

NEWS & VIEWS

March 12, 2023

Volume 22 No.3

Doylestown Mennonite Church

PASTOR'S PEN—

“The Fruit of Suffering”

As we journey through these weeks leading up to Easter Sunday, and reflect on the suffering of Jesus and our own suffering, I can't help but connect to our 2023 theme – Spirit Produced Fruit. It seems odd, doesn't it, to think about suffering as spring is starting to sprout and as we prepare for a happy holiday celebrating new life and resurrection?

But God's Kingdom is full of paradoxes like this: death brings eternal life, suffering brings hope, poverty means wealth, last means first, least is greatest, greatest is the servant of all, slavery to Christ means true freedom. So is it possible that our suffering and struggles, our losses and pain, could actually be the means by which the Spirit produces fruit in our lives?

I have lived a very privileged and comfortable life – let me be clear about that – yet it has been through the difficult and painful moments that I can look back and see the ways God matured me the most:

- Through grieving deaths, God has invited me to embrace the joyful moments more deeply
- In disappointments, God has invited me to lean on His faithfulness and to trust Him more
- In times of waiting that seem to stretch out forever, God has given me more patience
- When I have felt anxiety about finances, God has invited me to keep noticing His generosity and to continue practicing it myself
- In times of conflict, Jesus has brought me unexplainable peace

- When I want to lash out in frustration or anger, God has been patient with me and has given me the strength to practice self-control (when I have been willing)

If not for loss, would love and joy taste so sweet? Would I understand what faithfulness truly means, if I hadn't met deep disappointments? What is patience without the need to wait and see what God is up to? How could I truly appreciate the gift of God's peace if I never knew conflict and anxiety?

Please hear me, I am not advocating that we make ourselves or anyone else suffer. My thought is simply this: Jesus has promised that “in this world we will have trouble.” So when I inevitably face trouble, I hope I can have the grace to lean on my Lord and Savior. I hope I can trust that He will shape me through my suffering as I surrender to Him. For the troubles we face are never the end. God's Kingdom is coming in fullness and it is filled with good fruit!

-Pastor KrisAnne



COMING UP....SOME SPECIAL DATES

Birthdays

Coleen Ryan 3/3
Timothy Landes 3/10
Karen Fennell 3/18
Randy Heacock 3/30
Louise Beyer 4/2

Anniversaries

Jon & KrisAnne Swartley 3/13
Ron & Robin Miller 3/26

KAREN'S PLACE COFFEEHOUSE

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

March 18—Chip Mergott

April 1—Annual Comedy Night, hosted by Al Smith. Performances by Christian McCartney and K-Mack. All proceeds from sales will be donated to Battle4Children's Charities, which works to prevent child sexual abuse.

CARE TEAM REPORT

The Care Team met on Thursday, February 23. Freida Myers, Sandy Landes, Randy Heacock and Aimee Gourley were all present on Zoom. During the meeting we read Philippians 2:6-8, introduction to the book, Strong and Weak. The paradox of a flourishing life. We discussed examples of how we can live a life with both authority and vulnerability. As we do each meeting we reviewed part of our "job description." This month we focused on this part: This group will also encourage individuals to use their spiritual gifts within and beyond the congregation. DMC is very blessed to include so many people with a variety of wonderful gifts.

We reviewed the compassion fund. If you know of someone who has a need that might be helped with funds from the compassion, please reach out to a care team member. We spent the last portion of our meeting lifting up individuals in prayer.

The next scheduled meeting is March 21, 2023.

A THANK YOU

Thanks so much to the congregation for supporting me by prayers, visits and other deeds of love.

-Lucy DeJesus

A LOSS

On Valentine's Day we lost a dear valentine, Grace Brenneman. A life-long member of our church, she shared her gifts widely from the dinner table and the church, to overseas. We remember her hospitality, teaching ability, volunteering, and the vitality and kindness of her personality. Almost 99 years gave her a life filled with many kinds of service. We will celebrate her life at a memorial service on April 1 at the Souderton Mennonite Home Auditorium.

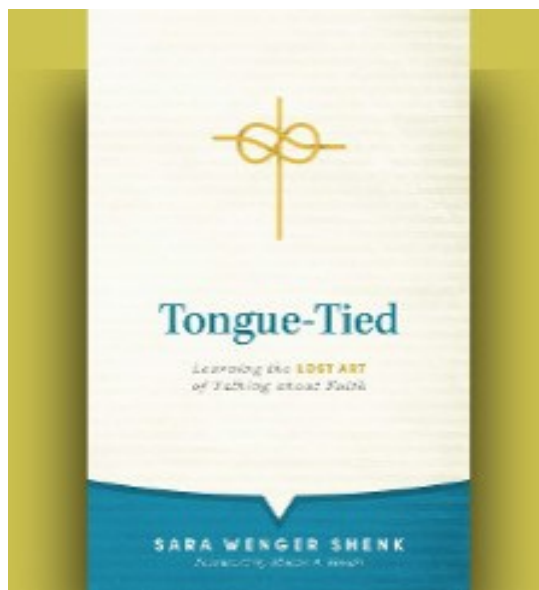


CHURCH LIBRARY

Review of Tongue-Tied by Sara Wenger Shenk.

The author notes that many of us who grew up in Christian families are “losing our ability to identify God’s presence in our lives or to talk meaningfully about faith with others.” She says, “Faith is about learning to trust God. We “don’t expect that God will intervene in our affairs.” “Few of us actually experience God.” I liked her quote of poet Jan Richardson who asks in an Ash Wednesday Lenten prayer: “Did you not know what the Holy One can do with dust?” She remembers how meaningful it was during a time of crisis to hear a traditional African American spiritual: “Somebody prayed for me, had me on their mind, took the time to pray for me. I’m so glad they prayed, I’m so glad they prayed, I’m so glad they prayed for me.”

Later, on Father’s day she was touched to watch a video sent from her son and family; he played the piano and they sang “Somebody prayed for me... My father prayed for me... My mother prayed for me... My Jesus prayed for me, had me on his mind, took the time to pray for me. I’m so glad he prayed, I’m so glad he prayed, I’m so glad he prayed for me.” Shenk quotes Elaine Heath who says prayer is “a contemplative soaking in the infinite love of God. At a public conference Shenk attended, she heard Heath say that “Good theology (in contrast to bad) “helps us gaze into the face of Christ, who gazes back with love. Building time into our normal rhythms to ‘soak in the love of God’ and ‘gaze into the face of Christ,’ will directly affect the quality of our prayers—how we talk with God and about God.”



-Freida, Myers Librarian

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The annual congregational meeting was held on February 26 after the fellowship meal. Led by Mark Reiff, reports were given by Pastor Randy, Kendrick Garrido, Treasurer, Garry Landis, Trustee, and Sandy Landes for the Care Team. The new spending plan was approved and some good discussion followed. Minutes will be available in due course.



2022 APPROVED SPENDING PLAN		\$223,510
2022 Actuals		
Sunday MORNING OFFERINGS		\$180,910
Mosaic STIPEND (for Pastor Randy's conference responsibilities)		\$30,600
TOTAL INCOME		\$211,510
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$218,232
DIFFERENCE		-\$6,722



Susie Churchmouse writes:

Yeah, a fellowship meal livened up this place again! Angel and Sandra started it off with chicken and rice, everybody else filled in with wonderful salads and desserts. I couldn't even try everything, since my capacity is limited, but I think everybody else did justice to it.

Deadline for submitting items for the April News & Views: **March 28th**

PARTING THOUGHT:

Blessed be your name in the land that is plentiful, where your streams of abundance flow, blessed be your name.
Blessed be your name when I'm found in the desert place, though I walk through the wilderness, blessed be your name....You give and take away, My heart will choose to say, blessed be your name

-Matt Redman and Beth Redman, 2002

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