciously and given half a chance will endeavor to correct mistakes.

I share these thoughts after working with this congregation for the past year. The self-study makes clear that communication and respect for boundaries have not always been a hallmark of the congregation's life together. By the grace of God, second chances are at hand. My prayer is that every member of Myerstown UCC will endeavor to daily strive to improve communication and respect boundaries.

As for me, I want to address a boundary issue to which I have pledged my commitment to follow. The Pastor's code of ethics is very specific. It is also a matter to which any and every ordained and authorized clergy serving in the United Church of Christ have promised to follow. This code has existed since our denomination's inception.

As such, as I leave Myerstown, I will respect and honor the rights and privileges of whoever the incoming pastor is. This means, I will not, unless directly invited by the standing pastor, whether Interim, temporary or permanent, involve myself in the ongoing life of the congregation. I will not be providing pastoral services or discuss congregation matters with any member of the church.

Though initially there may be some matters to which I will be asked to attend, such will only be the case until a new interim or permanent pastor is called to serve Myerstown UCC. Let there be no misunderstanding. I value the many contacts I have made during my time, but I am now finished and as such it is my responsibility to take my leave.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve and share with you this past year.

Sincerely,

Rev. Rick Lucio



Julius Muthengi Updates...

Update from 6/10/19

Dear Prayer Partners,

Warm greetings in the name of our precious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I trust this e-mail finds you rejoicing in God's amazing grace. Indeed, it is by that grace through which we were saved, and also continue to be who we are in Christ. Agnes and I are always thankful to God for the measure of his grace which makes it possible for us to serve him here in Kenya. We praise him too for your partnership with us in this ministry. . . God alone knows how much we value you and are committed to praying for you each day! Indeed, you play a very critical role in our lives and the ministry of advancing God's kingdom in Africa and beyond.

As the subject of this e-mail indicates, we would like to share with a praise and one prayer item. With regard to the praise, you may remember in the beginning of this year we requested prayer for two unspoken prayer needs. Since God has answered prayer in one area, we are now in a position to share with you that answered prayer. In November 2018, our daughter Josephine (Joey) lost her job under mysterious circumstances. Between then and April this year, things have been extremely difficult for our family. We have been helping her to clear some debts as well as paying her rent for a one bedroom apartment. Please PRAISE GOD with us that on Monday this month, our daughter got a job. . . and we are really thankful to God because he has answered our prayer and yours! The situation was so difficult that by last weekend our savings account was almost depleted, with a current balance \$100! This means that we cannot withdraw the remaining small amount, otherwise the account will be closed. Nevertheless, we believe that the God who is faithful will continue providing for our daily needs as he has always done. . . Finally, continue praying that God will provide the funds needed for the replacement of our aging car. As you remember some \$8,100 was provided in September 2018 towards this project, but we still need approximately \$6,000 or more to help meet this need. Pray, Pray, Pray. . . May God bless you beloved.

Your friends in Christ,
Julius and Agnes

DO TO OTHERS AS
YOU WOULD HAVE
THEM DO TO YOU.
—LUKE 6:31

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Appreciation Update

Dear Friends at Myerstown United Church of Christ, Greetings in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. I trust this correspondence finds you well in the Lord. Agnes and I are thankful to God for his amazing grace, goodness and faithfulness towards us. God's ministry is progressing well, both at the university and also in the village. The last several months have been extremely bus for us here at International Leadership University as we have been preparing our students for graduation, scheduled for Friday June 21st, 2019. We are grateful to God for these men and women who are about to enter into full time Christian ministry. Pray for them that God's guiding hand will go ahead of them.

Thank you beloved for your commitment to pray for us as we together help fulfill the Great Commission globally. In addition to your prayers for us, you have faithfully supported us financially. Indeed, words are inadequate to express our gratitude to the Lord on your behalf. Thank you particularly for the \$775 gift which you sent to us through our dear friend Jack Reed. All we can do is to assure you of our continued and daily prayers as God gives us the grace. . . God bless you.

Your coworkers in God's vineyard,

Julius and Agnes

Update from 7/12/19

Dear Prayer Partners,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ from Nairobi. I trust the Lord has been your shield as you walk with him each day. Agnes and I are thankful to God for his faithfulness and goodness towards us together with our entire family. We praise him too for friends like you who have stood with us as we serve him by way of training leaders for the African Church, as well as ministering to our community in the village. Talking of our village ministry, Agnes and I have just returned to Nairobi following my men's ministry las weekend. It was a wonderful time to share with the men God's word from Colossians 1:3-8. I also gave each person a packet of corn flour (over 4 pounds), following intercessory prayers and breakfast! Pray for these men and the women to whom Agnes ministers that god will continue proving for their physical needs, in addition to their spiritual growth.

Thank you so much dear friends for your prayers through which we are strengthened each day as we serve our Lord here in our country, Kenya. We are grateful to those of you who support us financially on regular basis, as well as those who send us gifts from time to time through our friend Jack. Finally, please, please, please pray for us that God will provide the remaining amount of money towards replacement of our car. Just to remind you, we received \$8,100 towards this project almost a year ago but we have not been able to meet our target (remaining amount of \$5000-6000)! Once again thank you so much for your role in our lives and ministry. God bless you abundantly,

Lebanon County Christian Ministries



LCCM donation request item for the month of August are salad dressings.

Lebanon County Christian Ministries continues to operate as a help agency for Lebanon County. Several fund raisers are held throughout the year. On Saturday, March 23 the annual Lenten Breakfast was held with a sizable number attending. Four members plus a visitor represented MUCC. The next major fund raiser will involve golf and more information will be forthcoming.

Thank you for your ongoing support. Remember that besides food and clothing, other services are available at LCCM. If you have a need, please call LCCM at 717/272-4400.

Worship Attendance

Worship Time: 9:00 am

6/2/19	63	7/7/19	67
6/9/19	64	7/14/19	58
6/16/19	N/A	7/21/19	67
6/23/19	53	7/28/19	59
6/30/19	56		

BOY SCOUT TROOP 20 CORNER

The Boy Scouts of Myerstown Troop 20 are in the middle of a very busy summer. The troop's monthly campout for June was held at the troop cabin. The boys who attend the June campout toured the Mid Atlantic Air Museum in Reading, PA on Saturday. Riley V. was the boy cook for the weekend. On Sunday, June 21st, Christian S.'s Eagle Scout Ceremony was held at the Marion Rod and Gun Club in Womelsdorf in front of family, friends, and members of Troop 20. Also, call out for the Order of the Arrow, the Boys Scouts of America's National Honor Society, was held at Camp Bashore on Friday, June 28th. Aaron P., Colin Y., Wesley D., Anderson K., and Mr. Bewley were selected as candidates during the evening fireside ceremony.

The troop attended summer camp from Sunday, June 14th to Saturday, June 20th at Goose Pond Scout Reservation in Lake Ariel, PA. This camp is part of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Counsel, located in Moosic,

PA. Sixteen boys and four adult leaders attended camp for the week. The boys worked on requirements to earn over fifty merit badges and participated in the camp wide Polar Bear swim early Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings in Goose Pond. Additionally, Talon Y., Donovan K., Sebastian K., Logan W., Riley V., Bradden E., Anthony, B, and Ethan B. participated in the camp's "Pathways" program, which is designed specifically for newer scouts to learn the skills required to be a First Class Scout.



Troop 20 meets in the MUCC basement on Wednesdays from 6:30 – 8:00pm from November through April. The troop meets at their land on Halfway Drive from May through October. If anyone is interested in joining Boy Scout Troop 20 (grades 6-12), they may come uninvited to any Wednesday night meeting or contact the scoutmaster Scott Hentz at (717)-507-8804 or hentzs@comcast.net. If anyone is interested in joining Cub Pack 460 (grades K-5), they may contact Mike Young at (717)-376-7280. You can also visit our troop website at www.myerstowboyscouts.org.





Summer Adventure 2019 ***Lava, Lava Island... Where Jesus' Love Flows.***

This year's Summer Adventure ended with an Ice Cream Sundae bar for the children and their families.

We had a wonderful 5 day Summer program this year with 20 children in attendance (up from last year!), six youth assisting and eight adults involved in the teaching, games, snacks, songs, pictures and crafts. Our "crafty" leaders, Angie Bicher and Holly Rosen came up with a fun and educational (make your own lava lamp one night). Marie Hibshman led the younger children to their different stations. Marsha Bicher led the children in the Bible stories each evening. Susan Herr took charge of the snacks after the preparation purchases of the snack materials were made by Shirley Krall. Adults who led the outside games were Mel Bennetch and Jeremy Zimmerman. The children learned four songs from the curriculum and they were led in the learning of the Lava Song one evening under the skillful ukulele playing of Travis Bicher. Our volcano was creatively made from a lectern, and the mixing bowl found in the kitchen. A most important role was filled by Gabby Bicher, who took hundreds of pictures throughout the week. She put together a short video collage of the week using just a portion of the many photos she was able to take. Thanks is extended to all who helped, brought their children and invited friends to take part in the week. Next month, we will list the youth who helped during the week and I will share a few more pictures.

August

WORSHIP SCHEDULE 9:00 am Worship Service

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### **August 4– Eighth Sunday after Pentecost**

9:00 am service

Communion by Intinction

Rev. Jim Yoder will preach

### **August 11– Ninth Sunday after Pentecost**

9:00 am service

Rev. Rodney Shearer will be leading worship through music ministry

### **August 18- Tenth Sunday after Pentecost**

9:00 am service

Rev. Richard Christensen will preach

### **August 25– Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost**

9:00 am service

Rev. Keith Miller will preach



- *Our new secretary, Beverly Asroff, began working with us on Monday, July 22. We are thrilled to welcome this new addition to the staff!*

## Highlights from the July Council Meeting:

### Council Meeting Summary – July 2019

Tuesday, 6:30 pm, July 2, 2019

Minutes and treasurer reports were reviewed and approved. Thanksgivings and concerns about members were expressed. Staff reports followed. Pastor Luciotti shared an inquiry from Lebanon Association to share a pastor with Grace UCC in Lebanon. Council requested a letter from Grace clarifying what they are looking for. While open to all possibilities, the profile has just been posted and it was decided we should give it a little time before exploring other possibilities. There was a discussion about the need for clarification about announcements about the death of members' families and what the protocol should be. This also included discussion about the prayer list. Pastor Luciotti suggested that we create a prayer chain based on the prayer list, which should be managed by the church office and an appointed Elder. The Elders will be asked to create a protocol. Parish Administrator Emily Frantz shared that the visitation lists have been updated. She also shared the great job that Katie Fields has been doing as our Temporary Secretary including sending out letters, updating electronic files, and organizing the cemetery files into a digital record. Committee and Task Group reports followed including a request from personnel committee to offer a small scholarship to Katie Fields for her service during our time of need. This was approved by Council. Other items discussed were August performance reviews for employees and an update on the secretary position, along with a motion to approve Beverly Asroff as secretary, which was approved. Christian Education Committee shared that they met to finalize Summer Adventure. Property Committee did not meet but dealt with issues that resulted from kids pulling glass from the broken window in the Parish House. Worship Support Team has recommended two services beginning in September which was approved by Council. The first service will be the abbreviated Service of the Word held at 8:00 am. The second service will be traditional liturgical worship. The group is to further investigate whether 10:00 am or 10:30 am would be a better time based on the discussion at Council and get back to Council prior to the August meeting for a finalized vote. The by-laws revisions are coming along. In August Council will be asked to voted on the final inactive membership list which is being organized by the church office. There will be a financial advisory committee created to tackle the issues faced by not being able to find a church treasurer. Emily, Lindy, and Kathy Grose from personnel will create this group. Supply pastors are filled for the month of August and special music has been planned including Rodney Shearer and Katie Gehman. The motion to accept Mike Ebersole's resignation with regret was approved by Council. Meeting concluded with prayer and was adjourned.



We would like to thank Pastor Rick for his visits and prayers during my mother's hospital stay. Also, for the many thoughts and prayers, cards and calls from members of the congregation. Finally, thank you to Pastor Rick for officiating at the graveside service. Your thoughtfulness and compassion are very much appreciated as we go through the grieving process.

Sincere Blessings,  
Margo and Paulie McQuate  
And Family of Betty Gracely



*If you happen to have a church key that you no longer use on a regular basis, please return it to the Church Office. We are running out of key copies because so many have been checked out. Additionally, if you open a door to the church with a key, please make sure that it locks behind you when you leave!*

## **Transition Update – August 2019:**

**As our time with Pastor Rick Luciotti has come to an end, we thank him for blessing our congregation over the past year. We hope to continue to work at improvements in our relationships, communication, and transparency as we move forward in our search for a new pastor. We realize that times of transition bring about many questions. We are hoping to answer some of the questions that you might have in this update.**

**We have secured excellent supply pastors for the next 14 Sundays. We look forward to welcoming them to Myerstown UCC and opening our hearts to the message they will bring to us. Please contact Emily Frantz if you have any questions or suggestions about this process. Mark Herr will be working with each of the supply pastors to put together the worship service each Sunday. Thank you to Mark for stepping into this role. If you have any additions/comments/questions about Sunday morning worship, please address them to Mark or the Worship Support Team which he leads.**

**We also have created a list of pastors in the Lebanon and Lancaster areas who are willing to assist us with pastoral care needs such as hospital visits, home communions, etc. One of our Elders, Marie Hibshman, has agreed to be our contact person for pastoral needs. Thank you Marie! As you have heard in the announcements and seen in the bulletin, she has been working hard to find members of our congregation who will “adopt” our members who have difficulty attending church by visiting, calling, writing and helping us to know how best to care for those people. A HUGE thank you to everyone who has agreed to help us with this mission. We want to make sure we are doing our best to care for ALL members of our congregation.**

**During another time of transition our Church Council led by Kory Leppo, President and Kristi Fields, Vice-President, continue to work at managing the business of the church. If you have never served on Church Council you might be very surprised at the amount of items that come their way each month. They continue to work on important updates: our membership list to be in compliance with our by-laws, policies and procedures, committee and group structure, and looking to increase efficiency. They are also tasked with finding an interim or bridge pastor while the search committee does their work. A big thank you to these leaders and all of our Council members.**

**Our search committee led by Doug Bohannon has been installed and had their orientation meeting with Rev. John Fureman from Penn Central Conference. They plan to meet monthly and begin their work as they wait for pastoral profiles to come their way. Thank you search committee!**

**Our church office and financial staff continue to work at updating our membership information and will be undertaking a huge project of moving all of our membership and financial information to an updated and more cost-efficient software system. They are always willing to answer questions that you might have, so please be in touch if you have questions or concerns.**

**Emily Frantz, Parish Administrator**

# Worship Volunteer Schedule

## July 28 – September 1

### Church Worship Instructions:

When two worship leaders are listed they should decide between themselves who will read scripture, lead liturgy, or assist with communion.

The first name listed on each usher team is responsible for all head usher duties such as ringing the bell, retrieving handicapped signs, lighting and extinguishing candles, locking doors, etc. If you can not serve on any assigned task, please try to find a substitute before calling the office.

### July 28

Open - Bill and Betty Arnold  
Greeter - Bill and Betty Arnold  
Worship Leader - Wanda Rabold  
Ushers - Ed and Candy Hibshman, Terry and Suzie Schott, Kenny Patrick  
Sound - Bob Dash  
Count - Ed and Candy Hibshman, Terry and Suzie Schott

### August 4 - Communion - Intinction

Open - Cal Beamesderfer  
Greeter - Terry and Suzie Schott  
Worship Leader - Margo McQuate  
Communion Servers – Ed and Candy Hibshman, Steve and Marianne Fritsch  
Ushers – Ed and Candy Hibshman, Terry and Suzie Schott, Kenny Patrick  
Sound - Paulie McQuate

### August 11

Open – Mark Herr  
Greeter – Ted and Carol Batdorf  
Worship Leader – Sally Kulp  
Ushers – Marie Hibshman, Emily, Kara, Abby Frantz, Kenny Patrick  
Sound – Paulie McQuate  
Count – Marie Hibshman, Kathy Grose, Charles and Carolyn Williams

### August 18

Open – Marcia Bicher  
Greeter- Dawn Hassler  
Worship Leader- Steve and Marianne Fritsch  
Ushers- Doug, Stephanie, Braden Bohannon, Kenny Patrick  
Sound- Robert Dash  
Count- Lois Werner, Sara Zeller, Sally Kulp

### August 25

Open- William and Betty Arnold  
Greeters- William and Betty Arnold  
Worship Leaders- Charles and Carolyn Williams  
Ushers- Kory and Ryan Leppo, Robert Dash, Kenny Patrick  
Sound- Robert Dash  
Count- Ed and Candy Hibshman, Terry and Suzie Schott

### September 1-Communion- Pew

Open – Cal Beamesderfer  
Greeters- Pat and Trudy Yeager  
Worship Leader- William Arnold  
Ushers- Kristi Fields, Darryl Brown, Annamarie Behm, Kenny Patrick  
Communion Servers- Kristi Fields, Annamarie Behm, Suzie Wartluft, Marie Hibshman  
Sound- Paulie McQuate  
Count- Ted and Carol Batdorf, Marie Hibshman, Darryl Brown





## Prayer List

Family Member/s

### Long-Term Prayer Concerns

Family Members

Nancy Brown  
Ellen Goodyear  
Ruthann Snoke  
Joyce Mitstifer  
The Search Committee

Friends

Suzanne Fritsch — mother of Steven Fritsch  
Bill Gracely— father of Margo McQuate  
Dennis Palm— former ScoutMaster of Troop 20  
Katie Long— friend of Phyllis Keith  
Linda Feaser— friend of Kathy Grose  
Jewel Fessler— friend of Kathy Grose  
Joanne Frantz— mother-in-law of Emily Frantz  
Heather and Elvin Perez— friends of Marianne Fritsch

Suzie Wartluft's contact number is 717/866-5490. Please call this number with any and all prayer concerns. Feel free to leave a message if Suzie does not answer and she will follow up to ensure accuracy on the listing of concern. The updated list will be called into the church office by 9:00 am each Wednesday morning. Feel free to contact Suzie with any questions or concerns

