



The Grape Vine

Volume 1 No.13

June 24, 2020

In-Person Worship Begins

On **July 5th**, Myerstown UCC will have it's first in-person worship since March. The service begins at **9:00 a.m.** and will be held **outdoors** in the parking lot behind the church building. Read page 4 for more information from the Re-Opening Committee. It's a Communion Sunday; think of it as a Pot Luck meal—bring your own bread and juice, please!

Worship This Week

June 28 Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Facebook live feed 9 am

Texts

Genesis 22:1-14

Psalm 112

“ But I Don't Wanna Fear God ”

Theme: To be honest, I'm not sure where this will take me, but I want to look at this encounter between God, Abraham and Isaac for Isaac's point of view, how it might have affected his entire life, and what that means for us.

More About the Update

The church office would like to thank everyone who has helped to make this update process a success. Return phone calls and email responses have been notably high.

Here are the kinds of things we have learned. There are some people who are not getting the Grape Vine. We have phone numbers no longer in service. We also know the whereabouts for some children and grandchildren who have moved away. And birthdays!!! When Katie calls, please call or write back!



Dear Myerstown UCC,
 Thank you for your generous
 gift. I truly appreciate it.

Thank You

Sincerely,
 Linda Benetot

Birthdays

- 3 Carol Woynarowski
- 7 Monroe Krall
- 27 Terry Wolfe
- 28 Jacob Blystone

Letter from the Muthengi's

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord and hope of glory! Our eyes are totally focused on him and him alone, as the apostle Paul put it "For in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17: 28). Indeed, these are unprecedented times globally, especially due to coronavirus pandemic. We should, however, be thankful to God for making us his children through Jesus Christ.

It is imperative therefore, to trust him wholeheartedly because our future is in his hands. . . Agnes and I are thankful to God for his faithfulness. He is indeed, unchanging and can be trusted at all times! I thought of writing to you this brief e-mail on behalf of Agnes, who is still in the village, and on my own behalf. Our purpose for this communication is to assure you that we are constantly, and fervently praying for you beloved. You are so precious to us that we cannot forget to intercede for you before our heavenly Father. Thank you so much for your faithful partnership with us as we serve God here in Kenya. Whatever challenges we face, we are assured that you are standing with us, and for that we praise God! May God continually bless you. May he graciously hear and answer our prayers and yours. We count it a privilege to be your co-laborers in God's vineyard, as we together advance his kingdom globally. Thank you once again.

Birthdays

- 26 Trudy Yeager
- 27 Suzanne Upton

NOTE: If your birthday is **not listed**, please contact the church office and provide the month, day and year. Shhh! We won't tell anyone the year - honest!

For his glory,
 Julius and Agnes

Worship in JULY

July 5 Independence Day Sunday

Re-Open Outdoor Worship

& Live stream

9:00 am

Sermon: Old Game, New Rules

Scripture: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

July 12 Re-Imagining Sunday

Outdoor Worship

& Live stream

9:00 am

Sermon: Preparing The Soil

Scripture: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

During the month of July we will be hearing the Word of God speak to us about expressing our faith, and sharing the Good News, that has brought renewal and reconciliation for centuries, with new with new patterns, to speak to new audiences in new and meaningful ways. This struggle with the pandemic we are still journeying through, has forced us to find many new patterns for accomplishing daily tasks, work, communicating, and showing our caring. The Church has needed to find new patterns to accomplish ministry but has resisted moving from “the way we’ve always done it”. We learn from Scripture that the evolution of the Church has been going on since its inception, and even before!!!

Paul’s Epistle

From the very beginning, Christian believers have gathered for worship, prayer, instruction, and “breaking bread” to remember Jesus, the One who called them into one Body, the Church. Less than two months after the death and resurrection of Jesus, the believers “were all together in one place” (Acts 2:1). In an early summary of what church life was like, Luke tells us that, “Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home, and ate their food with glad and generous hearts” (Acts 2:46).

For two millennia Christians have continued to gather, assured of the promise of Jesus that, “where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” (Matthew 18:20). We have gathered in small house churches and in soaring cathedrals; we have gathered in one-room chapels and multimillion-dollar facilities; we have met by trees on savannahs and in brush arbors in camp meetings; we have met secretly in underground gatherings and openly in rallies attracting thousands.

Until we couldn’t meet safely.

The coronavirus pandemic has challenged the Church to continue being the Church [in new and different ways. We are now facing the challenge of re-opening.] A care-filled response to that challenge is much more than unlocking the doors and inviting all to come sit, sing, and greet one another as has been our custom. We know the dangers posed and the

risks taken if we were to do that. We care too much for one another to let that happen.

(excerpt from “Resuming Care-Filled Worship and Sacramental Life during a Pandemic” an Ecumenical Consultation on protocols for Worship, Fellowship and Sacraments)

As you have probably heard, our first step in beginning to meet together is to have an outdoor Worship Service on Sunday, July 5, in the grassy area adjacent to the parking lot at the rear of our campus. We are asking that you park on the westernmost half of the parking lot or along Madison Aly. We would like to reserve the street parking along Locust St. for those who would wish to stay in their cars.

We will have 20 foot squares delineated in the grass and on the first 20 feet of the parking lot for individuals or families to sit in. Please bring your own folding, camping, beach chairs or a blanket to sit on. The “stage” will be approximately in the middle of the parking lot and easily visible from anywhere in the grassy area or from the street.

We are asking all Congregants to wear masks when walking from their cars to their delineated square. Once you are seated, you may lower your mask, but we ask you to maintain physical distancing from all those around you.

Although it will not be safe to sing when we move to the Sanctuary later in the month, singing is allowed outside if we practice appropriate physical distancing. We will be singing the most familiar verses of the most familiar hymns, and may be able to set up a screen with words.

Members as greeters/welcomers will be helping you to your area, but will not be shaking hands and will be modeling physical distancing.

We encourage all congregants to bring their own bread and grape juice, or wine. We will be consecrating all the elements that each family brings without touching them.

When departing, we will ask you to leave, in order, at the direction of the greeters/welcomers, and move to your vehicles. Please feel free to wave and say hello, but remember to maintain at least 6 feet distance, and we would ask that you not participate in extended conversations.

We are fortunate that, at least to our knowledge, no one from Myerstown UCC has contracted COVID 19. And we are sure that all of us desire to continue in that direction. For now, loving each other means following the guidelines established by our governmental leaders to effectively do our part in avoiding the spread of the COVID 19 virus.

We look forward to being together, even in a limited way. We will, of course, be live streaming for those who are still uncomfortable with the risks inherent in any gathering. Let us all continue to pray for each other, and do the things that protect those most vulnerable in our community.

Blessing,

The Re-Opening Task Force &
Pastor Paul