

West Swamp News

Volume 9, Issue 1

December '19/January '20

Officially installed!

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Pastor Michael Howes is now officially installed. During the worship service on Nov. 10, with Conference Pastor Scott Roth presiding, we prayed over Pastor Michael and pledged to support him and partner with him in the ministries of our congregation.

May God bless this new partnership as we work to further God's kingdom!



Members of the Ministry Team and Pastor Search Committee pray for Pastor Michael.

FYI

- Need a new picture for the directory update? Contact Lynne to arrange a photo time.
- Knotting takes a break over the holidays and will resume Jan. 14.
- Our 2020 Annual Business Meeting is Jan. 26 at 1 pm, following a fellowship meal.

Advent: What are we waiting for?



In today's American culture of Instagram, Snapchat, same day delivery and fast food apps, we are not very good at waiting. And why wait for something that we know has already happened?! Yet there is merit in waiting.

We hope that the elements of our worship services during this Advent-Christmas-Epiphany season will nurture a season of reflection, curiosity, celebration and, ultimately, courageous hope.

Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

Pastor's Corner: The journey inward and the journey outward

A new year is right around the corner. With newness comes opportunity for growth and change. I want to suggest two simple practices to you as possible ways for you to grow in the new year. You may already be engaging in them or something similar. If not, I encourage you to give them a try.

The first is to go inward by reading Scripture and praying. Mark 1:35-39 shows us that Jesus had a regular habit of prayer that included a definite time and place that produced for him a definite result—clarity about

what his purpose in life was. In as little as 15 minutes you can read a paragraph of Scripture—the book of James is a good place to start—reflect on its meaning for your life, and take a moment to pray. Like Jesus, establish a definite time and place where you can engage in this practice.

The second practice is to go outward by doing free attention giveaways. People all around you, maybe even some in your own household, are starved for someone to be attentive to them in a concentrated, undistracted way. A free attention giveaway

starts when you ask a person, “How are you doing?” and then listen attentively. Set a goal for yourself of at least one giveaway each day. You’ll be surprised how much the tone of your day changes when you make attentive listening to someone else a regular part of each day.

I’m looking forward to hearing from you about how your journey inward and outward grows in the new year.

Peace,

~ *Pastor Michael*

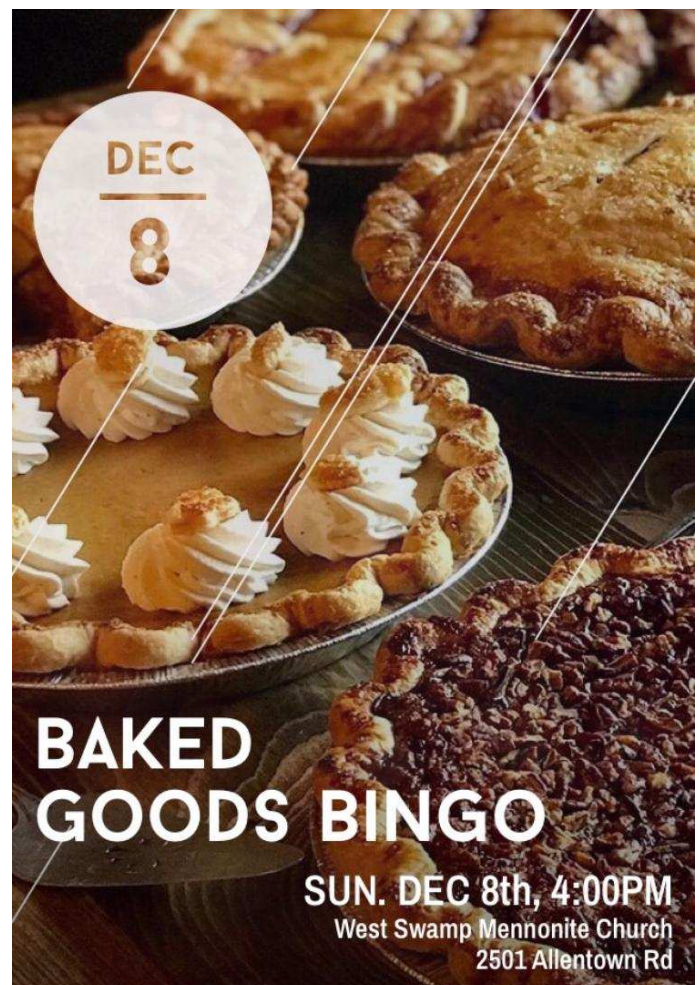
Baked Goods Bingo

Join us **Dec. 8** for a fun night with family to support those in need in our community and beyond. Doors open at 4 pm, kitchen opens at 4, and bingo begins at 5.

\$5 per game pack sold at the door (10 games included in pack). There’s a homemade baked good prize for every game!

You can also get tickets for Raffle Baskets; bring a non-perishable food donation for one free raffle ticket (up to 5 tickets).

All proceeds will benefit the Code Blue Homeless Shelter in Quakertown and Crossroads Community Center of Philadelphia. Contact Katie Auckland at 267-733-2141 or k34auckland@gmail.com with questions or contributions.



Community: Another reason to bake!

Time to get out your favorite cookie recipes, heat up the oven and get baking! West Swamp will once again take part in the annual **Christmas Carnival**, held on Saturday, Dec. 14. This carnival is held in support of low income families in the Quakertown area.

Our congregation hosts a station where kids can make a craft and each family receives a carton of homemade cookies. That means we need dozens & dozens of cookies!

Cookies need to be dropped off at church by 6 pm on Friday, Dec. 13. Community Commission members—and anyone else who would like to help—will pack the boxes that evening.

If you can bake, please sign up on the Mission bulletin board. And if you'd like to help at this event, please talk to Nancy Jacobs.



Nancy Jacobs and Sue Keller attach Christmas cards to cookie packages for the 2018 Christmas Carnival.



Christmas Carnival

Saturday, Dec. 14
11:30 am – 2:00 pm

Quakertown United Methodist Church
1875 Freier Road, Quakertown

Sponsored by the Quakertown Ministerium, HUBBUB,
and the Upper Bucks Unit of the Salvation Army

Community: Taking care of each other

With the New Year approaching, the Visiting Committee is looking for a few more friendly faces to fill out our 2020 visitation schedule.

It's an easy and fun way to get to know, and keep in touch with, our members who may be homebound or reside in nursing homes. Two volunteers are scheduled each month to go to-

gether or individually, and are given a list with addresses and phone information. The time visiting someone is very much appreciated, and can be very rewarding for the visitor too!

If you'd like to give it a try, please contact Nancy Jacobs, or the church office. Thank you for helping to care for our church family in this way.



DISCO: A personal invitation to Sunday School

The past few years have been a challenge for the Discipling Commission with the decline in children's and adult Sunday school attendance. As a Commission we strive to offer SS topics that will interest members and encourage them to attend. We understand it's sometimes hard to get out of bed on a Sunday morning, especially if the weather is not cooperating, but we know it's important to make time to meet together and to explore the Bible and our relationship with God.

In December we will be starting the DVD series "Prayer: Does it Make Any Difference?" by Philip

Yancy. We all know prayer is an important aspect of our spiritual life but sometimes it can be frustrating. Is God hearing us, are our prayers making a difference and can they be more satisfying? Philip Yancy explores this enigmatic intersection where we meet God.

Which brings me to the monthly prayer breakfasts. If you have not been to one yet, we encourage you to come out. It has been a wonderful time of fellowship and also a time to share and pray with members of our church family. The next breakfast is Dec. 1. We would love to see you

there!

Lastly, the Discipling Commission would like to make it a point of developing more small groups as a way of building relationships with others and strengthening each other's spiritual life. We are always open for ideas. See Lori Farrell or anyone on the Discipling Commission if you have suggestions.

We are looking forward to a new year with new possibilities for West Swamp Mennonite Church and we want everyone to be a part of it!

~ Lori Farrell

Advent Giving Projects

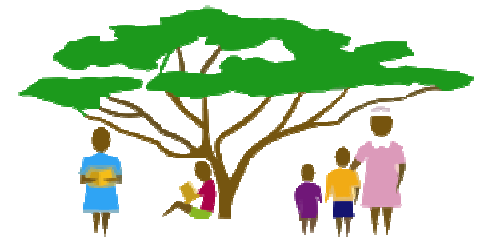
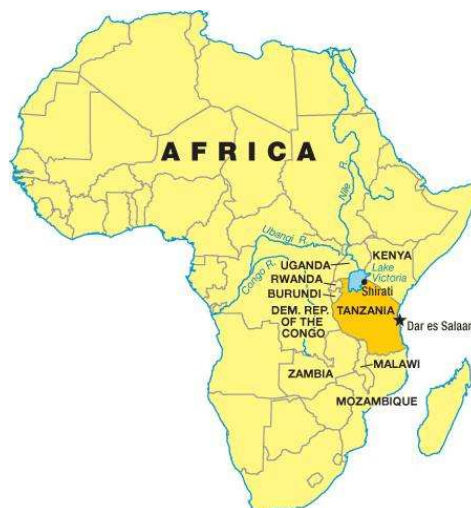
DISCO is sponsoring two Advent Giving projects this year—one local, on global.

Local: AHUB (Advocates for the Homeless of Upper Bucks) is asking for \$5-\$10 gift cards from WaWa, Subway, McDonalds, Wendy's, Burger King, Dunkin' Donuts and Walmart. These will be given, as needed, to guests coming into the Code Blue shelter. You can clip cards to the Giving Tree in the fellowship hall.

Global: Collections will be made during the worship service for **Friends of Shirati**, a group that works to improve the well-being and life chances of some of God's beloved children in Tanzania. As an organization, we are devoted to supporting the work of the caring and professional

staff at Shirati Hospital as they serve the children and adults of the North Mara region of Tanzania.

Our donations will support **meals and transportation for children living with HIV/AIDS**. Each month over 360 chil-



FRIENDS OF SHIRATI

dren living with HIV/AIDS come to Shirati Hospital to receive their medication. This medication is essential for their well-being and health. A U.S. grant, which used to fund the transportation and meal for the children, has ended, and Friends of Shirati have pledged to fill the gap. A donation of **\$100** can pay for **meals and transportation for 10 children**. Additional donations may be used for school supplies and possibly school uniforms.

DISCO: Another Sunday School option

When Ben & I based an August worship service on the Bible as one continuous story, we realized how ridiculous it was to try to cram that all into a one hour service. That reinforced the idea that's been kicking around in my head for a while.

I've been reading through the Bible this year using resources from The Bible Project. It's the first time in years that I've actually kept up with any kind of Bi-

ble reading plan. I usually get bogged down around July and never finish. This year I've managed to keep up, but sometimes I want to slow down and think and discuss parts of the story.

Are you interested in getting into the Bible more? Interested in seeing the story that runs the whole way through? In increasing your "Biblical literacy"?

Then I invite you to join me in a new Sunday School class start-

ing Jan. 19. This is a special invitation to those who are not currently attending Sunday School—all ages are welcome.

We'll meet in the youth room and maybe there will even be snacks sometimes. But I warn you there will be homework — daily Bible reading and sometimes a video to watch.

Let me know if you're interested,

~ *Lynne Rush*

Mission: Is this a crazy idea?

As the year comes to an end, Mission Commission needs to come up with the mission budget for 2020. We kind of stay "status quo" from year to year with no major changes, which I guess is fine since the budget—as far as missions goes—normally does not get much discussion.

Mission commission will be discussing the 2020 budget at our Nov. 26 meeting. I have been toying with an idea. What if part of the missions budget was to have some "seed money" available to fund mission type things and/or mission fundraisers.

The "Baked Goods Bingo," which will be happening Dec. 14, got me thinking about the "seed money" idea more. Thanks to the idea of Katie and Matt Mood, AHUB Code Blue and Crossroads Community Center will benefit financially from the proceeds of a fun night of bingo.

What other creative fun worth-

while things could small groups, families or individuals come up with to fundraise for other mission organizations or meet a need ourselves as a congregation? Could \$50 or \$100 dollars turn into 50-100 people feeling the love of Jesus in a real way, maybe for the first time! Instead of donating \$100 to Ripple, could that same \$100 be used to buy cookie ingredients to bake cookies to sell and maybe be able to donate \$500 from cookies sales to Ripple instead. Crossroad Community Center does the cookie sale method to raise funds so their children to attend Camp Men-O-Lan.

So what do you all think? Is this just a crazy idea or could this "seed money" thing work?

Sometimes I wonder if everyone reads the newsletter. I must admit, until I (as a deacon) had to be a regular contributor to the newsletter, I did not read it as

faithfully as I now do. So go ahead, make my day and tell me what you think of the "seed money" idea. You can email me at arushjob@verizon.net or speak to me directly.

Oh, and one more thing: it's time for our next SWAP trip. If you



Lori Farrell installs window molding during the 2018 SWAP trip.

are interested in giving a week of your time to be part of a work team this summer, talk to Lynne Rush or Shawn Husvar.

~ *Rod Rush*

Stewardship: 2019 to 2020

With the holiday season and the end of the year just around the corner, it is time to recommit ourselves to a strong end of 2019 and to great expectations for 2020.

As of this writing in mid-November, we are tracking to have a small budget surplus by the end of the month. With heating oil tanks to be filled and some other year-end costs to be paid in December, we will need your continued financial support right through the end of the year to hold onto that surplus.

Looking ahead to one of the 2020 challenges, the Stewardship Commission will be bringing forward the fellowship hall carpeting project for your consideration. We have two proposals for the carpet that are in the \$11,000 to \$13,000 range. However, one big unknown associated with the project is the condition of the subfloor, as we are aware of a couple soft spots under the carpet.

Also on the 2020 wish list is painting of at least one of the outside walls, and finding some-

one to take over the lawn mowing from Jim Bevan. We were blessed to get one more bonus year from Jim during 2019, but all good things must come to an end. If you or someone you know are interested in the job, please let one of the trustees know.

I feel as though 2019 was a good year of stewardship here at West Swamp and I ask that we strive to be good stewards in 2020 of all the gifts the Lord has entrusted to us.

~ Randy Rush

The Great Winter Warm-Up Comforter Blitz

Thanks to all who participated in our October Blitz. We knotted 73 comforters in two days! There are still a few that need hemmed before we take them out to Ephrata in January. See Mary Bittenbender if you can help with this.

Pictured clockwise from right: Ben Rush, Joan Hallman, Joyce Rosenberger and Case Mood take part in the Comforter Blitz.



Kid's Page



Symbols of the *season*

Many traditional decorations convey the meaning of Christmas.

Directions: Use the picture clues to the right to complete the words. Then write the boxed letters in order to complete 2 Corinthians 9:15, NIV.



shepherd's staff _ _ _ _

tree that keeps its leaves _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

shines to lead the way _ _ _ _

green for eternal life,
red for Jesus' blood _ _ _ _ &
_ _ _ _ _ _

sounds to announce
good news _ _ _ _

has no beginning or end _ _ _ _ _

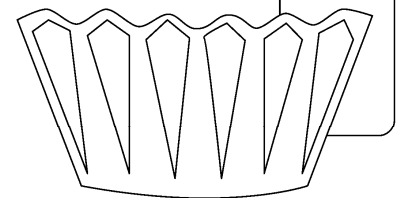
Th ks b to od fo is
indesc ba le gif !

2 CORINTHIANS 9:15, NIV

Answer: candy cane, evergreen, star, holly & berries, bell, wreath; Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! 2 Corinthians 9:15, NIV

Light the Way

Make some Christmas candles to remember Jesus, the Light of the world.



What you need:

- Unlined white notecards
- Hot glue (and adult help)
- Yellow tissue paper
- Mini muffin liners
- Clothespins

What you do:

1. Roll a notecard from side to side into a "candle" tube. Secure with glue.
2. Insert a piece of tissue paper "flame" in one end.
3. Glue the other end to a muffin liner. Then glue the liner to a clothespin.
4. Repeat to make many paper candles. Pin them to the branches of a Christmas tree.



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mennonite church

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Reflecting God in our
living, loving and serving



Birthdays

December

- 12/1 Pauline Stelmach
- 12/4 Dennis Wieand
- 12/7 Debbie Bauman
Wayne Moyer
- 12/8 Stanley Stauffer
Ken Yoder
- 12/9 Betty Lou Green
Penny Rice

- 12/11 Jasper Riley
- 12/15 Louise Butcher
- 12/16 Sue Gwilliam
Brent Rice
Seth Rice
- 12/17 Madison Mood
Evan Wieand
- 12/19 Bill Grube
- 12/20 Ossie Myers
- 12/21 Kim Witt
- 12/23 Barb Moyer
- 12/24 Elliana Kirkpatrick
- 12/26 Glenn High

- 12/27 Bob Leber
Elaine Propst
- 12/29 Charles Spiess
- 12/31 Kevin Huff

January

- 1/5 Jamie Smith
- 1/11 Tom Mood
- 1/27 Jessie Keller
- 1/28 Brent Keller
- 1/29 Katelyn Opdyke
- 1/30 Rod Rush

Calendar of Events

December

- 1, 9:30 am—Prayer Breakfast
- 1—Advent begins
- 3, 7 pm—Community Com.
- 5, 1 pm—Senior Luncheon
- 8—Joyful Noise practice
- 8, 4 pm—Baked Goods Bingo
- 11, 6:15 pm—Chimin' In practice
- 11, 8 pm—Worship Com.
- 12, 7 pm—Stewardship Com.
- 14, 11:30 am—Salvation Army
Christmas Carnival
- 15, 12 pm—Sunday Lunch Bunch
- 17, 7 pm—Ministry Team
- 18, 6:15 pm—Chimin' In
- 21, 8 am—Men's Bible Study
- 24, 7 pm—Christmas Eve Service
- 29—Christmas Sunday

January

- 2, 1 pm—Senior Luncheon
- 5—Epiphany Sunday
- 9, 7 pm—Stewardship Com.
- 14—Knotting begins again
- 15, 6:15 pm—Chimin' In
- 18, 8 am—Men's Bible Study
- 19, 12 pm—Sunday Lunch Bunch
- 21, 7 pm—Ministry Team
- 15—Knotting resumes
- 16, 6:15 pm—Chimin' In
- 26—Fellowship Meal & Annual
Congregational Meeting
- 28, 7 pm—DISCO

Regular Activities

- Tuesdays, 8 am—Quilting (Knotting takes a break until Jan. 14)
- Wednesdays, 7 pm—Adult Choir