

NEWS & VIEWS

April 11, 2021

Volume 20 No.4

Doylestown Mennonite Church

PASTOR'S PEN—

Encouraging Discipleship

I grew up saying the Lord's Prayer every Sunday during junior church. Looking back, I am a bit intrigued because the church of my childhood did not use written prayers. In fact, I remember being encouraged to pray "from the heart" which seemed more authentic than written prayers. Over time I developed a bias that spontaneous prayers were better than those written on paper. It almost seemed that being able to spontaneously pray in public was a sign of spiritual maturity.

As I have grown older, with or without increasing maturity, my appreciation for written prayers has increased. I have learned to value particularly prayers that are contained in the Bible as helpful and authentic. One such prayer is what we call the Lord's Prayer as found in Matthew 6:5-15. Since Jesus gave this prayer to his disciples, it seems that those of us who claim to be his followers may find it beneficial to everyday life. This prayer will be my focus for April as we seek to increase our journey as disciples. Beginning next week, I will send out weekly e-mails to encourage use of this prayer.

Before instructing the disciples how to pray, he first told them what not to do. In verses 7 and 8 of Matthew 6, Jesus said "do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him." When I hear this I cannot help but remember falling asleep in prayer meetings in which it seemed people were convinced God had a better chance of hearing if those praying used more words than the person before them. It seemed that they interpreted the phrase to "pray without ceasing" as to never say amen.

What I find interesting is why Jesus said this. Jesus said, "your Father already knows what you need." From the very beginning Jesus appears to want to place a different emphasis on prayer. For Jesus, the context of prayer is not the transmission of information from the one praying to God. Rather, prayer is a relationship builder for the one praying to connect with a caring God who already knows one's need/circumstances. Therefore, when we pray we do not need to be eloquent or well spoken to get God's attention. God is already tuned in waiting to hear from us.

This month, pay attention to the attitudes you hear about prayer. Do you sense God waiting to hear from you? Does it seem like you need to plead with God to get his attention? Do you believe that the more people who are praying for your concern the greater chance of God giving what you want? Remember Jesus' words of caution not to heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do. Be confident that God knows what you need before you ask and allow that to set the tone for your prayer relationship with God.

-Pastor Randy



COMING UP....SOME SPECIAL DATES

Birthdays

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

KAREN'S PLACE

For now, Karen's Place will not be open to the public. However, we will continue to offer concerts and live stream them so you can watch them live online or later at your convenience on their website or Facebook page.

Upcoming are:

April 17– Obadiah, one of our most popular bands- all blues? all rock? pure gospel.

May 1– The Sweet Mercy Band, a contemporary Christian rock band with a Southern Twist.



FROM THE PRAYER CORNER

During this year of the pandemic, we have prayed together as a congregation in worship, in the prayer room, over the phone, in zoom meetings, etc. It has been encouraging to experience prayer in these scheduled times.

However, I was recently challenged by a blog on prayer in which the writer urges us as the body of Christ to take prayer everywhere, to use it anytime, with anyone and for anything. Instead of limiting ourselves to praying at scheduled times, Phil Migloratti suggests letting the Holy Spirit nudge us to pray in our everyday lives whether it is at home, at work, while driving, at a restaurant, walking, shopping, etc. Where do you find yourself with people and situations where prayer is needed? What if we

stopped for a minute to pray together with a person or two right at the present moment? I admit it takes courage. It doesn't need to be long, because we know God is able to do more than we can ever ask or imagine.

I'd like to invite us as a congregation to take the next 50 days between Easter and Pentecost, which is Sunday, May 23, and see how many "prayer meetings" in which we have the opportunity to participate. The prayer bulletin board across from the mailboxes usually has a list of "scheduled" prayer meetings for the month, but now I invite you to add sticky notes with just the location of a place where you prayed, with the Holy Spirit, with one or two other people, by phone, etc.



If you would like, send me the locations throughout the week and I will add them to the bulletin board.

"Each of you, all of you, allow the Holy Spirit to fill you with unexpected opportunities to pray." Ephesians 5:19

-Pastor Sandy Landes

CARE TEAM REPORT

The Care Team met on March 9 for our monthly meeting. We've been meeting virtually for so long but we spoke about hopefully meeting in person again soon. After what seemed like a long, isolated winter, it was nice to have reason to be hopeful for change! Along with our normal agenda of discussion and prayer around needs and care for our church community, we had a discussion around a reading of Ephesians 1:3-10 'Praise for Spiritual Blessings in Christ'. What stood out to us in this scripture is that God has blessed us with: Adoption as 'sons', Redemption and Forgiveness, Lavished on us His grace, to be Holy and Blameless. So as we accept these blessings, what words of blessings can we share with others? "God wants you to know that you are loved." "God has forgiven you for your sins" are some examples, but maybe you can think of others. We're not always comfortable to speak in this way, but these are blessings that God has given to all people so we can be confident to pronounce these blessings to others. Maybe this is a different or helpful way to think about our dialogue when we pray with someone - What has God blessed this person with? How can we look to these words to bless those in life's every day decisions and struggles? There are so many ways to pray and it's inspiring that this team and our church community are continuing to learn, explore and share experiences and perspectives!

-Kendrick Garrido, for the Care Team

FROM THE LIBRARY: BOOK REVIEW

I've always been reluctant to tell anyone much about the story line of any book that I've read or a movie that I've seen. The joy is in the journey and seeing things unfold before your eyes without knowing ahead of time how things will turn out. Isn't that how Jesus worked with His disciples, encouraging them to walk in faith with Him?

All Saints is a fascinating, very inspiring book !! The back cover briefly describes the story line ... "Newly ordained, Michael Spurlock's first assignment is to pastor All Saints, a struggling church with 25 devoted members and a mortgage well beyond its means. Michael must choose between closing the church and selling the property – or listening to a still, small voice challenging the people of All Saints to risk it all and provide much-needed hope to their new community. The best option may be to close the church rather than to watch it wither any further. But when All Saints hesitantly risks welcoming a community of Karen refugees from Burma – former farmers scrambling for a fresh start in America – Michael feels they may be called to an improbable new mission. Together they risk everything to plant seeds for a future that might just save them all."

All Saints, written in 2017, is a true story which was also produced as a movie by SONY. It also is a very timely story. Having an encounter with "Refugees from Burma" may not mean much to you until you recognize that Burma is now known as the "Republic of the Union of Myanmar". I did not know much about that country so I recently looked for information about it on the Internet. The Wikipedia article on it was quite an eye opener. Its population in 2017 was about 54 million people, approximately 7% of whom are the Karen ethnic group referred to in this book. Myanmar was granted independence in 1948, the same year that Israel was. Since that time the country has been involved in one of the world's longest civil wars. Myanmar is front page news right now. The 2020 general election was held on November 8th, the day after ours, and it resulted in widespread claims of voting irregularities. On February 1st, the day that the new government was set to convene, the military staged a coup and jailed key members of the ruling party. Since that fateful day, hundreds of people have died in protests against the military takeover. Our daily news sources

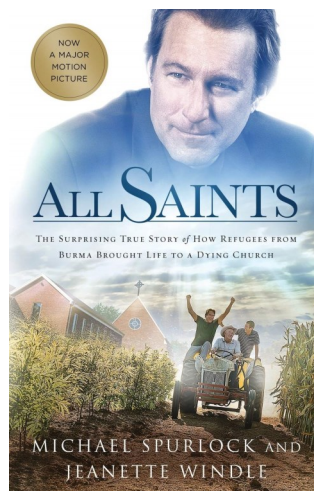
continue to report more deaths and large groups of refugees fleeing Myanmar to seek safe refuge in another country.

Our own country now seems to be going through similar concerns about the integrity of our 2020 elections and wide divisions of opinions about how to resolve a wide range of perceived problems. We also have to deal with a large number of refugees, but virtually all of those want to come into our country, not flee from it.

All Saints is a wonderful testimony of what can be accomplished when people seek God's will, walk with Him in faith, and witness the miraculous ways that He provides exactly whatever is need to take the next step. The small church that I attended weekly for over 10 years out in Missouri closed the month after I moved here at the end of 2018, mainly because we failed to attract people in spite of being in one of the fastest growing communities in the greater St. Louis region.

Last year here at Doylestown Mennonite Church we focused on "Waiting on God in a hurried world". This year we "Look instead for what God can do!" What will He want us to do in response? What will we do when we encounter strangers from a different background than ours? Some strangers may appear to be stranger than others. Remember, though, that every person was created in God's image and that Jesus gave His life for each one of them, that none of them should perish, but all who accept Him have eternal life. May God guide us and bless each of us as we encounter each person we meet.

-Karl Strauch



Note: Lucy DeJesus donated some books, which are available for anyone. Many of them are devotional books which are better to take and keep for a while rather than add to the library. Help yourself to anything you like from the special free book shelf.

—Freida Myers, DMC Librarian

SPRING GETAWAY @ SPRUCE LAKE

About 25 DMC participants headed North to the Poconos for the weekend of March 19-21.

Lisa Reiff shares her experience --

The DMC Spruce Lake Spring Getaway was a wonderful time to rest, relax and enjoy time with church family. It was my first time at Spruce Lake; I was glad to finally see and experience the place that so many of my fellow Mennonite friends and family often speak of. Our first evening there, many of us gathered in the cozy lodge, played games, and chatted by the fireplace while enjoying the complimentary coffee and tea. We did not stay up too late, as we knew Saturday would be full of disc golf and hiking up Spruce Mountain.

Early Saturday morning, most of the men skipped breakfast and left for Pinebrook to play on Steve Landes' infamous disc golf course. I could hear envy in my husband's voice as he left, telling me to "enjoy breakfast in the dining room, and eat some for him too". He wouldn't have to tell this pregnant lady twice! The food served in the dining room, especially breakfast, was delicious. I enjoyed sitting at the breakfast table with the Swartley crew (minus Jon, as he was disc golfing). Heidi and Ben educated me on some "Gen Z" phrases, that I proceeded to use (most likely incorrectly) throughout the weekend, hoping that they might think a "millennial" like me is up with the times.

Saturday afternoon, many of us decided to hike up Spruce Mountain. I was told it was a fairly easy hike, but it proved to be quite a challenge, as much of the trail was still snow covered. As I waddled up the mountain, I was grateful for the encouragement and help I received from Dave and Joyce Zuzack, who ended up holding my coat the last half of our ascent. The view at the top of Spruce Mountain was, of course, worth the climb!

I had a great time at the DMC Spruce Lake Spring Getaway. Not only did we have beautiful weather, but the weekend had no agenda and allowed all to spend their time the way they wished. I loved getting to

know and spending more time with church family, as well as hearing about the history and experiencing Spruce Lake. It was a great time of fellowship and fun, and I look forward to more DMC getaways in the future!



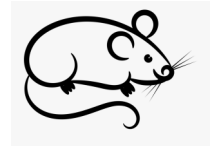
CELEBRATING EASTER

Throughout the month of March we viewed the cross, suffering and loss “through the lens of the resurrection.” We also used colored strips of paper to write down prayers of hope or ways we experienced hope and placed them on the cross or into the bowl at its foot. During the Good Friday service, those prayers were collected into the bowl and placed behind the magnifying glass. During the Easter service, we viewed short videos from members of the congregation who spoke about their hopes and experiences of hope. Easter flowers also brightened the sanctuary and we were encouraged to take them home with us to enjoy and to share with others.



Susie Churchmouse writes:

No Easter breakfast?? I hope that doesn't happen again! I'm really missing everybody.



DEADLINE for submitting items to the May News & Views: April 27

PARTING THOUGHT:

I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer. I Timothy 2:8

The prayer of the upright pleases him. Proverbs 15:8

Pastor: Randy Heacock

randy.heacock@doylestownmc.org

**Pastor of Prayer & Pastoral Care:
Sandy Landes**

sandylandes1311@gmail.com

Doylestown Mennonite Church

590 N. Broad Street

Doylestown, PA, 18901

Phone: 215.345.6377

dmc@doylestownmc.org

Newsletter Editor: Lois Myers

Phone/Fax 215-794-8327

myersfm@juno.com

Pastor of Worship & Administration:

KrisAnne Swartley

krisanne.swartley@doylestownmc.org