

Doylestown Mennonite Church

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

VIEWS

PASTOR'S PEN

It astounds me that we are beginning a new year, 2016! Like it or not, time marches on.

As I typically do, I have chosen a theme for the year. Since I have been appropriately accused of creating new words, I have decided on the following for this year's theme. Communion-ity..... learning to live together.

I chose to use the word communion-ity rather than community with intention. I am hoping this made-up word will enable us to think and behave in new and fresh ways. One definition of communion is the act of sharing in common one's thoughts and/or emotions. As a congregation, we share a common faith understanding in our desire to follow Jesus. This is one side of our communion. We seek and desire to encourage one another in our relationship with God. This common goal in our relationship with God also increases our relationship/connection with one another.

It is this part that I am calling us to work at this year. How might we learn to share our thoughts and emotions with one another in a way that builds our bond together? How does our communion with God translate into our communion with one another? This is the learning that I sense God desires us to pursue. This is what I invite us to pray for as individuals and as a congregation.

More Bible study is not the cure. Neither is more time in worship or service. The challenge is how to be together in a different way. How do we be present with one another in a way that more affectively allows God to work in us?

I certainly do not have a simple answer, but I do believe we have the foundation that is needed to work at this in 2016.

With Jesus as our foundation, we can press on. The Holy Spirit has been moving among us in a variety of ways, so we can try new ways of relating with confidence. The scriptures in both Old and New Testament declare that when we are humble before God, he lifts us up. In a similar way, scripture declares when we are humble with one another, our bond with one another is strengthened. Hence, our communion-ity will be enhanced when we are both humbled before God and each other.

Our first step in this journey is to learn to share more honestly of our thoughts and emotions with one another. What if we expected an honest reply to the greeting, "How are you?" What if we answered, "I am angry with a friend, I am afraid, I am disappointed with a family member, I am resentful, or I am struggling." It will take learning on our part to respond with such honesty. It could even become messy and complicated in the process. I can, however, promise one thing. If we try this with a desire to love and seek God we will find ourselves in deeper communion with one another.

In a society that has harvested great loneliness and increased isolation, we have a tremendous gift for one another and those we engage. Will you join me in praying for and practicing our theme for 2016?

Communion-ity.....Learning to live together!

SOME SPECIAL DATES

BIRTHDAYS

Mary Ellen Schade	1/1
Lester Heacock	1/8
David Chittick	1/10
Janey Garrido	1/13
Alverda Landes	1/13
Judy Garrido	1/14
Heather Zeo	1/18
Vanessa Heacock	1/21
Jamia Jackson	1/21
Peg Freed	1/25
Don Derstine	1/31

ANNIVERSARIES

Dave & Mary Lee Chittick	1/25
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COMING EVENTS

FEATURED IN KAREN'S PLACE

January 16 - Blue Sky Falls, a modern pop Christian band based in Lancaster County. They have that "Lancaster Sound", You won't be disappointed in their show.

February 6 - 288 Band, a rockin' Christian band from New Jersey. Their name comes from 1 Chronicles 25:7, where it reads "Along with their relatives-all of them trained and skilled in music for the Lord; they numbered 288".

February 13 - Valentine's Dinner Concert, with Wendy Schettig.

Entrée: Grilled, marinated herbed chicken breast, potatoes and seasonal vegetables, salad and New York Cheesecake. Catered by Jessica Lee Catering. \$25.00 per person. Reservations required by February 1. To make a reservation, email: info@Karensplace.org or call 215.345.6377.

SPECIAL FROM WORTHWHILE WEAR

For Men & Women...Worthwhile Wear: Special DMC Shopping & Tour, Sat. January 9, 2016, 9:00 am. The Thrift Store will be opening early for our group to shop and have a tour of the facility. Bring friends & neighbors to see the store and hear about the work of Worthwhile Wear. Meet at church at 8:30 am or go directly

to the store at 9:00 am, Worthwhile Thrift & Freedom Boutique, 6516 Easton Rd, Pipersville, PA 18947 (215-541-5401). Please sign up on the bulletin board in the hall behind the pulpit. Questions, please contact Nancy Heacock, 267.261.5123.

Volunteers Needed- If you have an hour to spend or all day, please consider helping at Worthwhile Thrift Store in Pipersville. There is a need for sorters in the warehouse and cashiers in the store. Please call the store at 215.541.5401, for more details on volunteering. Another great way to learn about the store is to join us for the special shopping and tour on Jan. 9th. See more info above.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

On a Wednesday evening, December 16, a group met at Don and Kathy Heckler's house to go caroling in their neighborhood. Two groups were formed to walk through the neighborhood. People who answered the door at around 40 homes received a Christmas card with an invitation to our Christmas eve service and other programs of the church. Afterward, the singers enjoyed hot chocolate and cookies at Don and Kathy's house.

FROM THE PRAYER CORNER

Praying together is not always easy. Sometimes we get sleepy listening to others pray, sometimes we are distracted by our own thoughts, and sometimes it is easier to pray by ourselves because we don't have to worry about having the right words. Having said that, I encourage us to ponder the practice of the early church which met together to pray. I wonder what would happen if we met together to pray as we face challenges and joys, decisions and problems? I wonder how we would be changed as we learn to pray with others for guidance, in seeking the kingdom of God to come to our church and community?

In the past two months, I have made a commitment to having a time of prayer together here at DMC every week. Sometimes it is an evening, sometimes a Friday morning, and sometimes it happens during the Sunday School hour. Praying together, while it has its challenges, can also be a time of shaping us and helping us to listen to God through each other, since prayer is about communicating with God which is both listening and speaking. Here are the times I have scheduled for the month of January and I invite you to consider joining one of these times to pray with others:

Friday, January 8 - 9 am

Tuesday, January 12 – 7-8 pm

Friday, January 22 – 9-10 am

Sunday, January 31 – During the Sunday School Hour

You are welcome to come and go as you are able during the scheduled times. I am also open to meeting with any DMC participant if you wish to pray in your home or workspace. (Oh, and the part about having the right words... I Samuel 16: 7, "People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." In other words, bring your heart to prayer and let God direct your words as you pray.)

Sandy Landes

PARTNERING WITH GOD - FIVE SIMPLE PRACTICES

Beginning in February 2016, all participants of Doylestown Mennonite Church are invited to join together to learn and try out 5 simple practices that will help us to partner with God in his mission to share grace and truth with our world.

They are:

- Developing a heart to serve
- Learning to listen for guidance
- Opening our eyes to everyday opportunities
- Inviting God to transform our daily habits and challenges
- Communicating confidently God's love for all people

Randy, Kris Anne and Sandy have worked together to plan five separate times to meet beginning in February and continuing through June. Each meeting time will focus on one of the practices with input from the pastoral team as well as opportunities to try it out and respond with our questions and thoughts and reports on how we are experiencing the practices in our lives.

The schedule is as follows:

Saturday, Feb. 20, 9-11 am with a focus on "Developing a Heart to Serve"

Sunday, March 20, 6-8 pm with a focus on "Learning to Listen for Guidance"

Saturday, April 23, 3-5 pm with a focus on "Opening our Eyes to Everyday Opportunities"

The May and June meetings will be scheduled per the participants' schedules. Please signup with the DMC office by calling Jenni Garrido at 215-345-6377, email doylestownmc@verizon.net or signup on the bulletin board. While we encourage you to attend every session, please join us as you are able. Everyone is invited to set aside the time for this important learning that will encourage us as we seek to be faithful followers of Jesus, and to grow in confidence in Christ.

Sandy Landes, Prayer Minister

Update: Refugee Resettlement in Southeast Pennsylvania

A small group of interested people gathered for a second time on December 13th, to continue discerning how God might be calling us at Doylestown Mennonite Church to reach out to refugee families who are resettling in our area. A member of the Sandy Ridge Community Garden joined us, as well. We reviewed our thoughts from the first meeting:

Inspired leadership sparks congregational generosity

"the least of these" Matthew 25

"widow"

God's love is so great for all refugees

"Won't you come and fill this place, O God?"

God's faithfulness

God hurts with the hurting

We ask God for wisdom

We also asked some questions- Could we speak to other congregations who have sponsored refugee families, and learn from their experience? Could we contact Lutheran Children and Family Services and have them come to speak with us about specifics? Members of the group are following up on these questions as we prepare to meet again (date to be announced).

We left feeling that we are in no hurry to dive into a large-scale project. We will continue to gather information from churches and organizations like LCFS who work with refugees regularly. We do feel God leading us to do something! There are many options open to us: collecting monetary donations, material aid like kitchen/bath/bedroom supplies, or becoming a sponsor congregation for a family. We trust that as we continue to pray, listen and explore possibilities, God will make clear what task we are called to do.

Kris Anne Swartley

FROM THE CARE TEAM

The Care Team met on December 21, 2015 and discussed the following:

We opened our meeting with prayer.

We spoke briefly about how Christmas is not always a happy time for everyone. It is a good time however, to connect with people and share with them even though it may not be easy.

We prayed for our congregation via the names in the church directory. We also discussed a recent communication that the care team sent to reach out to Rebecca Hestand. She has not responded, we prayed for her and her family.

In our devotions we are reading and discussing a book called The Emotionally Healthy Church. We read 1 John 1:7. We discussed that verse and what it means. We talked about walking in the spiritual light, sharing with other people, walking in the truth and how we are very thankful for our congregational members recent sharing. What are the patterns God wants for us? We are all sinners, how the Holy Spirit has purified us and how it is a constant process.

We reviewed discussion questions and talked about our genogram and how we are influenced by our culture, upbringing and values. We talked about how our families have shaped us. We talked about the influences of DMC. This is hard work and it takes time.

Care Team members are available for prayer during Sunday School on the first Sunday of the month (January 3, 2016) and specifics can be found in the weekly bulletin. Our next Care Team meeting is planned for January 25, 2016 at 7:00 PM.

Robin Miller for the Care Team (Randy Heacock, Sandy Landes, Bill Leatherman, Robin Miller and Freida Myers)

LAND FOCUS UPDATE

If you are observant you will have noticed some activity in our field. The garden group has gone ahead and moved. This was an anticipated venture and is one of the first steps in moving forward with any improvements to our outside space. The garden group is very active and excited about their new space. They have installed raised beds and are working on a new fence to keep the critters out. They have not been able to keep new participants out though! There are several new members and they hope to gather a few more before spring planting. This has been a real boost for them and has generated a lot of energy. Dave and MaryLee Chittick have been involved with the garden group and are able to fill you in with more information if you like. The other option would be to stop out at the garden and check in with anyone working in the garden.

We are currently still mulling over our next steps. We did venture out into the community close by to the church and received very positive reactions to any improvements we would make. We have been hearing a lot of emphasis on waiting and it seems that is what we are currently doing.

I have some thoughts about this waiting time. In our fact-finding and planning I interviewed Mike Derstine, pastor of Plains Mennonite Church. They installed a park on their property that is used very much. He made an interesting observation: "We built the park before we understood how to use it to connect with our community." I am thinking that as we wait we are learning how to connect with our community.

If you pay attention to your bulletin you will see a schedule of groups that use our building on a regular basis. If you would sit in the parking lot for several days you would also notice that there are folks who use our place for walking, parking, eating lunch and other similar activities. We can also include the folks from the garden on this list of others who use our facilities. These are the people of our community.

I believe we should not improve our property from a program or building-oriented plan that focuses on our own needs and more specifically to increase our numbers. I believe we can improve our property in response to our needs as well as those of our community. This may seem like a subtle shift, but I believe it releases us from the burden of measuring success by the numbers and looks more at success in a relational way.

Steve Landes for the Land Focus

FROM MENNONITE WOMEN

Yes, we still exist. There are no longer the formal monthly meetings and those weekly quilting and knotting sessions at the church, but comforters for MCC are still being produced. There will be more opportunity through this winter for groups of people to meet on a Saturday afternoon to knot and socialize together. Four to six people can work together each time, and it isn't limited to women. If you have some free time and would like to join in, or have some questions, contact Lois Myers (215-794-8327.) It's not hard; you can tie your shoes, right?

Worthwhile Wear Donation Drive –now till Jan 31, 2016. As a church we support Worthwhile Wear, a Christian organization that was founded as a solution to human trafficking. This is a local organization that is serving women who are caught in human trafficking. Their thrift store, Worthwhile Thrift & Freedom Boutique, helps to support this important work. Please bring gently used clothing for men/women/children, jewelry, and house wares to donate to Worthwhile Wear; put in the church library.

Donation details----

Gently used clothes --men/women/children:

- NO stains or rips
- Yes to summer or winter clothes
- NO underwear or socks
- Yes to coats & jackets
- Yes to shoes & boots
- YES to books (updated)

Jewelry, belts, scarves, accessories

House wares – dishes, knick knacks, small appliances

- NO large kitchen appliances

Blankets/Sheets – clean & NO stains/rips

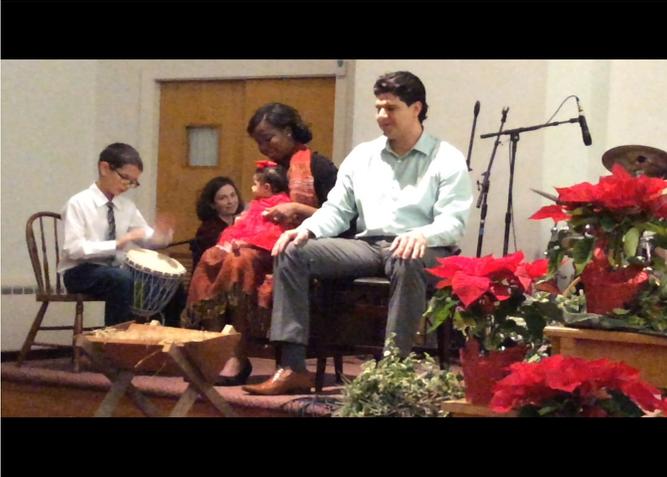
NO Toys

Large furniture items – drop off at store or call store to arrange for pick up.

Questions, call church office, 215-345-6377 or contact Nancy Heacock.

ADVENT and CHRISTMAS EVE

This year the advent theme was Waiting. Several people shared their experiences of waiting and the advent candles were seen through glass darkly until Christmas eve, when the Christ candle came to the fore. Christmas eve was full of carols and a special feature was the appearance of Ben Swartley as the Little Drummer Boy, playing his drum for the baby, portrayed by Yesenia Garrido and parents Naa and Derrick.



From Susie Churchmouise:

CHRISTMAS EVE IS BIG FOR ME-I LOVE ALL THE SINGING, ESPECIALLY CHRISTMAS EVE AND YOU CANT FORGET THE FOOD! ON DECEMBER 7 THE GOLDEN AGERS' DINNER WAS HOSTED BY JIM AND PAM MOYER, CESAR AND JUDY GARRIDO AND JOHN AND SALLY LANDIS. THEY SERVED A REALLY GOOD DINNER TO AROUND 35 GUESTS. AGAIN ON DECEMBER 27, THERE WERE COOKIES AND PUNCH HERE IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL. THOSE COOKIES WERE THE BEST.

Deadline for submitting items to the February News & Views: February 2

PARTING THOUGHT:

Another year is dawning, dear Master, let it be,
In working or in waiting, another year with thee
Another year of mercies, of faithfulness and grace,
Another year of gladness on the shining of thy face.

Frances Ridley Havergal, 1874

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