

# West Swamp News

Volume 9, Issue 2

February/March 2020

## Celebrating Reconciliation

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### FYI

- Begin your Lenten Journey at the Ash Wednesday Service on Feb. 26 at 7 pm.
- Beginning Feb. 2 we will have a time of singing before the service on the first Sundays of the month. Come to the Prayer Breakfast then head upstairs to sing on a full stomach!
- Daylight Savings Time begins Mar. 8. Don't forget to turn your clocks ahead.

During a joint assembly on Nov. 2 Franconia and Eastern District Conferences held a vote to a split after 172 years apart. The vote was unanimous.

While other conferences have merged, this union is not a merger; it is a reconciliation, reversing a division in 1847 that arose from disagreements on disciplinary practices and authority.

The new conference officially begins Feb. 1, though a new name for it has not been announced yet.

If you have read our history book, you know that John Oberholtzer, West Swamp's pastor during that time, was involved in that 1847 split and that West Swamp was deeply affected.

As was the case in several churches in this area, the split divided not only the conference, but individual congregations as well.

At that time worship services alternated between West Swamp and East Swamp.

When more conservative members wanted to hold their own service with a guest preacher on an "off" Sunday, progressive members got wind of it and changed the locks on the meeting house. (This happened peacefully according to one side; not so peacefully according to the other.)

As a result seven families left West Swamp to

form the Swamp Congregation a mile and a half away.

This split remained painful for decades, but reconciliation between our two congregations was already going on before reaching the conference level.

When Swamp celebrated their 150th anniversary on Sept. 28, 1997, they invited West Swamp to send a representative. Henry Stauffer, a member of

*(Continued on page 3)*



Conference moderators, John Goshow (Franconia) and Jim Musselman (Eastern District) prepare to celebrate the reconciliation! Photo by Cindy Angela

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

As I write this, the beginning of the Lenten season is still weeks away. But I want to invite you to reflect with me about what this season in our life together as a congregation means.

Growing up in south Louisiana, Lent was a big deal, not least because it began with Mardi Gras. All Louisiana schoolchildren love Mardi Gras, because you get a week off from school.

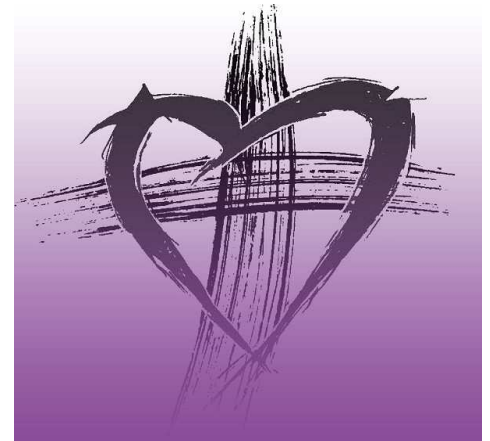


But the day after Mardi Gras always puzzled me. All day long I would see people walking around with a dark smudge in

the center of their foreheads in the shape of a cross. It wasn't until I was much older that I learned that they had been marked with the sign of the cross at an Ash Wednesday worship service. And later still, as a pastor I would take ashes mixed with oil and mark congregant's foreheads, speaking over them ancient words: "From dust you were made, and to dust you are returning."

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent, a period of forty days (not counting Sundays—it's a long story) before Easter when we are focusing on spiritual growth. The forty days recall the time Jesus spent fasting in the desert before he began his public ministry.

To help facilitate spiritual growth, many Christians give something up during Lent, like a favorite food or enjoyed activity.



The point of fasting during Lent is not the giving up of something, but what giving it up accomplishes. Taking something out of my life for a season creates room, more room for God. So I challenge you to take something out of your life to make more room for God—more room for prayer or Bible study or serving your neighbors.

Peace,

~ *Pastor Michael*

## Lent 2020: Show us

Lent is a time to slow down and breathe in the life of Jesus. It is a long and difficult journey to the cross, but if we pay careful attention, Jesus shows us who he is.

In the Scriptures this year for lent, the theme of "Show us" arises. At different points in the story, Jesus invites us into a deeper understanding or rela-

tionship with him. Our hearts and minds must remain open and we say to Jesus, "Show us." We desire for Jesus to show us who he is and who we are. Whether it's a way forward through the desert, a way to overcome temptation, the extent of God's love, or the power to overcome death, Jesus wants to show us.

Jesus wants to be revealed in new and deeper ways to his church. Our desire is for the church to enter into a deeper relationship with Jesus—to fall in love again with the story of Jesus. This Lent season we pray that Jesus show up in new ways for our congregation. May you find new meaning and life in these stories of Jesus.

## DISCO: Save the date!

This year's Youth Auction date is set: Saturday, Mar. 14. It's not too early to start thinking about how you can help!

**Volunteer:** We could use people to help set up, work in the kitchen, organize display tables, or clean up.

**Donate:** Items that have sold well in the past are themed gift baskets, baked goods, handmade crafts, meals hosted by members,

tickets to sporting events, etc. New or gently used items are good too. Let Lori or Lynne know if you have items to donate or if you have questions.

**Attend:** The more people who come, the higher the bids go, the more money we raise. Bring friends!

Remember the Youth Auction can't happen without YOU. We appreciate your support!



## Celebrating reconciliation together

(Continued from page 1)

our Spiritual Council, attended and read a letter saying, "As a symbol of reconciliation and forgiveness, we present you this key to our congregation." He withdrew a key from his pocket and gave it to Swamp's pastor, William Brunk adding, "While we cannot undo the past, we can anticipate the future with new wisdom and understanding."

An observer later wrote, "Older members, particularly those who had heard the stories of the past while there was still feeling in them, had tears as they shook their heads in disbelief. Then there was applause, long-sustained applause as all of us realized we were being touched by the Spirit of unity, of merger, of integration."

Swamp reciprocated the next year. On June 7, 1998 Pastor William Brunk, Marlin Clemmer and Daniel Schantz presented us with a *Fraktur* commemorating

the key presentation and bearing the inscription "How good and how pleasant it is for brothers and sisters to dwell together in unity."

We are excited about the reconciliation of our two conferences and want to celebrate together. Here's how we're going to do it—by worshiping together, sharing communion together and of course, eating together!

On Mar. 1 Swamp will join us here at West Swamp for our Fellowship Prayer Breakfast at 9:30. Then we'll worship together at 10:30. Pastor Nathan Good of Swamp will preach and we will celebrate Communion during the service.

The next Sunday, Mar. 8, we'll worship together at Swamp at 10:15. Pastor Michael will preach. Following the service we will eat together at a fellowship lunch and share Communion once more.

Be a part of history! Celebrate this Spirit-led reconciliation, many years in the making!



**Fraktur presented to the West Swamp congregation by the Swamp congregation on June 7, 1997.**

## Mission: SWAP team forming

There are eight to ten people interested in Sharing With Appalachian People this summer. This could be a larger group than has gone the last few trips. Even if all ten go, that is still just a fraction of the total membership of West Swamp.

So how can the whole church take ownership in this meaningful project? When the Eagles won Super Bowl LII, it wasn't just the players and coaches who got the credit. The fans were praised for their part in the process. The support of the fans helped inspire the team to always do their best. So how can the rest of the church body, the part that does not travel south and pick up hammers, help support and inspire the "team"?

One way is to start praying for the group that will go. Soon those thinking about going will need to make the commitment to go or not. That could be hard. Deciding to give a week to serve instead of doing a more glamorous vacation such as going to the Grand Canyon or Hawaii or Europe could be a hard choice. Some may have doubts about their abilities or about working for total strangers. Prayers for those that are in the deciding process are very important. Once we know who is going more specific prayers can be prayed as concerns may be shared. Notes of encouragement would also be great and very meaningful.

Another way to help is financially. Since those going to SWAP are giving so much of their time, sweat and talent, it is

helpful if the church can cover most of the expense. There is no line item in the budget for SWAP this year. The thinking behind this is that the whole church can take ownership in raising some funds to make SWAP happen. There is a new line item in the budget called "seed money." I am happy to say that the Men's Bible Study group would like to "grow some funds" using that seed money to help send a crew to SWAP. I am also happy to say that the Men's group is humble enough to know, "WE WILL NEED LOTS OF HELP!!!"

In the past the Men's Bible Study has done a fine job with pancakes and sausage. In order to raise the necessary funds, we will have to step it up and add some more menu items. If you are good in the kitchen and enjoy making people happy by filling their stomachs with delicious things, then you need to let the Men's group know you can help. We're counting on those going on the SWAP trip to be involved too.

Bakers will also be needed for the baked goods table, or should I say *tables*. The breakfast is all-you-can-eat, but people get hungry again and need something to take home. Can we have a great variety of baked items to sell?

You may be thinking, "You do NOT want me in the kitchen, so what can I do to help?" If we have lots of good food and lots of tables set, we will need you to invite all your friends and relatives to come eat. We will need everyone to get the word out about the Benefit Breakfast. We

will also need helpers in the set up and cleaning up.

So here are the details of the Breakfast to benefit those going to SWAP:

- Saturday, Mar. 28, 7:30 to 10
- Free will donation
- Pancakes, sausage, juices, coffee and the rest to still be determined
- Baked goods tables

Seriously consider how you can be a part of this SWAP team effort. We can make this happen and in the process Jesus will be glorified. Sign-up sheets will soon be on the Mission Bulletin Board to help.

As always, thank you for the amazing things we can accomplish together.

~ Rod Rush



**Jeff Searfass & Shawn Husvar use an ancient method to move a big rock out of the way and on to the truck.**

**\*Kid's Page\***

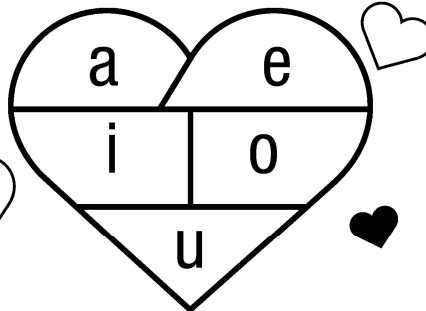


*A friend in Jesus*

In the Bible, Jesus shares what it means to be a true friend.



*Directions: Use the heart key to fill in the missing vowels from John 15:14, 17, NIV.*



“Y \_ \_ r \_ my fr \_ \_ nds \_ f

y \_ \_ d \_ wh \_ t \_ c \_ mm \_ nd. ...

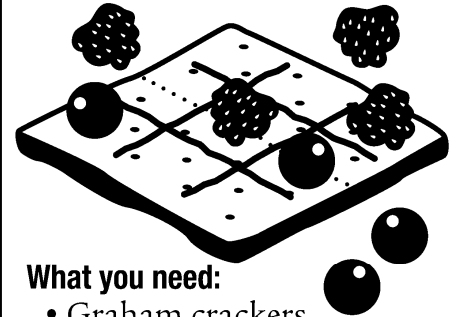
Th \_ s \_ s my c \_ mm \_ nd:

L \_ v \_ \_ \_ ch \_ th \_ r.”

JOHN 15:14, 17, NIV

**Friendship Squares**

This tasty treat doubles as a game to play with a buddy.



**What you need:**

- Graham crackers
- Chocolate chips
- Microwave-safe bowl
- Zippered baggie
- Scissors
- Raspberries
- Blueberries

**What you do:**

1. Gently break cracker sheets in half to form squares.
2. Heat chocolate chips in microwave for 30 seconds. Stir, then continue heating for 30 seconds at a time until melted.
3. Spoon melted chocolate into baggie and snip a small triangle from one bottom corner.
4. On each cracker, squeeze chocolate lines to form a Tic-Tac-Toe board. Let cool.
5. Using the fruit as X's and O's, play Tic-Tac-Toe with a friend. The winner gets to eat the treat!

Answer: “You are my friends if you do what I command. ... This is my command: Love each other.” John 15:14, 17, NIV



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Reflecting God in our  
living, loving and serving

### Calendar of Events

#### **February**

- 2, 9:30 am—Prayer Breakfast
- 4, 7 pm—Community Com.
- 5, 6:15 pm—Chimin' In
- 6, 1 pm—Senior Luncheon
- 9—Joyful Noise practice
- 12, 6:15 pm—Chimin' In
- 12, 7 pm—Worship Com.
- 13, 7 pm—Stewardship Com.
- 15, 8 am—Men's Bible Study
- 16, 12 pm—Sunday Lunch Bunch
- 18, 7 pm—Ministry Team
- 23—Joyful Noise practice
- 25, 7 pm—DISCO
- 25, 7 pm—Mission Com.
- 26, 7 pm—Ash Wednesday Service

#### **March**

- 1—Joint Reconciliation Celebration with Swamp our worship service
- 1, 9:30 am—Prayer Breakfast
- 3, 7 pm—Community Com.
- 5, 1 pm—Senior Luncheon
- 8, 10:15—Joint Reconciliation Celebration at Swamp
- 11, 6:15 pm—Chimin' In
- 11, 7 pm—Worship Com.
- 12, 7 pm—Stewardship Com.
- 14, 5:30 pm—Youth Auction
- 15—Joyful Noise practice
- 15, 12 pm—Sunday Lunch Bunch
- 17, 7 pm—Ministry Team
- 21, 8 am—Men's Bible Study
- 24, 7 pm—DISCO
- 24, 7 pm—Mission Com.
- 25, 6:15 pm—Chimin' In
- 28, 7:30 am—SWAP Benefit Breakfast
- 29—Joyful Noise practice

#### **Regular Activities**

- Tuesdays, 8 am—Quilting & Knotting
- Wednesdays, 7 pm (usually)—Choir



## Birthdays

#### February

- 2/4 Karalynne Parzych
- 2/6 Nancy Propst
- 2/10 Paige Mood
- 2/11 Brandon Mininger
- 2/12 Sue Keller
- 2/21 Kinsley Searfass
- 2/22 Michaela Wieand
- 2/26 Jim Bevan

#### March

- 3/5 Judy Scheetz
- 3/9 Jason Stevenback

- 3/11 Rick Hinkle
- 3/12 Alicia Loch
- 3/14 Julia Huff
- 3/16 McKenzie Huff
- 3/17 Chris Farrell
- 3/19 Earl Miller
- 3/22 Erin Farrell
- 3/27 Bruce Bauman  
Katie Stauffer
- 3/29 Pat Bevan
- 3/31 Lori Farrell