

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.*



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editor: Lee Ann Kurash

from the Pastor . . . GIANT RUMMAGE SALES

“The only way to understand what is happening to us as twenty-first-century Christians in North America is first to understand that about every 500 years the Church feels compelled to hold a giant rummage sale. ...we are [now] living in and through one of those 500-year sales.” (Anglican Bishop Mark Dyer, quoted in Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence*; Baker 2008, p. 16).

By 500 A.D., Christianity had become a creedal institution. The “Great Schism” of 1054 A.D. split the Church into Orthodox and Catholic. In 1517, Martin Luther nailed his “95 Theses” on a German church door, sparking the Reformation. 500 years after Luther, the Church in the West is experiencing seismic shifts in global culture, politics, and spirituality. Our new normal is here!

We now live in a cauldron of contention at every level. Public meetings involve shouting and threats, even fights. State and national capitols are targets of rage. Government service is now dangerous for public servants and their families, even for ballot counters. Religious denominations struggle with conflict at every level, even globally. Civil societies cannot survive like this

Local churches struggle and fail. Pews have emptied out for years. Younger generations have left. Few folks look to the church as their social center, or seek baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and funerals. Few young adults choose ministry as a profession: high stress, low pay, poor mobility. Clergy attrition increases as candidates decrease. Part-time is now the norm.

Add to this the clergy abuse plague and the unconscionably poor response to such abuse by church leaders. Too many churches have been subsumed by culture wars and political manipulation, while others remain timid and tepid in the face of injustice and suffering. Is it any wonder that so many people, especially young people, have given up on us? Not at all!

Yes, some evangelical churches grow, but mostly from people circulating from one church to another. Megachurches come and go. Their longevity over time is suspect at best, especially when their superstar pastors transgress or retire. Add to all of this the toxic mingling of White Christian nationalism with evangelical Christianity, and we have a lot to discourage us!

This is a very long way of saying that I come to you with a broken heart, having witnessed 50 years of unrelenting church decline; with my eyes wide open, given the plethora of present-day challenges; and with humility, knowing that I am your seventh pastor in seven years. You’ve been through a lot and are a fraction of what you once were as a congregation.

I get all of this. I can’t fix it. I do not have all the answers. I cannot save your church, or any other for that matter. What I can do is be open and honest, humble and faithful, inquisitive and resourceful, courageous and compassionate, in Christ’s name. We can survey our changing cultural landscape together, chart a course forward as partners in ministry, and pray...*a lot!*

Will you join heart and hand with me on this journey? I hope so! Let’s see where the Spirit leads us, and may God guide our every step.

+ Blessings, Bruce Greer.

Mission Updates

Julius Muthengi

Our special missions offering for the month of June is to help support Julius Muthengi and the villagers in Kalima Kathei, Kenya, in their quest for clean drinking water, through a well which was dug in 2016. Our church donated money to help dig the well. Before the well, the villagers had to use an unsanitary watering hole on private land that was used by both humans and animals. During the dry season, the hole would dry up and people had to pay for water.

Dear Friends at Myerstown UCC,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ from Nairobi I trust this e-mail finds you rejoicing in God's amazing grace. We are thankful to God for your role in our lives and ministry. Words are inadequate to express our gratitude to you beloved for always being there for us! All we can do is to continue praying for you as you serve God in the capacity he has chosen for you. Agnes and I are grateful to our God for his faithfulness and goodness as we serve him here in our country Kenya. We continue praising God for the ministry he has graciously entrusted to us.

As I indicated earlier, God's work at the university is progressing well. Please pray for our students who are working on their thesis, as they anticipate graduating on November 19th, 2022. Pray also for us as faculty as we guide these beloved students in their academic journey. Please continue praying for our family, especially our son and daughter who lost their jobs in 2020. Our village ministry is also moving on well in spite of challenges facing our people. One of the challenges is lack of means of livelihood due to recurring drought. As such, many families are struggling to put food on the table. Pray also that God will provide funds towards purchase of the much needed solar lamps for these families. Once again, thank you so much for your partnership in advancing God's kingdom in Africa and the world. Please accept our sincere appreciation for your support contribution of \$238, sent through Grace Community Church in June 2022. May God continually bless you and the work of your hands.

Your friends in Christ,

Julius and Agnes

You can contribute any time this month by writing Water in the 'Other' space on your envelope, or if you donate using Givelify, there is an envelope for Julius Muthengi/Water.

Lebanon County Christian Ministries



Wish List

- ~ boxed au gratin or scalloped potatoes ~
- ~ boxed mashed potatoes
- ~ bottled orange juice
- ~ boxed pasta
- ~ jelly
- ~ coffee

Ongoing personal care items

- ~ toothpaste
- ~ deodorant
- ~ body wash
- ~ shampoo
- ~ toilet paper

Lebanon County Christian Ministries continues to operate as a help agency for Lebanon County.

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.



FROM THE PULPIT IN JULY

Rev. Greer will be preaching.
9:00 am Worship

July 3 (Pentecost+4)

"Do What the Man Says!"

Please read 2 Kings 5:1-14.

**Patriotic sing following the Organ Postlude.

July 10 (Pentecost+5)

"Help!"

Please read Luke 10:25-37.

July 17 (Pentecost+6)

"Faith in Balance."

Please read Luke 10:25-42.

July 24 (Pentecost+7)

"What's in a Name?" [Rated R].

Please read Hosea 1:2-10, Colossians 2:6-15.

July 31 (Pentecost+8)

"Wardrobe Change."

Please read Colossians 3:1-17.

Church Life Updates

IT TAKES A LOT OF WORK TO KEEP OUR CHURCH FUNCTIONING! SO WE EXTEND *many* THANKS TO:

1. Ed Hibshman and the Property Committee for handling the complicated process of remodeling Sunday School rooms into office space, arranging for last-minute repair of bathroom fixtures in the parish house, replacing an electrical circuit board in the basement of the parish house discovered by an insurance inspection
2. Fritz Firestine for installing locks on a couple of doors, patching the drywall in what will be the church office, and hanging new window shades in the parish house
3. Lindy Bennetch and Marie Hibshman for cleaning rooms in the parish house in preparation for Pastor Greer's arrival
4. Kathy Grose for donating a bed (which Bruce reports is very comfortable) and a night stand for the Pastor's new bedroom. Also for providing the juice we use for Communion.
5. Sam and Parker Kurash for moving some very heavy furniture out of Emily's former office on the second floor of the parish house and into her new space in the former choir room.
6. Mark Herr for providing home-baked bread for Communion services.
7. Kory Leppo for handling the never ending issues connected to Mt Hope Cemetery and to Greg Beamesderfer and Jim Miller for agreeing to help.
8. Marcia Bicher for decorating the church for every season.
9. Dave and Jen Blystone for changing the paraments in the sanctuary.
10. Sara Zeller, Kathy Grose, and Marie Hibshman for counting the offering twice a month.
11. Ed and Candy Hibshman, Marie Hibshman for setting up for communion.
11. Troop 20 Boy Scouts and leaders for cleaning up debris on Mt Hope Cemetery and Travis Bicher for supervising this effort. Also for setting up tables in the social hall when needed.
12. All the volunteers serving as greeters, providing refreshments after worship, doing the welcome and announcements.
13. Gavin Bicher and Amber Beamesderfer for handling the live-stream whenever Emily is away.
14. Lindy Bennetch for removing all the weeds around the church and rental properties.

15. All the volunteers serving as greeters, providing refreshments after worship, doing the welcome and announcements.

We are always in need of more volunteers. Contact a Council Member or call the office if you are willing to help.

Support for Outreach Ministries

With everything that has been happening, we have neglected our Outreach Offerings so we will continue to ask for support for Julius Muthengi/Water and his ministry in Africa throughout the month of July.

Below is a report on what we have donated in the first five months of 2022:

Bruce and Amber Althouse Africa Mission - \$1035
Lebanon County Christian Ministries - \$1615
Ukraine Relief - \$515
Julius Muthengi Ministry - \$100
One Great Hour of Sharing - \$2310

Volunteering at  **HERSHEYPARK**

Are you interested in being a volunteer for our church?

For each shift you work (usually 3-5 hours long), you get a 1-day pass to the park, including free parking. Occasionally, 2 or 3 passes are offered for a shift. This is great to use for yourself or to give to family members. In addition, our church gets \$8 for every hour you work. The areas where we volunteer are 1) Food and Beverages in HersheyPark and in the Giant Center, 2) Games, 3) Attractions (rides), and 4) Ushering at Giant Center and HersheyPark Stadium. If you are interested in being put on the volunteer list, please email Candy Hibshman at ehibshman1@comcast.net, with your name, phone number and e-mail address. She will e-mail you whenever she gets a request from Hershey for volunteers. If you are interested in working a shift, CALL her at 717/468-3563. She will contact Hershey. You may not contact them yourself. Candy will get back to you to let you know if you are scheduled.



Monday, July 4th Independence Day. A time to celebrate our freedom!

Sunday, July 24th at 2:30 pm (note day and time change) **New Horizons** will meet at the Lebanon Community Theater. Located at Theater Drive off E. Maple Street, Lebanon (Stoever's Dam) Performance is "Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Coat." Reservations/payments due by July 2nd. Call Danny or Donna to reserve tickets. Dinner afterwards TBD.

Myerstown UCC Community Night:

Please join us on Sunday, July 31st for our first Community Event held in a very long time. Beginning at 4:00 pm, there will be a Food Truck, Wich Way, serving seasonal paninis with chips and later in the evening, Sweet Ride Ice Cream! Come visit our information table and your single dip is on us! The church council is sponsoring this event and plan to have lawn games (corn hole, washers) and a 40' Inflatable Obstacle Course.

The Perseverance Band of Lebanon will be providing a concert from 7 pm - 8 pm. Bring money for your food and a lawn chair to sit and enjoy the evening!

All are welcome! Please consider volunteering to work a shift to help with small jobs that evening. See Marie Hibshman to get involved.

Contact the church office with any questions.

July

- 2 Wendy Shaffer
- 3 Porter Linn
Carol Woynarowski
- 4 Camilla Zimmerman
- 6 Brett Bohannon
- 7 C. Monroe Krall
- 20 Scott Bennetch
- 23 Russell Miller
- 27 Joyce Bahney
Terence Wolfe
- 28 Jacob Blystone
Michael Hartman
- 29 Jacqueline Shaak
Mary Smith
- 31 Jeff Rosen



Myerstown UCC
COMMUNITY NIGHT
featuring a concert by the Perseverance Band of Lebanon at 7:00 PM!



FOOD TRUCKS:
Wich Way (Panini Sandwiches)
Sweet Ride (first dip is on us!)

LAWN GAMES and an INFLATABLE OBSTACLE COURSE (no charge!)

Bring a lawn chair and money for a sandwich. Everything else is FREE! Invite a friend!

Sunday, July 31, 2022
4:00 - 8:30 PM
306 W. Main Avenue, Rear Parking Lot



REV. GREER'S SCHEDULE

In Myerstown Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday

He works at home on Mondays (feel free to contact him there).

He is here overnight on Saturdays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays.

The Pastor's "Day of Rest" is Fridays.

The Church Office will be advised of any changes to his schedule.

Drop by to say "Hello!"

July Office Hours

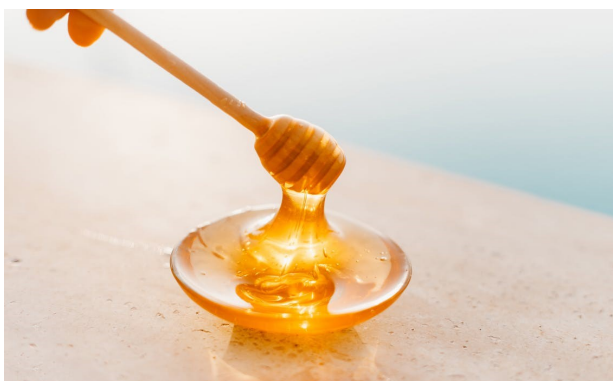
Lee Ann is in the office on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Amended office hours the week of July 4th. The office will be closed Monday, July 4th. Lee Ann will then be in the office on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and return to a regular schedule the following week.



Kind words are like honey—sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.

Proverbs 16:24 NLT



Staff Contact Information

Emily Frantz
muccparishadmin@comcast.net

Mark Herr
muccmusic@comcast.net

Lindy Bennetch
muccchurchtreasurer@gmail.com

Deb Spencer
muccfinance@comcast.net

Lisy Frank
llisy711@aol.com

Lee Ann Kurash
myerstownucc@comcast.net



Need Pastoral Care?

Rev. David Swift continues to serve our congregation by visiting any member in need of pastoral care.

This includes patients in the hospital, residents of care facilities, persons who are confined to their homes, or anyone experiencing a difficult situation. If you, or anyone you know, would benefit from a visit with Rev. Swift, please call 717/866-5252. In the event of an emergency, call 717/306-6319. This number is to be used only for urgent pastoral needs. You may also leave a message, but this phone is not able to accept text or email messages.