

PASTOR'S PEN

We are living in unprecedented days. I included pictures of our empty sanctuary and the notice on our door. The emptiness and quiet of our building speaks of isolation and fear that is being caused by COVID 19. The first hymn of our blue worship book is titled, "What is this place." The hymn talks of this church building sheltering people and a body that lives when we are gathered here. Yet today and for at least the next month, this building remains both empty and quiet.

As people who value gathering regularly with other followers of Jesus, not being able to worship together is a tremendous loss. In the very moment when we most need one another we are forced to physically isolate. In spite of an empty building without the ability to be physically present with one another, the church marches onward. I sense we are learning new aspects of worship. We are trying different expressions of worship that nurture us and connect us to God and one another. People are being forced to create their own rhythm of daily worship to replace what some sought to receive once a week through attending church.

I have heard of people calling others that they often did not take the time to call. Families are spending more uninterrupted time together. People have more opportunity to sit before God and cry out to God. Others have worshipped through service to others. One person told me how his prayer life has become more meaningful during this time when he cannot gather with others.

I look forward to when we can once again gather in this empty building to sing together and greet one another without fear. I long to see this building once again busy with activities where groups meet to encourage one another. At the same time, I give thanks that our faith can anchor us in the midst of uncertainty. Especially in this season of spring, when we see signs of new life bursting forth in nature, we can be confident that God is present in our world.

The last verse of the hymn I referenced states it this way. "Here in this world, dying and living, we are each other's bread and wine. This is the place where we can receive what we need to increase: God's justice and God's peace." May we fully trust that in this world we can and we will receive what we need from God.

-Pastor Randy



Some Special Dates....

Upcoming BIRTHDAYS

Matthew Ryan	4/1
Louise Beyer	4/2
Mark Reiff	4/9
Sandra Maldonado	4/25
Cesar Garrido	4/29

Upcoming ANNIVERSARIES

Charles & Grace Snyder 4/3

PLANS GOING FORWARD

As suggested by our government at every level, DMC will remain closed the entire month of April. To celebrate Easter, we will host a Facebook Live message from Pastor Randy and Pastor KrisAnne. This will be live on Sunday, April 12, at 10 AM at this link: <https://m.facebook.com/doylestownmc/>. No need to have a Facebook account in order to listen.

We will continue to send out pastoral messages after Easter on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday via email. We invite others to send us short messages of "surprise" that will be shared with the congregation. These can be messages of surprise blessings or surprise encounters with grief/loss.

Trying to be realistic, we anticipate there is a strong possibility that one or more within our congregation will contract COVID-19. As Pastors, we will try to respond using congregational participants who may live closest to such individuals to help care for one another.

Zoom prayer meetings will continue to be offered 3 times each week.

Pastor KrisAnne will continue reading daily Kingdom stories on Facebook Live at 10 AM. These can be listened to anytime by going to the Doylestown Mennonite Church Facebook page by clicking <https://m.facebook.com/doylestownmc/>.

As always, we continue to be open to respond to any need, so please always feel free to call on us.

Fully trusting that God is with us,
Pastors Randy, Sandy and KrisAnne

KAREN'S PLACE COFFEEHOUSE

Due to the COVID-19 virus, Karen's Place will be closed at least through April. However, our TV shows on WBPH (TV60) will continue to air on the 2nd Wednesdays at 8:30pm.

We have also scheduled a special live Facebook event for **April 18 at 7PM**. Grammy Award nominated spoken word artist **Egypt Speaks** (who appeared at Karen's Place 2 times) has planned her "The Stay Home Facebook Live Virtual Tour."

A message from Egypt:

"I am super excited to bring the Stay Home Tour to a living room couch near you! With everything that's been going on, I wanted to think of a way to bring stories, poetry, and music of hope to you in a way that was safe in the current climate. Thus, the Stay Home Tour was born. I'll be taking over some of my favorite venue's social media accounts over the next two weeks to host a series of concerts and conversations. Who knows! I might even bring along a few of my favorite artists. It's all anyone's guess really. These venues are also located around the world (literally)! So find a date and a time zone that works for you and grab some popcorn.

So! Stay home, bring your own toilet paper, and I'll see you on the web starting this week!"

-Don Heckler

FROM THE COMUNITY GARDEN

Here you go! Something you can't postpone or cancel. The rains come and the sun shines and things are growing fast. The garden calls for help NOW, and the gardeners will be there. Much will happen in the next few weeks.

FROM THE PRAYER CORNER

While this pandemic has certainly changed much of our lives, I am so grateful that it hasn't changed who God is. As we have been tending to our walk with God, that ongoing trust and connection will continue to give us stability in the midst of all this change. In our phone prayer meeting on Sunday evening, one person mentioned really appreciating experiencing God as their Rock. That sense of God's presence is helpful as they go to work and feel the uncertainty. My prayer is that we will continue to grow in our relationship with God and perhaps learn new ways to pray!

We have several prayer opportunities during our social distancing requirement:

Prayer by phone/computer: Tuesdays at 9 am, Fridays at noon and Sundays at 7 pm.

Each meeting has a link that will be emailed to the congregation. The two options are to join via your computer with video and audio or by phone with just audio. You are welcome to join and share our experiences and prayers for each other without fear of passing on a virus, but with the blessing of passing on compassion and care for each other as well as . Please join as you are able. We meet for approximately 30 mins.

On the four Sundays in April that we are not able to meet for worship, at least one prayer usher will be available by phone on those days from 9:30 – 10:30am. They will continue to respect the need for confidentiality. You will receive their contact info on the Friday before the Sunday they are available.

A few prayer resources that you might find helpful:

- 24-7 prayer.com, there is a guided prayer for this global pandemic
- <http://mennoniteusa.org/menno-snapshots/a-prayer-for-covid-19/>
- Psalm 91, 23, and 46 are helpful psalms to read and pray aloud

May we each find ourselves trusting God for the grace we need each day.

-Sandy Landes, Prayer Minister

CARE TEAM NOTES

The Care Team met virtually on Monday, March 23, 2020, we discussed the following items: We talked about the current world situation with COVID-19 and how that has changed our regular routine. We agreed that life is very different without person to person contact.

We read Psalm 46 and we all realized that we need the strength that only God can provide as we go through this time. Even though our worldly life changes, we can trust that God never changes.

We pondered several questions, for example- How are we managing anxiety that we have? What are some good news stories of God's faithfulness at this time? How can we better support others at this time? Our team agreed that limiting the time watching the news was helpful and allowed us to focus more on God. To focus on 'the now' and be grateful for all that we have. Having a positive attitude helps with our state of mind. Now is not a time to attack but to be respectful, it's an enormous task at hand. Be compassionate and focus on what brings joy and signs of hope.

We have a standing agenda item to discuss compassion fund needs. Additionally, we pray for our congregation and church members in need. Our next Care Team meeting is planned for Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 7:30 PM.

-Robin Miller, for the Care Team

FROM THE LIBRARY

Book Review: [Does God Really Like Me?](#) By Cyd & Geoff Holsclaw

When I was a teenager, the passages in the Bible about God's wrath made me quite uncomfortable. I was afraid that one day, I would do something really bad and God would stop loving me. I have learned since then how long and wide and high and deep is God's love. I have learned to trust that love and to rest in it when I fall short. But every once in a while, the child inside me still asks that question (especially when I've come face to face with my selfishness or greed or impatience, etc.). I know God loves me, but does He really like me?

So when my friends, Cyd and Geoff, announced their book title and asked people to become part of the "launch team" for the book, I jumped in! And I wasn't disappointed! They do a fantastic job of talking about our human tendency toward sin and God's deep desire to bring us back to life with Him. They use easy-to-understand illustrations from their own lives to explain Biblical truth, and they invite us to think deeply about how we have experienced God and the journey of redemption. I was impressed with their openness and vulnerability in these pages; they share deeply from their life experiences. I was also impressed with their theological depth. It was obvious to me that they had studied the scriptures carefully and weren't just writing from emotion.

I would recommend this book to anyone who lives with that voice in their head that says, "You better be good if you want God to accept you." I would also recommend sharing this book with a friend who may be struggling with the idea of a loving God because they have most often heard about God's wrath. Each chapter closes with a prayer or journaling prompt, which could easily be used in conversation with a reading partner. Cyd and Geoff also recommend songs for each chapter that connect to the topics (easily found on

Youtube or iTunes or Amazon music).

I leave you with the over-arching message of the book: Yes, God likes you! He created you with the gifts, talents, personality and body that you have. And He is delighted when you want to be in His Presence. Deeply delighted!

-KrisAnne Swartley

THOUGHTS FROM SOUDERTON

The Easter Season will certainly be different for all of us this year. We are asked to practice social distancing, stay in our homes and not to gather in groups. People all over the world are getting sick and many are dying. All our precautions seem to be doing very little to prevent the spreading of this pandemic and we can't see an end to the grip it has on this world.

I would like to gather together for Easter to solemnly contemplate what Jesus Christ did by dying on the cross for me and for the whole world. I would like to celebrate His resurrection from the grave together, making it possible that we can live forever with him. What a wonderful thought!

So I ask God, "Why have You allowed the COVID-19 to totally disrupt our lives and how should we react to it? What do You want me to learn from this?" I feel that I am part of this world that is slowly drifting away from the teachings of Jesus, our Creator and God. I am praying to Him to have mercy on us, to forgive us and heal us and that the people of this world will be drawn closer to God and closer to each other. This virus is no respecter of persons; it infects the rich and the poor, the famous and the infamous. It is a leveling instrument in our society. Let's use this time of separation and social distancing to commune with our God and reach out to help our neighbors when we can.

-John Moyer

DIFFERENT WAYS of being together on Sunday

On March 21 we had the option of meeting on the church parking lot at 10 am for a walk around the walking path. A number of us showed up and went around the path twice:



Then we stood in a circle on the parking lot (too cold to sit in the pavilion.) In the circle we had a time of sharing and prayer, Randy read scripture and KrisAnne led a song.



March 29 was different. Sandy set us up with ZOOM and quite a few more rang in for a time of sharing and praying together. Now other opportunities are coming in the next several weeks.

A BLAST FROM THE PAST: BUILDING A CROSS

Before they moved to Virginia, Dr. Earl King, his wife Cathie Sue and daughter Danielle worshiped with us. He wrote of this experience in May, 2011:

I volunteered to build a cross for the church community after hearing about a desire to have one in the sanctuary. Putting words into action was more difficult. The first struggle was: "What should it look like?" In my mind it could not look like ones we see on television adorning a deck. The cross would have to be sturdy to support Jesus while bearing all our sins. Getting the right dimensions was difficult, to say the least; my brother measured me up with a tape measure on the barn floor to try to get some proportions; that was a humbling experience. The second problem was the difficulty of overcoming my sense of unworthiness to build a cross to represent one of the greatest events in all of history. There are skilled wood workers in this church body who are saints and certainly more deserving.

The next challenge encountered was having an absolutely pure heart and conscience to work on the cross. You cannot build a cross and focus on its meaning and purpose in the wrong state of mind. Constructing a cross that held Jesus is not the same as building a table, garden beds, or a birdhouse. My conscience had to be clear; I had to be at peace with mankind. The second Saturday, while trying to work on the cross, construction came to a halt. I felt convicted that my conscience was not clear. It took a lot of soul searching and another week of praying for forgiveness before I could return to building the cross.

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(continued) A BLAST FROM THE PAST: BUILDING A CROSS

After completing the cross I realized that my measurements were off. Remember, it is because of us all, tall and especially short stout people like me that Jesus went there in the first place. Back to the lumberyard in Dad's pickup truck I went with no choice words. After finishing the construction I placed it upright in the shop. The view stopped me dead in my tracks, so to speak. A chill came over me and doubts of worthiness plagued me once again. I remember praying and thanking God for sending his only son Jesus to die on Calvary and the grace provided to me. The last step in building the cross was sanding, applying the stain and sealer. This reminded me of Jesus' blood cleansing us of our sin and mending our many infirmities.

I am grateful for having the privilege of building a cross for the church. It was a humbling experience and at the same time uplifting. A refrain from LIFE SONGS #145 is meaningful to me. *"Mercy there was great, and grace was free, pardon there was multiplied to me. There my burdened soul found liberty, at Calvary."*

Jesus came and gave his all. God gave his only son. I am responsible for Jesus dying on the cross.

-Earl King

A little note from Susie Church-mouse:

I'm getting worried. Lately hardly anyone comes around and it's much too quiet on Sundays. There's no music. It's always exciting on Easter Sunday when there's a great breakfast and everybody comes. I'm afraid there won't be any this year. I heard people walked the path and they seem to like something called zoom, whatever that is. It doesn't do me any good - I want to see faces and food!



Deadline for submitting items to the May 3 News & Views: **April 28**

PARTING THOUGHT:

"In heavenly love abiding, no change my heart shall fear, and safe is such confiding, for nothing changes here. The storm may roar without me, my heart may low be laid, but God is round about me, and can I be dismayed?"

-Anna L. Waring, Hymns and Meditations 1850

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