

NEWS & VIEWS

January 2, 2022

Volume 21 No.1

Doylestown Mennonite Church

PASTOR'S PEN—

Though I sense many are happy to see 2021 end, it is surprising how quickly another year has passed. Days, weeks, months and years keep rolling along. Nancy and I often joke about our appliances being new—now almost 21 years new. While we say goodbye to 2021, I do encourage us to remember our theme of “look instead for what God can do.” Whatever the lessons of 2021, let us continue to look into the future with eyes of faith to see what God is going to do.

Our theme for 2022 comes from Jeremiah 17:7-8. “Searching for the source...like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream.” Throughout 2022, we will attempt to encourage rooting our lives in Jesus, discovering what intercepts our roots, and identifying ways we confuse branches with roots, so that we can fully experience the stability God intends for us.

As we look at the book of Jeremiah, we discover that this imagery is provided in the midst of difficult and conflicted times. The words of Jeremiah are harsh and accusatory at times. Yet, this hope is offered to all those who chose to trust in the Lord. Likewise while we hope 2022 brings relief from the covid pandemic, tension and conflict will most likely remain a part of our society. The God who is faithful continues to invite us to trust in the Lord. We are given this promise of being like a tree planted by water.

I invite each one to both prepare for, and engage our theme for 2022. Post Jeremiah 17:7-8 in a place or places you see frequently. Listen prayerfully for what God may be saying to you as you meditate on this passage. I welcome any conversation regarding what you hear about this passage. May we learn and grow in being rooted in Jesus so that we will not cease to bear fruit.

2022 theme:

***Searching for
the Source***

*“like a tree planted by the
water that sends out its
roots by the stream”*

-Jeremiah 17:7-8



COMING UP....SOME SPECIAL DATES

Birthdays

Dave Chittick	1/10
Janey Garrido	1/13
Karry Bull	1/14
Judy Garrido	1/14
Don Derstine	1/31
Dorothy Wartko	1/31
Isaac Garrido	2/1
Jeff Buckwalter, Jr.	2/3
Jon Swartley	2/4

Anniversaries

Dave & MaryLee Chittick 1/25

KAREN'S PLACE COFFEEHOUSE

*Open the first and third Saturdays of each month,
7:00-10:00pm*

Jan 15—Jim Winder, is widely known for his critically acclaimed musical shows, Pilgrims Progress and Journey to the Celestial City, comes to Karen's Place with his band The Race. A stellar songwriter and musician, Jim expresses his faith through carefully crafted lyrics and song. A must see event!

Feb 5—Patrizsha and the Soultierior Motives Worldwide Band perform One Woman's Walk, an original musical presentation where God uses the transformation of one woman's brokenness to inspire, encourage, uplift, and set free! Patrizsha brings the antidote to addiction and self-destructive behavior. Leave inspired by this powerful, energetic, healing musical production that will make you feel like you can conquer any situation life may throw your way

CARE TEAM REPORT

The Care Team met via zoom last month. We began by reading Romans 8:1-17, 26-27, focusing on living by the Spirit and the ways the Spirit helps us when we do not know what to pray. We continued our discussion of **A Time to Heal**, by J.R. Briggs, looking at the ways we can be agents of healing through prayer, listening, and seeking to understand the trauma people experience. "Each member of the Care Team named some agents of healing in our communities: Big Brothers, Big Sisters of the Lehigh Valley, Karen's Place, MCC Material Resource Center, Code Blue Shelters, Bucks County Opportunity Council, Immigrant Rights Action of Doylestown, and the Germantown Community Fridge. We see ourselves as partnering with these organizations and others as we help people experience healing of physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and relational struggles.

We recently had two requests for financial help from the local community and we spent some time discerning how best to respond.. We are grateful for the Compassion Fund, which is a resource for these kinds of requests. We respond with generosity and wisdom, with God's help. Karl Strauch has agreed to serve as the Everence representative for DMC.

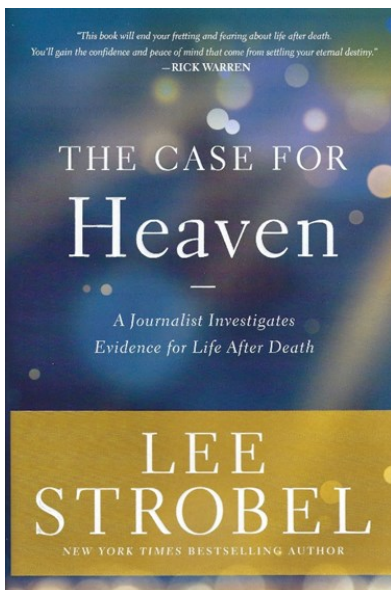
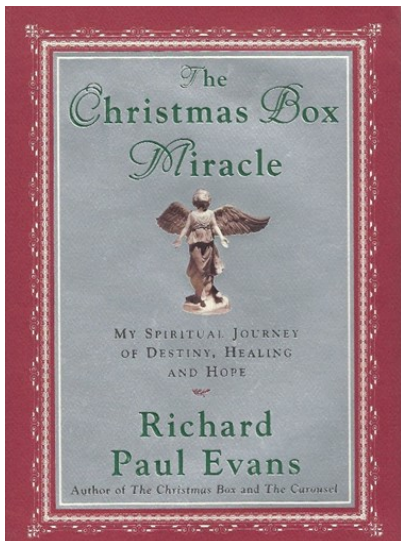
We plan to reach out to DMC members who are unable to worship with us in person over the Christmas season and spent some time in prayer for several individuals/families who are facing particular difficulties. The Care Team remains open to meet with anyone who desires prayer for healing, discernment, or financial counsel. Our next meeting will be Monday, January 10, 7 pm.

-Sandy Landes, for the Care Team

FROM THE LIBRARY– BOOK REVIEWS

Have you ever thought about writing a book someday? Some people do that and it eventually leads to a long string of books written over many years. Here are two books written by two prolific authors who began their book writing careers back in the 1980s.

The Christmas Box Miracle is a 2001 sequel to *The Christmas Box* written in 1994 about a man's spiritual journey, people he encountered along the way, and many miraculous things that happened during that journey. *The Christmas Box Miracle* is a very inspirational read with 41 short easy-to-read chapters in only 261 pages, perfect for anyone who frequently experiences many interruptions.



Early in his career, Lee Strobel was an atheist and a legal journalist for the *Chicago Tribune*. After his wife accepted Jesus as her Savior, he began a several year-long investigation into Jesus that resulted in his own acceptance of Jesus and publication in 1998 of his book *The Case for Christ*.

He subsequently authored a series of *The Case for* books and, just recently, *The Case for Heaven*, a 307-page hardcover book with these chapters:

- Can We Know There's a Heaven?
- Our Frantic Efforts to Outlive Ourselves
- Are We Conscious beyond the Grave?
- A Peek into the World Beyond?
- Why Trust Christianity on the Afterlife?
- How Followers of Jesus Will Spend Eternity
- Top Questions About Eternal Life with God
- The Logic of Hell – do Teachings make Sense?
- Escape from Hell – are there Alternatives?
- Reincarnation – What If Life Is Cyclical?
- Facing Death with an Eye on Heaven
- Walking God's Path to Heaven
- For Further Evidence
- What Happens After We Die?
- Favorite Verses Dealing with Heaven
- Questions for Group Interaction or Reflection

During the course of writing this comprehensive book, the author interviewed a number of highly respected people and conducted his investigation with the thoroughness of both a prosecutor and a defense attorney. As a result, some of those chapters use more technical terminology that is less familiar and takes more time to comprehend and digest, but other chapters are really exciting.

-Karl Strauch

REMEMBERING 2021

- January** - The Fifth Sunday day of service took us to Ripple Community, where we prepared meals of chili and corn bread to be handed out after the 4 pm service. We also sorted donated clothing; a woman arrived right then and was able to receive help. Another part of our group went to the Community center for painting and carpet cleaning.
- February** - Peg Freed's life celebration was held on February 27.
- March** - Members of the congregation attended a spring getaway at Spruce Lake. We celebrated Easter and had videos of a number of members sharing hopes and experiences of hope.
- April** - Men's retreat at Spruce Lake was attended by several men. Phil and Pratiksha Tyson with young son Evan shared about their work in Nepal with Beauty for Ashes and Love Justice International.
- May** - Mark and Lisa Reiff welcomed Samuel Mark on May 4. The Fifth Sunday day of service took us to Pinebrook for cleanup, The Simple Way in Kensington to help with a renovation, and assisting Lucy DeJesus with yardwork.
- June** - A fellowship meal was enjoyed in the pavilion. Lunches were brought from home and we enjoyed the time to fellowship together.
- July** - Mission Sunday featured Franco and Stacy Salvatori and their children, who were headed to Dominican Republic for work with Bold Hope International. On July 17 Christian and Kirsten Zeo were married.
- August** - The church picnic was held at Lost Acres. Pastor Randy was given a surprise gift in recognition of his 20 years of ministry and Jeff Buckwalter Jr. was baptized in the pool. The community garden was producing quantities of vegetables and donating them to local food pantries. Fifth Sunday Day of Service had some of us splitting wood in Hilltown and others serving at A Woman's Place.
- September** - Sunday school for all ages began on September 19: Nursery and children's class, Faith Training Camp groups and traditional class with International lesson.
- October** - Karen's Place re-opened on October 2. The Fifth day of Service came on October 31. People could choose to help Steve Landes at the disc golf course at Pinebrook, or do clean-up work inside and outside the church building.
- November** - The Thanksgiving offering included donations of food, clothing and personal items, which were delivered to Ripple Church and Ripple Community, Inc. for their work in Allentown. On November 21 we recognized Mary Leatherman's work as a teacher and friend to the youth of the church.
- December** - We lost Dave Zuzack on December 8 and celebrated his life at a service on December 18. At Christmas Eve service, we enjoyed singing carols, hearing from characters throughout the old and new testaments about the Child born for us, and a beautiful solo from Cesar Garrido, "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day." We lit tea lights while singing "Silent Night" together.

AN UNEXPECTED GIFT at CHRISTMAS

We enjoyed Christmas day at our daughter and son-in-law's home, along with their daughters and two grandchildren. After the gifts were exchanged and enthusiastically enjoyed by our 4 ½ year old great-grandson we gathered around the table for a meal. As we held hands together prior to the blessing the young great-grandson was asked if he wanted to say the prayer. All of our hearts were touched by his response, as he quietly began singing, "Happy Birthday to you, dear Jesus". Of course, we all joined in as we celebrated the real reason we were together, the birth of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. The best gift of all, through the eyes of a child.

-MaryLee Chittick

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS

Mary and Joseph were looking for a place to stay. I am sure that what they had in mind was a cozy, clean room, especially with the baby coming. But they were denied space at the inn and had to settle for the stable for shelter. A stable that was most certainly full of animals and the smells and sounds that come with them. She gave birth to Jesus and laid him in the closest thing to resemble a cradle. This manger they used was meant to hold food for the animals, but now it held the child that would one day be called the "bread of life". The Glory of God's mercy began to manifest itself in the most unlikely of places.

Since the days of Abraham, the people of God have been waiting for this Messiah to come. With all those years to prepare and all the examples of God using manger-like people and places, they didn't see Jesus coming. Often, we look back at them and scoff, wondering how they missed it. We have the privilege of even more hindsight, and we still miss it. We plan for God in the big parts of our lives, the parts that could be benefitted by the hand of God. We do want Him to be King of our lives, but unfortunately we want Him to reign in earthly power many times. We are looking for the same world leader that Israelites were hoping was coming. We evoke a God of Nation. We evoke Him for our prosperity.

But, God is interested in using our small spaces and the people and places we have deemed unworthy, those spaces and people we hide away and ignore, because there is no way that God needs them. The line of Jesus is filled with people most of us would have written off if we oversaw the narrative. He put them in position to express and impose His plan for the Messiah. He also used stories of widows, lepers,, the blind, the greedy, the dead, the oppressor, and even the criminal to show His actual power and plan for us. We must remember that if God wanted His Son to be born in a conventional space, He would have made it happen. The stable and the manger are just another reminder of what God's intentions really are.

So, let us look to prepare all the parts of our lives for God to use. Often God even uses the things that we

believe are impractical or silly. We look for him to use our obvious gifts, but if we really pay attention, we know that He has surprised us by where the Spirit shows up. We also must let go of our misconception of what God's plans are for each person. We need to become encouragers of the "sinners" among us, instead of writing them off from the narrative of God's mercy, grace, and power. We fall short of becoming like the Temple of Solomon, a beautiful, unmistakable symbol of the glory of God. We need to be grateful that God can make even a dirty stable into Holy ground.

-Ronda Hestand

FROM THE COMMUNITY GARDEN: BATS, NATURAL PEST CONTROL

Have you taken a stroll along the walking path recently? I encourage you to venture out to the Community Garden area and see how our local community and the community garden have been blessed by the addition of 2 bat houses! The trustees and community garden leaders were pleased to partner with Kyle Flaherty of Boy Scout Troop 24 in approving the addition of 2 bat boxes for his Eagle Scout Project. Kyle contacted Jeff Buckwalter and Dave Chittick for permission to build the bat boxes this past summer. The work was completed by the end of November which included attaching the two boxes to the top a 15' pole and then securing it into the ground. Challenging work, indeed! Congratulations on completing your project, Kyle, and thanks for helping the community!

A few interesting facts about bats:

- The U.S. and Canada are home to about 45 species of bats
- Bats reduce mosquito populations for free, without using harmful insecticides.
- Bat houses provide an alternative space to keep bats from nesting in eaves or attics of houses
- A single bat can capture 500–1,000 mosquitoes in an hour.
- Bats are the only mammal that can fly
- Like other mammals, mother bats feed their pups breastmilk



A photo of one of the bat boxes that Kyle put up near the Community Garden.

From Susie Churchmouse:

Things are looking up! Now there's Sunday school and more going on around here. I was sorry about the funeral but it was good to see tables full of people enjoying a nice meal and visiting together afterward. Just last Sunday, I managed to snabble some (very delicious) stray crumbs of Christmas cookies in the church lobby before they were packed up again!



Deadline for submitting items for the February News & Views: **February 2nd**

PARTING THOUGHT:

Another year is dawning, Dear Master, let it be
In working or in waiting, Another year with Thee.
Another year of progress, Another year of praise
Another year of proving Thy presence all the days.

-Frances Ridley Havergal, 1874

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