

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 2022

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editor: Lee Ann Kurash

from the Pastor... **“IN THE STORM WITH JESUS”**

She came at me like a heat-seeking missile, streaking by the people waiting to greet me after worship. Compelled to confront me then and there, she hit her target with these words: *“If you preach another sermon like that, you will divide our church!”* What do I do: fight, flee, or freeze? What do I say?

My sermon was based on Mark 4:35-41, the Gospel for Pentecost+3 (Year B). You know the story well. As Jesus and his disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee, a great windstorm arose. Waves swamped their boat. The panicked disciples rebuked a very exhausted Jesus for sleeping through the storm.

Jesus woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Dead calm followed. The disciples asked: “Who is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?” The sermon’s primary focus was on following Jesus wherever he leads, and not on the authority and power he demonstrated in Galilee.

Jesus’ disciples witnessed his teaching, miracles, and debates, all of it leading to an intensifying storm of bitter controversy and ominous conflict. Challenging religious legalism and coercive power with love and non-violent resistance led to his arrest, trial, and death, and to the disciples fleeing for their lives.

My June 2006 sermon stated that following Jesus often leads us into intense human storms, personal and public, all for the sake of God’s Beloved Community. So far, so good; but, challenging an unjust American war in Iraq, in Jesus’ name, violated the unspoken rules of pulpit protocol.

Pastors should avoid political issues. I did not. Strike one! I did not separate politics from religion. Strike two! Politics has no place in the pulpit, we are told. I was given a pass but duly warned. Keep preaching that way, Pastor, and you will be out! Jesus was warned and even thrown out of his home synagogue.

Days later she apologized to me and confessed that her husband and son-in-law were at bitter odds over politics, which divided and worried their family! Because our church was like an extended family for her, she projected that fear onto our church. She needed her church family to be free of such conflict.

From the United Nations to Washington DC, to our communities, neighborhoods, congregations, and dinner tables, we are bitterly divided. Fact-free, virulent speech incites hatred and harm. Because someone’s vision of America is superior and God is on “their side,” the pretext for violence is established.

Dear siblings in Christ, we are all in the same boat when we worship here. Christ is our North Star, his Gospel our compass, and his Way our example. As we sail through the stormy seas of the present time, swamped by the waves of insult and injury heaped upon us, should we not ask: What would Jesus do?

Take Jesus with you when you vote. What would he think/say/teach about this candidate or that issue? Take the Hebrew prophets with you, too. Before demonizing socialism and glorifying capitalism, use Jesus and the prophets as your guide, and then balance “we” with “me,” as in Acts 2:43-47.

The prophets and Jesus demand that we preach and teach about such things; also, that we condemn unjust war, coercive power, human cruelty, hubris, and hatred, while lifting God’s Beloved Community up as the only viable alternative. To still the storm we are in, let Jesus speak and then follow him.

We are all in the boat with Jesus, not as party members but as voting disciples. We *must* trust his Word and rely on his power in the storm! While the I.R.S. does not permit us to endorse candidates and ballot issues, Christ still compels us to speak to the issues with courage and civility. Will you join me?

With all of this in mind, Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

+Blessings, Bruce Greer, Interim Pastor.

FROM THE PULPIT IN NOVEMBER

November 6 (Pentecost+22)

“Take Courage!”

Rev. Greer preaching

To prepare, please read:

Haggai 1:15b-2:9; Luke 20:27-38

November 13 (Pentecost+23)

“Cupbearers for the King”

Rev. Greer preaching

To prepare, please read:

Nehemiah 2:1-6,11-18; Luke 21:5-19

November 20 (“Reign of Christ”)

“Christus Victor (Christ the Victor)”

Rev. Greer preaching

To prepare, please read:

Jeremiah 23:1-6; Luke 1:68-79; Colossians 1:11-20;
Luke 23:33-43

November 27 (Advent 1)

“What Goes Around Comes Around”

Rev. Greer, preaching

To prepare, please read:

Isaiah 2:1-5; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44

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

Cell: 617.599.6305

(calls, texts, 24/7)



Dear Myerstown UCC,

Thank you so much for allowing our extended stay on your parking lot until we could get the camper fixed. We really appreciate the short stays too!

Thanks again,

Kathy & Adam Heisy

(They also made a monetary donation to the church)

Dear Myerstown United Church of Christ,

Wishing you a happy fall as the pumpkin spice flows; and the 2022 harvest season begins.

In the past fiscal year 2021-2022 LCCM has distributed 399,983 pounds of food, served 63,029 noon meals, and provided clothing vouchers to 386 families. These numbers have all increased from our previous fiscal year. We value you as a partner with LCCM and invite you to remain involved with our ministry by: volunteering, attending our 2022 benefit dinner, and continue to advocate for our work in the community.

Two other major impacts of 2022 included: Returning to indoor dining for our noon meal (May 2022); and, and returning to congregate sheltering and partnering with The Chestnut Street Community Center (February 2022) for overnight sleeping accommodations.

We are in our 40th year of serving community meals with an all-volunteer effort. We are helping feed our neighbors in need of food and fellowship. We could not have done it without the help of generous donors like you! We are so appreciative of your generous support of \$1,310 to help ensure our community doesn't go without food and shelter.

Sincerely,

Bryan D. Smith, Exec. Director

‘Not all of us can do great things.
But we can do small things with
great love.’

Mother Teresa

Lebanon County Christian Ministries

November Wish List

We are in need of winter clothing for all.

We are in dire need of the following personal care items

- ~ size 5 & 6 diapers
- ~ shampoo
- ~ deodorant
- ~ conditioner
- ~ body wash
- ~ toilet paper
- ~ tissues
- ~ bar soap
- ~ shaving cream
- ~ disposable razors
- ~ feminine hygiene products
- ~ laundry detergent

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.

Lebanon County Christian Ministries, our November Outreach

Our special outreach focus for November is Lebanon County Christian Ministries. Inflation is currently driving the cost of basic needs like food and shelter out of reach for many people. Requests for help at LCCM have risen dramatically. We have supported LCCM for a long time and sometimes forget how important that support is. We accept donations throughout the year but as we prepare for our own holiday feasts, let us remember those who do not have the resources that we enjoy. Bring your donation of nonperishable food to worship and place it before the altar. Canned pasta, soup, and vegetables are always needed. Keep in mind that many clients at LCCM do not live in homes with well-stocked kitchens. Cake mix is not useful if you do not have the oil needed to make it. Personal care items like shampoo, soap, and deodorant are useful. Financial contributions are, of course, always welcome.

We have been a member congregation for many years. LCCM sends out an Annual Financial Commitment request and, as was approved in our budget, we have pledged \$1,000, in addition to whatever our members might donate. Kathy Grose and Marie Hibshman continue to serve as our delegates to LCCM and both volunteer in the Food Bank. Carolyn Williams has finished her term on the Board.

Lebanon County Christian Ministries assists people in need of emergency services such as food, clothing and shelter. Their facility on south 7th Street in Lebanon houses food and clothing banks. Noon meals are prepared and distributed from the kitchen there. Clients can apply for assistance with paying en-

ergy bills. LCCM also administers the Emergency Food Assistance program, a federal program that makes a variety of nutritious food available to low-income Americans, including many elderly, on a regular basis. Distribution sites located all over the county include St Luke Lutheran Church in Schaefferstown, Living Stone Fellowship in Newmanstown, and Tulpehocken Terrace in Myerstown.

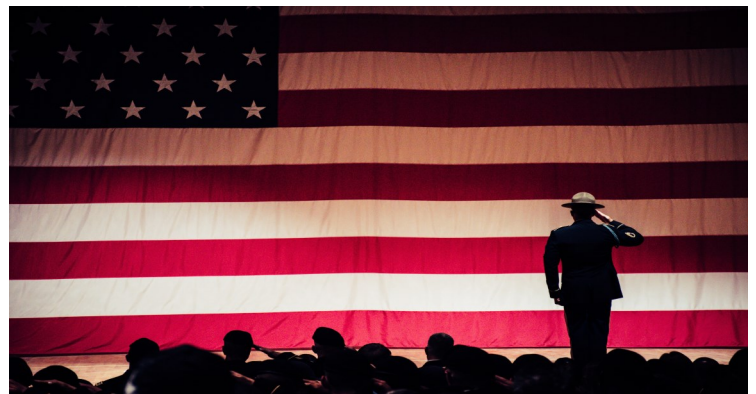
According to the annual report for fiscal year July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022, volunteers provided services valued at \$625,000. 399,982 pounds of food were distributed in all food programs, 1,396 families were helped by the food pantry, and 63,029 meals were served in free noon meals.

The need for emergency shelter is an area of rapidly growing concern. About two years ago LCCM began a program called Fresh Start which provides overnight lodging. It is now permanently located at the Chestnut Street Community Center. The Annual report lists 18 average number of guests per day and 6,601 nights of stay.

In recent years, LCCM leadership has introduced efforts to help people improve their situations, eliminating their need for assistance. LCCM's Director Bryan Smith announced that "we have partnered with Lebanon Family Health Services and collaboratively applied for a grant from WellSpan Health System. We were notified in June that we were awarded \$436,000 over a three-year period. This grant will work to..... establish a program at LCCM to help people who are ready to move from struggling to thriving with the help of a supportive coach." "We remain focused on our mission of sharing the love of Jesus by providing emergency food, clothing, shelter and guidance toward sustainability. We can only do this with your continued investment in us."



FRIDAY NOVEMBER 11, 2022 VETERANS DAY



HONORING ALL THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED OR WHO ARE SERVING

WE SALUTE YOU AND ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR CHOICE TO DEFEND OUR FREEDOMS!



November

- 1—Renee Duffy
- 3—Emily Frantz
- 4—James Eisenhauer
- 6—Joan Hartman
- 8—Nicholas Garman, Lloyd Weaver
- 9—Larry Mentzer
- 10—Jean Uhrich
- 15—Bradley Hartman
- 16—Sara Faust
- 19—Donald Brown
- 21—Glenn Bicher
- 23—Nancy Brown
- 27—James Diehm, Dale Ebling,
Darlene Noll
- 28—Jennifer Blystone
- 30—Gene Haag



Important!

Myerstown Women's Club will not meet in November.

Fall Back one hour on Sunday, November 6th

November's Council meeting will be held on **Tuesday, November 8th** at 6:30 pm in the Library.

Veteran's Day is Friday, November 11th.

Scouting for Food bag drop off is Saturday, November 12th. All food donated goes to local food banks.

Town Hall meeting November 13 immediately following worship to review 2023 Proposed Budget.

Scouting for Food bag pick up is Saturday, November 19. Please leave your bags on your front porch by 8:00 am.



Thanksgiving Day November 24, 2022

Enjoy the time spent with family and friends.

New Horizons November 26th, 2022 at 9:00 am Family Style Breakfast at Country Fare in Myerstown. Please make reservations and payments no later than November 19th.

Myerstown Holiday Parade and Tree Lighting Saturday, November 26th.

