



MARCH 2022

# THE LAMPLIGHTER YORK FIRST MORAVIAN

## HOW TO GET MORE FAITH

There are times when the teaching of Jesus does not seem to make sense! Our gospel lesson in LUKE 17:5-6 is one of those times. "And the disciples said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.'" So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea, and it would obey you.'" What makes it worse is that Jesus says much the same thing in MATTHEW 17:19-20, that if they had faith as a grain of mustard seed, they would say to the mountain, move from here to there, and it would move...

Do you see the problem here? The disciples have asked Jesus for help to get more faith and instead of helping them he tells them they need to do something even more difficult. What on earth is going on? When the disciples ask Jesus to give them more faith, why does he tell them to do something harder than they have ever done before?

Brothers and sisters, I believe the key to solving this puzzle is understanding that faith is like a muscle. The more you use it, the stronger it grows! Don't we know that from our own experience? When I coached high school cross country thirty years ago I observed that most teenagers who had never run could go as far as one mile the first day of practice. The second week of practice they could go two miles. By the end of the third week they could usually finish our three mile course. The more they ran, the better they got. I saw this in our granddaughter Olivia who completed army basic training last year. When she began she was slender and weighed 107. When she finished the ten week course of training she weighed 128 pounds of muscle.

I believe the laws of physical growth and spiritual growth are similar. You use it or you lose it. Use it and it grows; neglect it and it weakens. What do we call it when our muscles weaken? We call it ATROPHY! I am somewhat ashamed to tell you there is an example of this in my own life. I took piano and organ lessons for NINE years. But, today, I cannot play more than a few simple melodies because I did not practice the way I should. I liked playing the piano, but hated to practice, so when my dad told me it was time to practice, I spent much of that time playing pieces I already knew, and consequently, I never grew much beyond playing grade three pieces even though I had nine years of lessons. A funny story is told about a tourist in New York City who asked a native, "How do I get to Carnegie Hall?" And the man replied, "Practice, practice, practice..." I never made it to Carnegie Hall because I didn't practice enough....

Both piano playing and growing in faith are similar. The more you exercise, the better you will get! When the disciples ask Jesus for more faith, what does Jesus tell them? He tells them to practice using the faith they already have! That is the key to getting more faith.

I was never a great counselor, but when people came to me for counseling, I was trained to ask three questions, FIRST, "What is the problem?" SECOND, "What have you already tried to do about the problem? And almost every time people would say, "I prayed about it..." I would reply, " Have you done anything except pray?" Brothers and sisters, sometimes prayer is not enough! We also need to practice obeying God! Let me give you an example: In the Lord's Prayer. Jesus teaches us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Yet, St. Paul in II THESS. 3:7-10 says we are to work for our daily bread, and that if anyone will not work, they should not eat.

We need to do more than just pray! I believe the Bible teaches us the Lord wants us to pray but he also wants us to work. PHILIPPIANS 2:11-12, says, "Therefore, my beloved...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you to will and to do for His good pleasure." St. Paul says God works and we work also. It's not enough to pray, "Lord help me to get along with my neighbor... IF there are things you can do to get along better with your neighbor and you are not doing them! If your trees are growing onto your neighbor's property and you don't trim them, don't pray... If your neighbor's garbage cans are blowing down the street and you don't pick them up, don't pray.... In my first church there was a woman who came to me with a problem, she had a difficult neighbor whom she just could not get along with. I reminded her that Christians are taught to bless those who curse us and do good to those who spitefully use us; to return good for evil. She had no idea how to do this. I knew she was a good cook, so I asked her, "What is the best thing you cook?" And she replied, "Everyone raves about my apple pies. I think this is the best thing I cook." I suggested that the next time her neighbor made her mad, instead of grumbling, she bake her an apple pie. About a week later, the neighbor said something nasty, and she retreated into her house, turned on her oven, and baked an apple pie. The next day she gave it to her astonished neighbor and that was the beginning of a much better relationship....

Brothers and sisters, do you understand that in this life we need BOTH prayer and work? Many years ago St. Augustine said, "Pray as if everything depends upon God and work as if everything depends upon you." He also said, "Without God we cannot, and without us God will not!"

So then, what is the answer to the question, "How do we get more faith?" "The answer is that we need to exercise the faith we already have!" Let me share real life example of how Kathie and I have had to exercise our faith recently. As we have heard the Lord asking us many times in our lives, as we were struggling with the decision about whether or not we should leave our home and move to a retirement community, we heard the Lord say, "Will you trust me now?" We struggled with this decision. We were not sure if we should stay in our little house which we love, or move. We prayed every day. We talked to our family members who all had different opinions. In October we talked to our family doctor who advised us to move. A half hour after we got home, we got a call from the Director at Lutheran Village Retirement Center who said, "We have a cottage for you if you want it, and we said 'YES.'" We saw an open door and went through it.

Now that this decision is made, you would think we could relax and give our faith a rest? But we still need to exercise more faith! What shall we do about our STUFF? How shall we go about moving? It is true that you and I never get to the place where we no longer have to exercise our faith! In other words, we need to keep practicing trusting and obeying.

Brothers and sisters, I believe the Bible teaches us that God wants us to grow. God wants us to grow in faith, to grow in love, and to grow in holiness! God doesn't want us to remain baby Christians all of our lives! In HEBREWS 5:12-14, we read, "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who takes only milk is...only a babe."

The writer of Hebrews called his readers baby Christians. What are baby Christians? They are Christians who are saved, they have been forgiven and started in the Christian life, but they have not gotten very far, and they are of little use to God. I once heard a sermon by a pastor from Argentina, Juan Carlos Ortiz, about baby Christians called, "The eternal childhood of the believer." Baby Christians are always asking, never doing... "Give me this and give me that. Bless my dog and bless my cat..." Ortiz says this is the number one problem in the Church in Argentina. It is also a problem in the Church in the United States....

In Hebrews chapter 6, the writer adds, "Let us go on to maturity..." Brothers and sisters, this is God's call to you and me, "Let us go on to maturity!" Let us grow in faith, in love and in holiness.

Once we understand that faith is like a muscle that must be used. And once we understand that God wants his children to grow - The only remaining question that we need to answer is "What are we going to do about it?" You and I need to ask, "Will I be content to remain a spiritual child forever? Is there any place in my life where the Lord is calling me to try, to stretch and to grow?"

Brothers and sisters, what are you going to do about it?

Rev. Steve Nicholas  
First Moravian Church  
February 27, 2022

## Elders and Trustees News

## Total Income & Offerings from Sundays 01/30/2022 to 02/27/2022:

### Unified Board Meeting

The Board met on February 21st via Zoom. Worship was reviewed. It was suggested a detailed email be sent with the order of worship. Covenant will be holding a Maundy Thursday Service. We are planning a Good Friday Service. The 270th anniversary service will be held on March 20th. The Rev. Melissa Johnson will be preaching, and Love Feast will be served.

General	\$5,715.00
Refurbishing	\$225.00
Parking	\$150.00
AT&T Dividends	\$180.96

### Elections for Elders and Trustees

Steve Nicholas has agreed to continue as Vice Chair of the board. Cliff Bergstresser was elected and agreed to serve as president of the Trustees, Lance Sprenkle will now serve as vice president of Trustees. Larry will continue as secretary for Trustees, while Jeannette will continue as secretary of the Elders.

TOTAL	\$6,270.96
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## Current Board Members

### Elders

Steve Nicholas - Vice Chair  
Jeannette Sprenkle - Secretary  
John Knokey  
Lindsey Robinson

### Trustees

Cliff Bergstresser - President  
Lance Sprenkle - Vice President  
Larry Sprenkle - Secretary  
Jeff Rishel  
Tim Rishel

Wanda Knokey - Treasurer

### 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](http://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

## March Birthdays

- 1 Wanda Hendricks
- 3 Sadie Wurzbach
- 7 Pastor Sayward Lippincott
- 10 Bob Taylor
- 11 Alianna Saylor
- 19 Hayley Teal
- 24 Chloe Senft
- 25 Sharon Saylor
- 26 Pyper Robinson
- 29 Jemon Grant\*
- 30 John Rohrer

## March Anniversaries

- 16 Sam & Jaylynn Pauley
- 24 Clair & Ruth Seiple

# THANK YOU!

***A very huge thank you to Aaron Eckert who painted the entire parsonage!  
Thank you for all the time and effort you put into this massive project!  
Thank you also to Tim Rishel & Rick Lehigh who have been completing  
repairs and projects around parsonage as well.***

## 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