

# West Swamp News

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August '20

## Pavilion services continue in August

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### FYI

- Contact the church office if you would like to coordinate maintenance of the courtyard garden.
- Congratulations to Carolyn Rush who won the Wordsearch Challenge. The hidden message was "First to call Lynne gets a prize."

Hebrews 10:24 starts with a call to "not give up meeting together ... but let us encourage one another." It was definitely encouraging to begin pavilion services in July—to be able to see each other in person and talk with people from a safe distance.

We will continue to do that in August, meeting for worship at 9:30 am in the shaded area around the pavilion. Please continue to wear face coverings and bring lawn chairs to sit in appropriately spaced family groupings.

We've been blessed with good weather so far and hope that con-

tinues. Good news: the weather predictions for August Sundays look a little cooler than July was!

Photos (clockwise): Pastor Michael reads a parable. Mark Kemmerer videos the service for those who can't attend. Nancy Jacobs, Gretchen Isaak and Deb Stevenback do their best to serve a contact-less snack after a service.

Jan & Denny Wieand take a "back row" seat by the playground.



## Pastor's Corner: Learning to lament

One of the kinds of prayer that is featured often in the Scripture but largely neglected in our worship practice is lament. Lament is simply saying to God that we feel weighed down by the way the world is, by our circumstances and our environment.

In Psalm 13:1 King David says: "How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?" In Psalm 90, attributed to Moses, verse 13 says: "Relent, Lord! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants."

From these biblical examples and others like them, we can learn that it is completely appropriate to bring our lament to God. We have lost many things:

the normal routines of daily life, a sense of safety and security, time with friends and family, our accustomed patterns of worship. And there are many distressing things happening in our world: the ongoing global pandemic, with its rising case counts and fatalities; the partisan political divide in our nation; the ongoing presence of systemic racism in our communities. The biblical witness encourages us to lay all that out in prayer before God.

I grew up singing old gospel songs in church, and one of my favorites is "I Must Tell Jesus"—

*I must tell Jesus  
all of my trials;  
I cannot bear  
these burdens alone;*

*in my distress  
He kindly will help me;  
he ever loves and  
cares for His own.*

*I must tell Jesus!  
I must tell Jesus!  
I cannot bear  
my burdens alone;  
I must tell Jesus!  
I must tell Jesus!  
Jesus can help me,  
Jesus alone."*

Let us use this strange time through which we are passing to learn to bring our lament to Jesus.

Peace,  
Pastor Michael

## The future of knotting

One of the many activities put on hold during the pandemic has been the knotting project. For many years Joyce Rosenberger was the driving force of that ministry. With her death occurring at the beginning of stay-at-home orders, we haven't really been able to process and mourn her passing, let alone figure out how this will affect knotting.

The place in the process she will be missed most is sewing the tops. Joyce had been providing most of the tops that were being knotted. How can we fill that gap?

The rest of the process is pretty much taken care of: there are

people who cut patches, people who pin in the comforters and get them ready for knotting, people who knot, and people who finish the binding.

For the knotting project to continue, we need people willing to sew patches into comforters.

Who is interested? Maybe some day sewing parties will be an option, but for now it needs to be individuals.

Of course, the next question is



**Robert and Joyce Rosenberger work at the first Why Knot! Week in 2006.**

how do we maintain safe distancing while knotting. Contact Lynne with your creative ideas!

## Stewardship: Mid-year update

It is that time of the year when we look at how we are doing as good stewards of what the Lord has blessed us with here at West Swamp Mennonite.

As for our financial condition, we are standing with a \$958 year to date deficit at June 30. Last year at June 30 we reported a YTD deficit of \$8,074. So far this year your tithes and offerings are running ahead of last year by \$9,293; so thank you and keep up the good work. Our June 30 year to date disbursements are 49% of the 2020 annual budget, so that is tracking on target.

Way back in February Matt Mood was able to shore up the fellowship hall subfloor, which

saved a \$4,000 budget line item. This will help to offset the cost of the elevator repair. Speaking of the elevator repair; the hydraulic pump replacement work has been completed, however the elevator cannot be placed back in service until we install new electrical capacitors which have not come in yet.

In the near future look for a comprehensive professional pruning of the shrubbery around the church. This will give us the upper hand on the growth of our beautiful, mature plants. Thanks go to Sue Gwilliam for overseeing this project, and to a church member for underwriting most of the cost.

During this uncertain time of the COVID-19 pandemic the Stewardship Commission and the Ministry Team stand ready to meet the needs of our members and those in the community in any way we can. One of those ways is through our Sharing Fund. If you are in need or know of someone's financial hardship, please reach out to Pastor Michael or one of the Deacons. In Christ's name,

~ **Randy Rush**

[Note: The capacitors were installed and the elevator repairs are complete. Everything is up and running again!]

## DISCO: Navigating the next weeks and months

Fall is right around the corner and still we have no clear idea of when we will be able to meet and fellowship together like we have not been able to do for so long ago. I myself have many questions as to how we can safely gather together, and each day brings new challenges.

As of this date, the Discipling Commission feels even meeting together in small groups poses a risk, albeit small. So we ask for patience as we navigate the next few weeks and months. And we ask for your prayers for the Lord's guidance and wisdom as we move forward.

Currently, the Bible Project Sunday School class continues to

meet on Sunday mornings at 11 am via Zoom. Lynne and Ben Rush are leading the class and we are currently studying the book of 2 Samuel and King David's reign.

Ben is also leading a Zoom discussion based on the book *The Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism* by Drew G. I. Hart on Thursdays at 7 pm. The book looks at the problem of racism in America and how the church has handled the issue in the past and how we should be handling it going forward. We have had some real thought-provoking discussions during these sessions. If you interested in joining either group

but are new to Zoom, let Lynne, Pastor Michael or me know and we can help you.

I encourage everyone to take time to reach out to other members of our church family, whether by phone or email or even a note in the mail letting them know you are thinking about them. It is easy to just go about our daily lives and forget that we are all part of a community and we need to look out for each other. I am grateful to be a part of West Swamp family.

Wishing everyone peace, love and good health.

~ **Lori Farrell**

## Black lives matter

Since the start of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement in 2013, the phrase has been common in the US, however within the last few weeks, the phrase has become practically inescapable. Its visibility is increasing as the phrase "Black lives matter" is posted on social media, bumper stickers, and picket signs. Even though the statement is true – Black lives do matter – some people are finding it divisive. As its visibility grows, so does the visibility of the counterargument, "All lives matter."

I can see why saying "All lives matter" would be tempting; how could one go wrong saying that? I can understand why it would be especially appealing to say it as a Christian who wants to express a belief in God's grace and love toward all humankind. However, saying "All lives matter" as a response to "Black lives

matter" changes its meaning from a message of unity into a tool of oppression. The phrase "All lives matter" offers no contribution to the national conversation about racial justice other than to block the voices of the people most ardently crying for justice. It quite literally becomes a blanket statement: covering a complex issue with the fabric of well-intentioned platitudes and hiding everything underneath it from view.

Imagine how many spiritual truths found in our own Bibles would be missed if we applied the same "All lives matter" principle to scripture. When God focuses on and liberates the Hebrews enslaved in Egypt, we would say, "But God, *all* lives matter." When Jesus says, "Blessed are you who are poor," we would say, "No, Jesus, blessed is everyone." We would have to revise a lot of what Jesus

said, because Jesus was more concerned with being the Truth than saying what people wanted to hear.

There is a third slogan I've seen in these last weeks. It says: "All lives can't matter until Black lives matter." This is what I think is closest to what Jesus would have to say. Or, to put it in the language of the Sermon on the Mount: You have heard it said "All lives matter," but I say to you, "All lives can't matter until Black lives matter".

Yes, all lives do matter, but right now that sentiment is not reflected in our social structures. In order to truly care about all lives, we should be amplifying Black voices, not obscuring them.

Say "Black lives matter."

~ *Ben Rush*

## Mission Commission Project: MCC School Kits

School supply sales have started and it's time to start our MCC School Kit collection. Bags will be provided if you would like to donate complete kits, and single item or monetary donations are welcome too.

### Contents (NEW items only)

- 4 spiral or perforated-pages notebooks (8.5 in x 10.5 in and 70 sheets)
- 8 new unsharpened pencils
- 1 ruler (flat, good quality;

must indicate 30 cm; inch markings optional)

- 12 colored pencils (in packaging)
- 1 large eraser
- 2 new black or blue ballpoint pens
- 1 small **all metal** pencil sharpener, one or two holes.

**NOTE: All metal** sharpeners can be found online at Amazon.com or Bazic.com or in the art supply section of retail stores

like Staples. Plastic case pencil sharpeners are not accepted because these are poor quality and do not last as long. If you can't find the right kind, don't worry: we will get in a supply of metal sharpeners for the kits.

School kits often are requested after disasters and help bring normalcy to children whose families have been forced to flee their homes.

## Staying connected: What have YOU been up to?



**(Above)** From Sue Gwilliam: This photo is a shot of some of the things that we have been doing to stay safe and sane. Whoever we donate scarves to this year will be well supplied!

**(The rest)** From Dana Searfass: Here are a few pictures from our recent camping trip to Knoebels. We had a blast! It was a nice little getaway, still being able to stay safe and social distance. We're glad we were able to keep our annual trip!



## Staying connected



The farm is getting very busy! Stop by the Stand for you summer favorites!

From **Katie Mood**: We are officially back in our home! Finishing touches will continue, but it's great to be back in bedrooms and functioning a little bit more normally.



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



*Compete for the crown*



The apostle Paul compares the Christian life to running a race for an imperishable crown.



*Directions: From the starting line through the finish line, circle every third letter. Then place the circled letters in order in the blanks below to complete 1 Corinthians 9:24-25, NIV.*

**START**

c t r e j a s u c p h e l n p o m r x k i b v z t a e j a r g i u s o n y c c w  
 i q s a t e x y m p s a k o g m z s j e e u b t n y e h a p i d m r f o e  
 t e g r b u a n p i c d n o f i h m n e y g j o c s x r d p o e t w k i n

**FINISH**

“Do you not know that in a \_\_\_\_\_ all the runners run, but only one gets the \_\_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_\_ in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ goes into strict \_\_\_\_\_ . They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a \_\_\_\_\_ that will last forever.”

1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-25, NIV

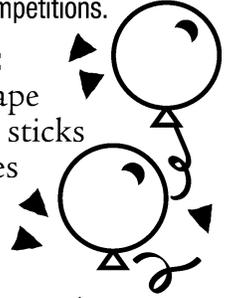
Answer: race, prize, run, competes, games, training, crown

**GREAT SUMMER GAMES**

Though this year's Summer Olympics were postponed, you can host friendly neighborhood competitions.

**What you need:**

- Masking tape
- Large craft sticks
- Paper plates
- Balloons
- Ribbon
- Scissors
- Green construction paper
- Craft glue



**What you do:**

**Balloon Badminton:** Make rackets by taping a stick “handle” to each plate. Blow up and tie a balloon. Use the rackets to pass the balloon back and forth, without letting it touch the floor.

**Rhythmic Routines:** Using tape, firmly attach one end of a 4-foot ribbon to a craft stick. Display style and skill by waving it around. Try choreographing a routine to a praise song.

**Champion Crown:** Cut a large hole out of the center of a paper plate. Cut 2-inch ovals from green paper. Glue those “leaves” to the ring as garland. Crown a winner of each game!



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## Staying Connected



If the Phillies play any more home games,  
look for Nancy & Don in the stands!  
Doubt if they'll catch any foul balls though.

So what have YOU been up to these days?



8/2	Bonnie Kiesel	8/15	Anita Husvar
	Gary Parzych	8/16	Christine Allem
8/4	David W. Green	8/20	Karen Parzych
8/6	Ben Rush	8/22	Katie Auckland
8/7	Jeff Rice	8/23	Darlene Deecher
8/9	Marsha High	8/29	Lynne Rush
	Carl Raub	8/31	Elizabeth Deecher
8/13	Scott Moyer		