

# NEWS & VIEWS

September 5, 2021

Volume 20 No.9

Doylestown Mennonite Church

## PASTOR'S PEN—

### Encouraging Discipleship

This month, I'm encouraging us to focus on the phrase, "Draw Near to God and He will draw near to you." This is a verse I first encountered as a teenager, and it stayed with me for years. It has come back to mind throughout my adulthood, as I navigated the twists and turns of life. In one sense, I'm not sure God waits for me to draw near to Him before He becomes present with me. I believe He is always here, whether I am aware of His Presence or not. But in another sense, as Randy preached a few weeks ago, God doesn't necessarily pursue us in the way we might assume. His invitation of love always remains, but if we choose not to walk with Him, God doesn't manipulate or force us. Sometimes He lets us go. All of that to say, in these words, I have always heard a gracious and steady promise—a promise that if I draw near, if I am willing and open-hearted and longing, God is there.

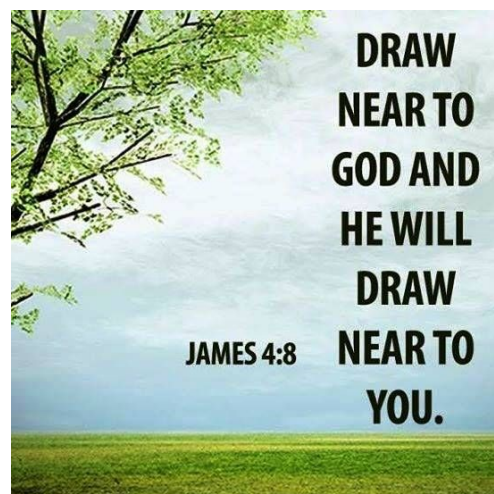
This scripture comes from a passage in James 4:6-8: "But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you."

It might seem strange to begin a passage right in the middle of a thought, "but He gives us more grace," without acknowledging all the words that come before. And I would certainly never suggest that we ignore the previous verses! But I like beginning with verse 6 because of the focus on God's grace. Whatever the "but" of my life is at present—family

stress, work stress, world news, national news, conflicted relationships, decisions to make, unresolved questions, things that need to get done, physical pain or illness, other burdens- "But He gives us more grace" is always a good place to live from. God's grace remains present as we navigate all these things and more- it covers our mistakes, guides our decisions, brings peace in the middle of chaos, smooths over our frustrations, helps us forgive. God's grace is our center and foundation.

In the next four weeks, I will invite us to draw near to God in four different ways- in Jesus, in honesty, in silence and with others. I hope we will be encouraged to make space to intentionally draw near to God. I pray we will experience God's grace in new ways as we practice drawing near.

-Pastor KrisAnne



## COMING UP....SOME SPECIAL DATES

### Birthdays

Aimee Gourley	9/7
Christian Zeo	9/8
Sue Bartels	9/17
Janice Wyble	9/20
Ben Swartley	9/21
Don Heckler	9/24
Joyce Zuzack	9/25
Betty Good	9/28
Glenn Wyble	10/6
Dean Bartels	10/6
Heidi Swartley	10/8

### Anniversaries

Mark & Lisa Reiff	9/15
Rob & Suzanne Schwabe	9/25

## KAREN'S PLACE

Doylestown's only underground Christian café.  
Open the 1st and 3rd Saturday nights from 7:00 -  
10:30pm with live Christian artists and bands. Con-  
certs start up again in October! Watch for announce-  
ments.

## SENIOR PICNIC

Twenty five seniors enjoyed a pot-luck picnic on Au-  
gust 15 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 to attend!)

## FROM THE COMMUNITY GARDEN

The community garden reports: "Currently we are  
harvesting kale, chard, okra, tomatoes, many various  
squashes, beans, potatoes, beets and carrots. I don't  
know how many plots the members are using but we  
have about 20 people who help with tending and  
harvesting. As of Saturday, August 28 we are at 1560  
pounds donated to pantries and we are looking for-  
ward to upping that with all the stuff we are still  
growing plus our watermelons, pumpkins and vari-  
ous winter squashes will be ready to harvest. We're  
always happy to have volunteers Tuesday and Satur-  
day mornings 8:30-ish are our work sessions."

-Melissa B., gardener



## FROM THE LIBRARY— BOOK REVIEW

Behind Fences is a new 2021 book from Masthof Press in Morgantown, PA. When he was 12 years old, Nelson Zeiset felt called by God to take the Gospel to criminals in prisons. As a Lancaster County Mennonite, he subsequently had a 33-year career as chaplain and served in 7 prisons in Pennsylvania and Alabama.

Nelson and his wife Esther have 3 grown children and 11 grandchildren. Both are accomplished authors who alternately narrate a wide variety of experiences that occurred while raising their family as Nelson served as chaplain to thousands of convicts in state prisons, many of them in very troubled situations.

The back cover of this 284-page book states, “Be inspired to pursue your own life calling and to view God’s faithfulness on every step of the journey.”

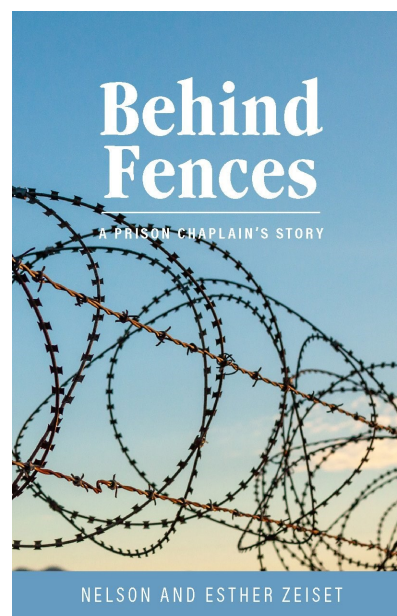
A prison ministry has never been on my bucket list of “1000 things to do before you die” but God keeps quietly hinting about how important it is. A co-worker at my former job went to jail for 5 years for having porn on his company computer. We had worked closely on many projects, but I never suspected he was involved in any activities like that, especially since we often discussed Biblical passages and praised God for his works.

Ever since June 2020 I have been corresponding with a prisoner at a State Correction Institution facility out in Northwestern Pennsylvania who wrote a letter to our church asking for some assistance. I briefly mention this not to seek credit for doing anything but as an example of how God often takes something that we least would like to do and transforms it into something that we can enjoy doing, to help someone in need and please Him.

In April of this year, several of us attended a retreat at Spruce Lake, where Mark Whitacre was the speaker. Mark was the highest-ranked Fortune 500 whistleblower in US history and helped the FBI uncover a multi-billion dollar price-fixing scheme. As a result he had to spend a number of years in a federal prison, but ultimately was the subject of the book *The Informant* and the 2009 movie *The Informant*, starring Matt Damon. I have now heard Mark relate his experiences for 3+ hours, read the book, and viewed the movie.

*Behind Fences* is a very thought-provoking book, set here near our location in Pennsylvania. Many places that are mentioned should be quite familiar to you. May God move your heart as He did mine. May God guide us and bless each of us as we encounter each person that we meet.

-Karl Strauch





## BLESSINGS & CHALLENGES OF COVID

Reflecting on the blessings and challenges faced in the pandemic, I am very grateful that my workplace stayed open, sometimes working four day weeks. Driving was easy with little traffic, kinda strange to see very few cars in the morning drive. My employer was great in keeping us supplied with work and we were able to supply our essential customers with products so they too could stay open also.

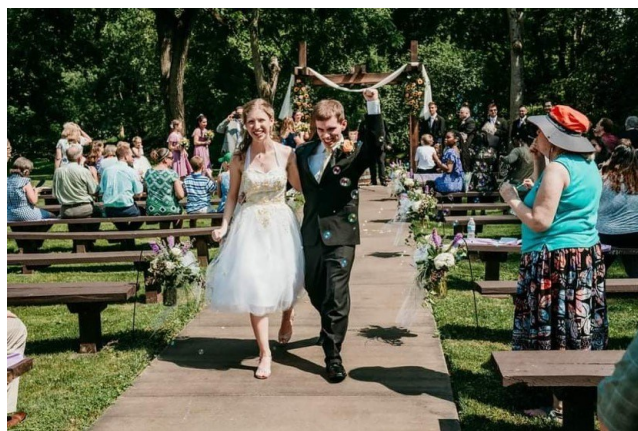
The challenging side was watching firsthand as my employer had been diagnosed with stage four kidney cancer, and seeing all that's involved with that awful disease. I have learned more about this disease than I ever cared to know, watching a strong active man slowly become weaker and weaker is heart breaking, and eventually passing away this past July 4th.

The positive side of this is my confidence in God, He definitely has a plan, and is in control, everything that is going on in the world today raises lots of questions and perhaps fear in many people, but I put my hope & trust in Him to guide my steps and decisions. This is an exciting time to be alive, things are not falling apart, they are falling into place, as we get closer and closer to the return of our Savior, Jesus Christ!

-Gary Garges

## ANOTHER WEDDING!

Christian Zeo and his bride, Kirsten, were married on July 17. It was a small wedding with only their wedding party and family members present. They are currently living in the city where he is now working and Kirsten started college this week. Not wanting a car in the city, Christian gave his car to his sister, Abby, so we may not see them often. Our congratulations to a beautiful young couple!



## CHURCH PICNIC

The church picnic this year was a four-star event! We met again at Lost Acres after having it cancelled last year. As the worship service was beginning, Randy and Nancy to their surprise, were called forward, and Sue Bartels, KrisAnne Swartley and Mary Lee Chittick presented them with a book of affirmations and gift certificates for an Airbnb trip (a gift from the congregation) in recognition of Randy's 20 years of ministry here.

We sang songs chosen by Jeff Buckwalter and he gave his testimony. Randy preached a sermon about baptism, and at the end we moved to the swimming pool, where Mark Reiff assisted Randy in baptizing Jeff.

The meal that followed was preceded by a "pastor Randy trivia game" and the presentation of a special cake honoring his 20 years of ministry at DMC. The picnic was enjoyed by around 90 persons, including Randy's mother, a few community garden members and a number of other special guests.





## FIFTH SUNDAY DAY OF SERVICE—"Service as worship"

Another Day of Service took place on August 29 at two places. One was A Woman's Place. There were two groups working there. One group of five worked on painting an interior hallway and five others did weeding in an enclosed back yard. At first sight the yard did not appear to provide much work for five people but after a couple of hours there were a half dozen or so bags full of weeds and other debris to take away. The paving stones on the patio, the areas around play equipment and a small garden were no longer covered with unsightly growth.



The other place of service was at the home of Jon and KrisAnne Swartley, where dead ash trees had been cut down. The group there was busy running two wood splitters and loading the wood onto trucks for delivery to three homes for firewood.



**DEADLINE** for submitting items to the October News & Views: **September 28th**

**PARTING THOUGHT:** "There is a place of quiet rest.....where sin cannot molest....where we our Savior meet.....of comfort sweet.....of full release...of joy and peace near to the heart of God. Cleland McAfee (1866-1944)

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