

NEWS & VIEWS

September 3, 2023

Volume 22 No. 9

Doylestown Mennonite Church

PASTOR'S PEN

Fall is my favorite time of year. Though we have had a rather moderate summer, I am always happy to turn off the AC and welcome crisper air of the season. In addition to the cooler weather, the beginning of football season and the return to a more regular routine are always welcome. I am particularly excited for this fall as we begin a period of congregational discernment.

In Romans 12 the apostle Paul encourages his readers "Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect." We are going on this journey of discernment to discover together what it is that God desires of DMC. I find this one verse provides a few simple points worth consideration.

Paul's caution not to be conformed to this world, I believe suggests an awareness of how easily and frequently we fall into this pattern. When we live, breathe, sleep and eat in a culture that advertises and constantly promotes a successful/happy lifestyle, it is impossible not to be impacted. Another way to say it is that we easily become comfortable with our surroundings and the way things are. Before long we are shaped and formed by things of this world. This caution is not to condemn but to help us recognize how easily this occurs.

Secondly, it holds out hope that transformation can occur by the renewing of our minds. This is not the same as getting more education or increasing one's knowledge. Rather it is a renewal that comes from taking a fresh approach. It includes a refocusing on the things that God desires and opening one's heart to pursue that which God wants. How do the sources you listen to renew your mind and heart that empowers transformation?

Finally, it encourages us in that we are granted the capacity to discern the will of God. It is not that we are given special knowledge but by listening to God and one another we can discover what God has for us. To discern means to distinguish mentally; recognize as distinct or different; discriminate. As we pray, listen, and speak together we can trust God will empower us to distinguish and discriminate. It will not come all at once and it will not be identical for each one of us. However, God can be trusted to guide when we listen.

I do not know where our journey will lead. I am pretty sure it will be different than what I expect. I am excited and confident God to know can be trusted. I encourage each one to join this journey to discover where God wants to take DMC.

- Pastor Randy

COMING UP ... SOME SPECIAL DATES

Birthdays

Aimee Gourley 9/7

Sue Bartels 9/17

Janice Wyble 9/20

Donald Heckler 9/24

Joyce Zuzack 9/25

Betty Good 9/28

EARLY OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Glenn Wyble 10/6

Dean Bartels 10/6

Anniversaries

Mark & Lisa Reiff 9/15

Robert & Suzanne Schwabe 9/25

KAREN'S PLACE COFFEEHOUSE

After hosting an outdoor concert series on Monday nights in August, Karen's Place re-opens in October to celebrate our 25th year.

SENIOR PICNIC

Nineteen seniors enjoyed a pot-luck picnic on August 20 at the home of Lois and Freida Myers.

The weather was all that could have been desired. The fellowship was delightful and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. (Sorry for the folks who are not yet old enough!)



FROM THE CARE TEAM

The Care Team met on August 22 via Zoom. Randy Heacock, Aimee Gourley, Freida Myers and Sandy Landes were present. Our biblical focus was Luke 9:28-36, the transfiguration of Jesus, which tied in with our conversation about vulnerability and authority. In the experience on the mountain, Jesus experienced both authority and vulnerability. The Father spoke words of blessing over Jesus (a word of authority) while the story relates that Moses and Abraham were speaking with Jesus about his upcoming departure, pointing to his crucifixion (an experience of vulnerability).

Our book discussion of Strong and Weak focused on hidden vulnerabilities that we face. Sometimes we carry vulnerabilities that others are unaware of, particularly when we have a leadership role, whether it is in work, in the family or community. We thought about this quote: "No one survives hidden vulnerability without companions who understand." Without companions who walk with us, we suffer burnout. It is important to acknowledge this for ourselves and others and to foster relationships where we can be open and honest. How can DMC grow in our openness to the vulnerabilities we carry?

The Care Team will resume our discussion on a welcoming statement for DMC this fall as we take time to discern God's guidance for us. We lifted up individuals and families in prayer. We pray that DMC will grow in our understanding of both authority and vulnerability.

We will meet again on Tuesday, September 19, 7:00 pm.

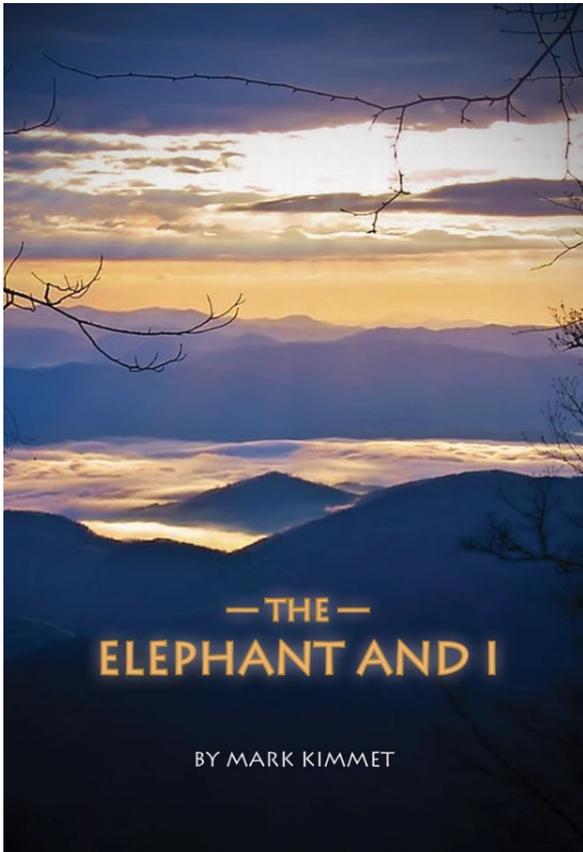
- Sandy Landes for the Care Team

OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY

Jeff Buckwalter has been working at Neshaminy Manor, a 360-bed facility run by Bucks County, for over 17 years. He recently asked Karl Strauch if he would lead a Bible Study there. Over a dozen people attended this study on August 23rd. To God be the Glory! Prayers for future studies on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month will be eternally appreciated.

FROM THE LIBRARY - Book Review

Do you enjoy outward-bound journeys that challenge you physically and mentally? This 380-page book describes in great detail the experiences of Mark Kimmet (“Noodle”) and his close friend (“The Elephant”) as they hiked the 2200-mile long Appalachian Trail from Amicalola Falls Park in northern Georgia to Mount Kitahdin in Maine in 5½ months from April 4th to September 22nd, 2005.



That epic challenge has intrigued me ever since reading Larry Luxenberg’s 1994 238-page book “Walking the Appalachian Trail” and Bill Bryson’s great 1998 276-page book “A Walk in the Woods”. Those helped me understand the magnitude of the 5½-month walk to Maine that a friend of mine took on that trail around 2008, shortly after he retired from his life-long job as a fireman down in central Florida. That friend subsequently planned to hike the challenging 2650-mile Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail up from the Mexican border in southern California through Death Valley and other breathtaking places up to Manning Park, British Columbia, Canada.



Cindy at southern end in 2022



Our family enjoying the Pacific Crest Scenic Trail in northern California in 2015

While we are focusing on forgiveness at DMC right now, could you forgive me for saying to you, “Take a hike !!” ...?

- Karl Strauch

UPDATE FROM KRISANNE

Dear Congregation,

I am finally able to share the news about where God has called me next in ministry! I recently accepted the lead pastor position at Souderton Brethren in Christ Church, just about 3 miles from our home in Hilltown. I am so honored and humbled by this opportunity to continue serving Jesus and His Body through pastoral ministry. During the interview process, they invited Jon to join me as I sat and talked with them. Leaving that meeting, we both felt a strong sense of "fit" with the group and peace in our spirits as we considered this congregation, Jon and I having such different temperaments, I knew that was a good sign of God's leading. Of course, I only know a handful of people at SBIC right now. I am looking forward to meeting many more members and discerning with their leadership board where God is leading the church next. One exciting aspect of their ministry is an afternoon Spanish worship service that has grown significantly in the past year - what a meaningful partnership between cultures that reflects the diverse beauty of God's Kingdom!

I officially move into my office on Tuesday, September 5, and installation Sunday is September 10 at 10:30 am. I'll also be introduced at the Spanish service at 1:00 pm, and there will be a meal in between. I want to once again express my love and gratitude to you all at Doylestown Mennonite. You have been such a gift to our family over the years, and you opened so many doors for me to grow in ministry. You are such dear friends and I'm sure we will find ways to connect over the next months. You are in our prayers and in our hearts!

- KrisAnne Swartley 215.254.8348 (c)

FROM EVERENCE

Our congregation's Everence representative is Karl Strauch. He shares this announcement from Everence:

Your path to Medicare and Social Security. Gain confidence and clarity about moving to Medicare and maximizing Social Security benefits with guidance from Everence, a faith-based organization that partners with our church. Attend an upcoming workshop: Thursday, September 7, 6:30 pm, at Zion Mennonite Church, 149 East Cherry Lane, Souderton PA. Learn key steps to getting Medicare, how to move from current coverage, planning for healthcare costs in retirement and more. RSVP at everence.com/souderton, by emailing souderton@everence.com or calling 215-703-0111.

PARTING THOUGHT:

If you but trust in God to guide you and place your confidence in him,
You'll find him always there beside you, to give you hope and strength within
For those who trust God's changeless love build on the rock that will not move.

- Georg Neumrk, 1657 Tr. Catherine Winkworth 1863

**Deadline for
submitting items for
the October
News & Views:
September 26**

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