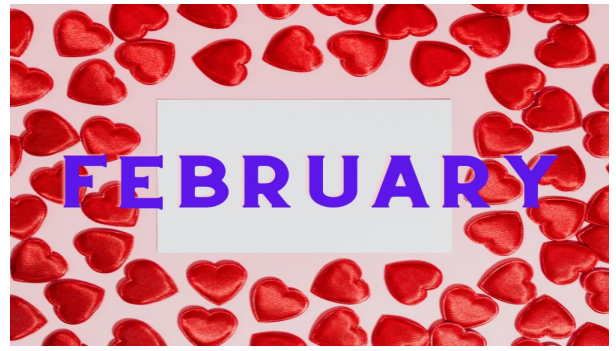


# The Vineyard

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.



February 2024

Volume 43, Issue 2

editor: Lee Ann Kurash

## from the Pastor..

### “What Wondrous Love is This?”

What wondrous love is this, O my soul! O my soul! What wondrous love is this! O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul,  
For my soul; to bear the dreadful curse for my soul!

When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down; when I was sinking down, sinking down  
When I was sinking down, beneath God's righteous frown, Christ laid aside his crown  
For my soul, for my soul! Christ laid aside his crown for my soul!

To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing; to God and to the Lamb, I will sing--  
To God and to the Lamb, who is the great I AM, while millions join the theme,  
I will sing, I will sing! While millions join the theme, I will sing!

(Words: Appalachian folk hymn; music: *Southern Harmony*, 1835.)

The lyrics to this haunting and soulful Appalachian hymn date back to 1811 and its religious camp meeting tune is rooted in an old English ballad from 1701. That should not surprise us given the English and Scots-Irish folks that settled in Appalachia, bringing their musical heritage with them into the remote hills and hollers of that storied region.

The text echoes words that many of us have known since childhood: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16); also, “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (John 15:13). Thus, the first line: “What wondrous love is this, O my soul!”

What better theme for Lent than ‘wondrous love’? Though the season begins with “ashes to ashes and dust to dust” and ends with Good Friday’s abject despair, the theme throughout and beyond it is love: self-giving, sacrificial, soul-saving, world-changing love. Such love, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13, “bears..., believes..., hopes..., and endures all things” ... even a cross.

While the “dreadful curse” in the hymn’s lyrics may suggest “original sin” to some, it suggests much more the personal concerns (e.g., guilt, shame) and social concerns (e.g., hubris, hatred) that we all carry. Fill in the blank. Regardless, dreadful curses can and do “sink us down” under the weight of human folly and frailty, “beneath God’s righteous frown.” “Christ laid aside his crown” to set us free from these self-inflicted curses. Only wondrous love is that redemptive!

As we observe Lent in 2024, with so much to “sink us down,” from Russia’s unconscionable aggression in Ukraine to Israel’s disproportionate retaliation in Gaza, to global and local suffering of all kinds, to the endless and petty cultural and political wars of our own nation, we would do well to remember the soul-healing power of wondrous love. And so, with millions, we sing!

*Prayer:* Merciful God, through these dark and daunting days, help us to sing boldly to “the great I AM,” whose wondrous love has the power to save us from ourselves; and also to love wondrously in song and service for the redemption of the world. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

+ *Lenten Blessings, Bruce Greer, Interim Pastor.*

## ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

FEBRUARY 14

Noon & 7:00 PM

A Brief Contemplative Service in the Sanctuary

**\*\*Ashes to shut-ins available by appointment\*\***  
(Contact Rev. Greer or the Church Office)

### FROM THE PULPIT IN FEBRUARY

Rev. Greer will be preaching

[Sermon emphasis is on the underlined passage(s).]

**5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY – FEBRUARY 4**  
**SCOUT SUNDAY with BSA TROOP #20**

**“On Growing Up”**

Isaiah 40:25-31 and Luke 2:41-52

**TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY – FEBRUARY 11**

**“On Passing the Mantle”**

2 Kings 2:1-12 and Mark 9:2-9

**1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY IN LENT – FEBRUARY 18**

**“Baptized—Blessed—Driven”**

Psalm 25:1-10 and Mark 1:9-15.

**2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY IN LENT – FEBRUARY 25**

**“Rejected—Rebuked—Renewed”**

Genesis 17:1-7,15-16; Psalm 22:23-31;  
Mark 8:31-38

### REV. GREER'S SCHEDULE

Bruce is usually in Myerstown Sundays (8A-Noon), Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. He works at home in Baltimore on Mondays (feel free to contact him there). The “Pastor’s Day of Rest” is Friday. The Church Office will be advised of any changes to his schedule. Drop by to say “Hello!”

#### **Bruce’s Contact information:**

Email: [revbgreer@gmail.com](mailto:revbgreer@gmail.com)

Cell: 617.599.6305

(calls, texts, 24/7)

### STORM CANCELLATIONS

Worship cancellations due to winter weather will be announced via email blasts, FaceBook page posts, and on our church office voice mail.

Please call Marie Hibshman (717.343.3247) if you have further questions or concerns.

(template by Layerace on Freepik)



Dear Myerstown UCC,

As we embark on a new year, I wanted to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for your generous support and contributions to LCCM.

Your unwavering commitment to helping those in need has made a significant impact on the lives of countless individuals and families in our community.

We are so appreciative of your very generous support of \$1,260 to help ensure our community does not go without shelter and food. Together we can create a hunger-free community and make a difference by: investing in people. Improving lives.

Wishing you a year filled with joy, good health and prosperity.

Sincerely,  
Bryan D. Smith, Executive Director

**Thank you to all those who ordered poinsettias that helped make the sanctuary so beautiful during the Christmas Season!**

- - - The Decorating Committee



## UPDATE ON COUNCIL ACTIONS - January 28, 2024

Members of Council are starting to clear out cabinets in the church. If we find anything of historical significance, we are setting it aside for possible eventual storage at the Evangelical & Reformed Historical Society Center at the Lancaster Seminary. Objects of little worth are being placed on tables in the old nursery/youth lounge and in the corner of the gathering area. Take some time to look through these materials. More will be added every week! If there is anything you can use, please take it. There are several picture albums. Take any pictures of interest. After several weeks, these things will go into the trash or recycling. If there is anything in the church that belongs to you, identify it ASAP.

We have sorted through all our hymnals and separated those that were purchased in memory of or honoring someone. Some of these are on a table in the old nursery. We ran out of room and will add others to this table as space is made available. Please take any hymnal that you donated. If you find one that was donated by someone no longer attending worship at MUCC, consider delivering it to them.

We are discussing ways to sell larger objects to members and are considering starting with a silent auction. We will hold all historic or potentially very valuable objects for evaluation later but if there is anything in this church that you would like to have, please contact a council member and identify that object.

We have signed an agreement with Nelson Ebersole, auctioneer and real estate agent, to handle the sale of our property. He has begun advertising. We will be accepting closed bids and have the right to reject any that do not meet our expectations. As part of the sale agreement, we will require that our tenants have ample time to negotiate new leases with a new owner or find a new place to live. Bids will be opened on March 15, 2024, but the sale will not be final before June 30.

We have taken steps to prepare the legal documents that will ensure the future care and operation of the cemeteries. In the late 1800's a group of men from Myerstown each contributed money to buy land north of town and created the Myerstown Cemetery Company. Over the years a majority of those men donated their shares to this church and the Myerstown Cemetery Company gradually went out of

existence. But no legal paperwork was ever filed granting ownership to the Myerstown Church Christ. We do not have a deed to the Mt Hope property. On January 23, Marie Hibshman, Bruce Greer, and Mike Ebersole met with Attorney Ken Sandoe who advised us that we need to complete a Quiet Title Action. This involves filling paperwork with Lebanon County and advertising in various places including the Lebanon Daily News and the Lebanon Legal Journal. He estimates the process will take 90 days and cost \$1500-\$2000. After that, our hope is to establish a new cemetery association, separate from the church, with a new, legal non-profit designation.

We are exploring the possibility of renting space where we could continue to worship together and where we could maintain an office. We are forming a Search Committee to find an Interim pastor to lead us after Bruce finishes his time with us on June 30.

Our future is certainly filled with uncertainty. Please talk to any Council member about your concerns. Our next Council meeting is February 13. And bring all your questions to the Town Hall meeting, after worship on February 25.

Marie Hibshman  
Congregation President

## **IMPORTANT!**

### **TOWN HALL MEETING**

**There will be a Town Hall/Open Forum meeting on February 25, 2024, after worship in the Gathering Area. This will be a time for detailed updates on the progress being made in selling the property and planning our future. Please plan to attend and bring your questions.**



# Celebrate Scout Sunday with us on February 4, 2024



Scout Sunday is celebrated on the Sunday before February 8 every year and this year the day will be marked on February 4. Since 1910, school pupils have been imbibing good deeds, survival skills, and moral underpinnings via the Boy Scouts of America. The Boy Scouts of America are descended from the British Boy Scouts, which were created in 1908 in reaction to the success of Robert

Baden-Powell's Scouting for Boys. Indonesia's national scouting organization, Gerakan Pramuka Indonesia, has over 17 million members, making it the world's largest scouting organization.

Lord Baden-Powell founded Scouts after the South African War. In 1907, Baden-Powell gathered 22 boys, some from public schools and others from working-class families, and placed them in a camp under his command. The outcome of that camp is now known to the entire globe.

The book, "Scouting for Boys" was released in six fortnightly installments in 1908 at 4d per copy. The book sold well. Scout Patrols were founded by the boys to test out new ideas. What was meant to be a training manual for existing groups became the guidebook for a new global movement. Powell's deep comprehension of boys clearly hit a nerve. As a result, the book has been translated into a variety of languages and dialects.

During the third World Scout Jamboree in 1929, he was given a new automobile, which happened to be a Rolls-Royce. This automobile was quickly dubbed Jam-Roll. He also acquired an Eccles Caravan, dubbed Eccles Cake, so Scouts attending the occasion were treated to a Jam-Roll towing an Eccles Cake. This combination suited the Baden-Powells well in their subsequent journeys throughout Europe. Baden-Powell also had a significant influence on youth education. The global Scouting movement expanded under his diligent leadership. By 1922, there were over a million Scouts in 32 nations; by 1939, the number of scouts had risen to more than 3.3 million.

(from nationaltoday.com)



**Myerstown Troop 20 meets Wednesday evenings from 6:30—8:00 pm in the social hall. Please contact Scott Hentz 717/507-8804 for more information.**

## Important!

**Myerstown Women's Club meeting on Monday, February 5th at 7:00 pm in the social hall.**

**Office hours the week of February 5th are Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.**

**Fastnacht Day 2024 is Tuesday, February 13th. This food holiday is also known as Fat Tuesday, Mardi Gras, or Shrove Tuesday.**

**Council Meeting Tuesday, February 13th in the Library at 6:30 pm**

**Lent begins Ash Wednesday, February 14th, 2024.**

**President's Day Monday, February 19, 2024—the office will be closed.**



## February

2—Gloria Ebling, Gary Underkoffler

3—Franklin Seifert

5—Benjamin Garman

6—Adaline Wolfe

7—Shirley Davis

9—David Blystone

18—Kathy Grose, Christine Wolfe

19—Tina Gares, Candy Hibshman

23—Jill Kinsey

24—Sara Zeller

29—Gabriella Bicher, Wanda Rabold

We omitted Pat Underkoffler's birthday in January. It was January 20th. Happy Birthday Pat!!!