



JUNE 2022

THE LAMPLIGHTER

YORK FIRST MORAVIAN

What's happening with the search for a pastor?

The process is moving along albeit a bit more slowly than we would all like. This is mostly due to the severe pastor shortage in the Northern Province as well as the entire Moravian denomination. You may be aware that Covenant Moravian has been without a pastor since January when Rev. Fritts moved to a church in Bethlehem. Because both churches are in the same situation, the Joint Boards of Covenant & First met together on May 26th, with Rev. Melissa Johnson, President of the Eastern District Executive Board. The purpose of the joint meeting was to discuss both our situations as well as the idea of calling a single pastor to serve both congregations as one possible solution due to the pastor shortage. There was good conversation that evening about what such an arrangement may possibly look like and the pluses and minuses of a shared pastor. Both churches' Joint Boards will now meet separately as a follow-up from that meeting and then we will come together again to meet with Melissa on June 20th. We need to stress that there was no talk or discussion about any merger of the two congregations, only a pastor sharing arrangement which may help hasten the call process as well as provide financial benefits to both congregations. Please continue to keep our Joint Board and the call process in your prayers.

Cliff Bergstresser, Trustees Chair
Steve Nicholas, Elders Vice-Chair

WHAT IS GOD SEEKING?

Brothers and sisters, what does the Lord want from us? What is the Lord seeking?
What can we do to please the Lord?

The Bible teaches us that Abraham trusted God and God counted it as righteousness for Abraham. Now it is important for us to remember that Abraham was NOT a man who was naturally righteous. When God revealed to Abraham and Sarah they would have a son even though Sarah was 90 years old, what did they do? They laughed! When God fulfilled his promise to them, what did Abraham and Sarah name their son? They named him ISAAC - which means in Hebrew "He laughs"...

When there was a famine in the land of Canaan, Abraham and Sarah determined to journey to Egypt to buy food. Abraham was worried that when the Pharaoh saw how beautiful Sarah was he would kill Abraham and take her into his harem. To protect himself he told Sarah to say she was Abraham's sister....Once again Abraham did not trust God, but he tried to work things out by himself. Does any of this sound familiar to you and me? What is the first thing we do when there is a problem?

It took a lifetime, but Abraham, at the crisis of his life, has learned to trust God when the Lord calls for the sacrifice of Abraham's son, Isaac. I believe Abraham said something like this to himself, "I don't know how the Lord is going to work this - how the Lord will keep his promise to bring forth a line of descendants and a great nation from Isaac - BUT, even if the Lord needs to raise Isaac from the dead, I will do what he tells me to do and trust the Lord to work it out..."

Abraham trusted God, and it was counted as righteousness for him. AND the Bible says he was known as "the friend of God." WOW!! There it is! This is what God is seeking. This is what the Lord wants. He wants us to trust Him - to really, really trust him!

But with all the chaos and uncertainty in the world today, how can people like you and me ever trust God?

FIRST, we can trust God because of WHO God is. Are there some people in your life whom you trust more than others? Are there some people whom you would not trust at all? What makes the difference? Isn't it the KIND of people they are? If George Washington told you something, would you trust him? What about if Benedict Arnold told you something? Do you see the difference? It all depends upon the character of the one who is doing the talking! Well, what do we know about the character of God?

There is a wonderful description of the character of God in the book of Jonah. If you remember the story, Jonah was a reluctant prophet. God called him to go to Nineveh and warn those people that they needed to turn to God or they would face his judgment. But Jonah did not want to go because the Assyrians who lived in Nineveh were enemies of Israel, and Jonah did not want them to be spared by God. We hear this plainly in JONAH 4:2, "Ah Lord, was this not what I said when I was still in my country. Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness. One who relents from doing harm."

God then proceeds to rebuke Jonah for his merciless spirit toward the people in Nineveh, and chastises Jonah for his attitude, "And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred twenty thousand persons who cannot discern their right hand from their left - and much livestock?" Here we see a God who is concerned for the children, and even the animals in Nineveh, and who has far more compassion than the vindictive prophet. Our God is even concerned little children and even animals...

Can we trust that kind of God with our lives? Yes we can, we can trust God because of WHO God is...

SECOND, we can trust God because of WHAT God has done. When God called Abraham, he promised to make him a great nation and God has kept this promise! When the children of Abraham were slaves in Egypt they were hardly a great nation. BUT, God brought them out through the leadership of Moses and brought them into the promised land of Canaan. When they rebelled and worshipped the false God, Baal, God punished them by sending the Assyrians and the Babylonians to destroy the city of Jerusalem and carry the people away to exile in Babylonia. One more time God saved them, brought them home to Jerusalem, and they rebuilt the city walls and the temple of God.

But again they rebelled and rejected the ministry of Jesus and handed over the son of God to be crucified by the Romans. God raised Jesus from the dead three days later but the nation of Israel faced the judgement of God. In 70 A.D. the Romans tore down the walls of Jerusalem and burned the temple of God and the descendants of Abraham were scattered among the nations for 1900 years. In 1948 the children of Abraham became the nation of Israel once again. Never before in the history of the world has a nation vanished for almost two thousand years and then been restored. It may take a long time, but God always keeps his promises. We can trust God because of what he has done. He is a faithful God who keeps his promises.

How many times has someone said to me, "Pastor, if I was alive in the time of Jesus and saw all those miracles, it would be a lot easier for me to believe..." . Is that the case? Remember after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, what did the scribes and Pharisees do? Instead of saying, "What a wonderful thing to bring Lazarus back from the dead!" They said, "Too many people are believing in Jesus because of this. We've got to get rid of him, and we have to do away with Lazarus too..." The presence of miracles does not guarantee there will be faith.

Think of the advantages we have over people who lived in Bible times. We have the advantage of 2,000 years of church history and Christian experience! Think of the wonderful story of John Amos Comenius and. " In the 17th century the Moravian Church, known as the Brethren's Church, was nearly destroyed by persecution. Comenius was the last bishop of the church and he prayed constantly that it would be spared and renewed. In "hope against hope - spem contra spem" in 1662 he laid his hands on the head of his son in law, Peter Jablonsky, a minister in the Reformed Church, and made him a bishop. In 1699, Peter Jablonsky placed his hands upon the head of his son, Daniel Jablonsky, also a minister, and consecrated him a bishop in the Brethren's Church.

A few families of Moravian Brethren fled to Germany where their church was renewed by the Holy Spirit in 1727 and in 1735, Daniel Jablonsky laid his hands upon the head of David Nitschmann and the line of bishops in the Moravian Church has remained alive until this day.

Think of the story of S. Morgan Smith who confessed that in 1879 he was so poor that he had "not two nickels to rub together..." Our late member Fahs March remembers his grandmother sleeping over with the Smith daughters in their attic and when it rained they needed to set out pots and pans to collect the water leaking through the roof. S. Morgan Smith was so destitute that he could not afford to pay someone to patch the holes in his roof. Yet we know that he ended up founding an industrial empire and becoming one of the richest men in York. And he was generous as well as rich, for he and his family gave millions to the Moravian Church, Moravian College, and did many things for our own congregation including paying for the elevator which brought Kathie and me to the sanctuary this morning.

Think about the many times the Lord has shown his goodness and his faithfulness in your own life. At every crossroads and in every crisis of our lives Kathie and I have heard the Lord saying the same thing, "Will you trust me now?" We heard it again in our recent move. We were uncertain about where to move and whether to move and we made an appointment to seek counsel with our family doctor who advised us to move. We drove home from the meeting with our doctor and one half hour later the phone rang. It was the marketing director from Lutheran Village offering us a two bedroom cottage with a garage and screened in porch. We were uncertain about how to move and whom to ask for help. Our neighbor told us he has access to a twenty-two foot truck and he could get a crew together and move us. Several friends offered to move us in their pickup trucks. A neighbor across the street told us he had a wonderful experience with Wherley Movers and they would do a great job at a reasonable cost. We found a list of three movers in the handbook which Lutheran Village provided for their new residents. Wherley was one of the three companies they recommended. We booked them and they did a great job for us at a cost even less than their estimate. I was concerned about the effect of moving on Kathie. After living in church supplied housing for forty-one years, our little house in Haines Acres was the first one which was our own. Kathie loved the bright colors on the walls. She loved the flowers which surrounded the house on every side. She loved the big bow window in the dining area through which she watched the birds perching on our deck. It was hard on her soul when we listed for sale the house she loved. We received an all cash eighty-five hundred dollars over our asking price. But the purchaser was a realtor who wanted to use our house as a rental. We almost said no, but our agent explained the realtor was a member of St. Joseph's Church near us who wished to buy the house to provide housing for three nuns from St. Joseph's who worked at a nursing center three blocks from our house. Kathie's sorrow turned to joy. She was delighted to know that the house she loved would be used for God's purposes. The Lord healed her spirit.

Are all these things coincidences? Is this simply random chance, or is it the hand of a faithful God?

Yet, even though the Lord has done it again, and brought us through many ups and downs in our lives, when we come to a crossroads, we have found that we still need to trust the Lord all over again! Kathie and I must continue to walk by faith, and so do you my brother and sisters.

I believe we are at a crossroads as a church. Humanly speaking, things do not look good. There is a shortage of pastors in the Moravian Church. There are forty seven churches in the Eastern District and seven of them are looking for a pastor. I not know what the Lord is going to do. But I do know the one thing the Lord wants from us. What is that? What does the Lord want? What is the Lord seeking? What is it that will please the Lord?

The Lord wants us to trust him. To really, really trust him!

Rev Steve Nicholas
May 29, 2022



GETTING IN TOUCH WITH DON ECKERT

Our long time member and former church treasurer, Don Eckert, is now a resident at Country Meadows in Shiloh. Don's daughter, Denise, has requested we share his mailing address and phone number with our members in case there may be some who would like to call or send cards. Don is staying in Country Meadows, Room 224, 1920 Trolley Road, York, Pa. 17408. You may phone him at 717-846-1848.

Elders and Trustees News

The Joint Board will have a zoom meeting on Monday, June 13th, 7:00pm. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss and review the possibility of sharing a pastor with Covenant Moravian. The following Monday, June 20th at 6:30pm we will meet in person with Covenant's boards and the Rev. Melissa Johnson, President of the Eastern District.

Upcoming Worship Services

June 26th - Rev. Robin Turner
July 3rd - Rev. Steve Nicholas
July 10th - Rev. Dick Godfrey
July 17th - Mr. Lloyd Purswell
July 24th - Rev. Terry Folk

Summer Worship schedule - We will be holding worship services downstairs starting Sunday, June 4th. (We will continue to use the blue worship hymnal.)

The offering plate will be placed on the communion table instead of in the back for future services.

The communion elements will be placed on the communion table using the glass cups and wafers for future services. Members will be asked to come up to take the elements back to the pews with them.

Did you know...

We have an online giving portal! If you prefer to catch the service via Zoom you can send your offering online! Just go to

- mmfa.info
- click Giving Portal at the top
- Click 'F' and select First Moravian Church - York, PA

If you prefer to mail your offering you can send it direct to:

Wanda Hendricks
3715 Fox Chase Drive
Dover, PA 17315

Total Income & Offerings from Sundays 05/01/2022 to 05/29/2022:

General	\$6,081.00
Refurbishing	\$266.00
Parking	\$50.00
Flower Fund	\$226.50
Dividends	\$111.08

TOTAL	\$6,734.58
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June Birthdays

7 Carol Zeigler
15 Kellie (Swartz) Ford*
17 Kathie Nicholas
18 Caroln Bailey
Denise Eckert
19 Kasi (Tyson) Steinbrenner
21 Ronald Eckert
29 Heidi Robinson
30 Lloyd Purswell*

June Anniversaries

3 Rudolph & Gloria Moore
12 Terry & Carol Zeigler
14 David & Karrie Rishel
26 Rev. Terry & Julia Folk*



Prayer Concerns

Amy Ardison (Betsy Senft's sister)
Pastor Jeff Coppage
Ann Coppage
Don Eckert
Mary Jones
Kathie Nicholas
Karrie Rishel
Cliff & Elaine Rowell
Ruth & Clair Seiple

**For pastoral care until
our new Pastor is received,
please feel free to call any of the
3 elders listed below.**

Jeannette Sprenkle 717-225-4304

John Knokey 717-848-9220

Steve Nicholas 717- 755-7412

***Please do not call Steve
on a Monday***

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2022 Watchword

“Happy is the one who trusts in you, O lord of hosts.”

Psalm 84:12