

West Swamp News

Volume 11, Issue 1

December 2021/January 2022

Pastoral Review Committee Report

Inside this issue:

Pastor's Corner	2
Commission News	2-4
Caleb's Cocoa	5
Birthday List	6

FYI

- Children's Church is happening during Advent through Epiphany. Do you know a child who may enjoy coming?
- Christmas Eve Candlelight Service is 7 pm on Dec. 24.
- Need an alternative gift? Check out MCC's Christmas Giving catalog at <https://mcc.org/christmas#!>

The pastor review committee was organized in late September and was made up of eight volunteers drawn from the pastor search committee and the ministry team. In addition, Randy Heacock, our conference pastor from Doylestown Mennonite, was invited to two of the meetings to help us evaluate the results of the Pastoral Review surveys.

Thank you to all who completed the review surveys and for your thoughtful comments of affirmation and suggestion. There was a total of 28 surveys completed, noting that a few were prepared as joint. A compilation of the surveys and comments were used in the evaluation meetings and ultimately provided to Pastor Michael.

Recall that the survey had 13 questions and a rating scale of 1-5. The committee had two survey evaluation meet-

ings and worked to understand and connect the ratings to the expectations/priorities set forth during the 2019 search process. We wrestled with the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and how that affected and changed the priorities we established in 2019. Much of our committee time as spent discussing the three highest and three lowest rated questions from the survey.

We are happy to report the overall rating of all 13 questions was 3.5, squarely between Meets Expectations and Exceeds Expectations in the rating scale. In summary Michael scored highest in the sermons/preaching skills and lowest in visitation/group leadership skills.

As the committee prepared to meet with Pastor Michael, we organized our agenda to have dialogue around the three highest and lowest scores and how to

implement changes to foster improvements to strengthen our fellowship. On November 16 five committee members and Randy Heacock met with Pastor Michael to complete the review process and look forward to 2022. One take away from that meeting was an agreement to resume the annual goal setting for each of the commissions in 2022.

~ *Randy Rush*
Moderator Deacon

Annual Business Meeting

January 23

Hope to see you there!

Pastor's Corner: *Being over doing*

At this time of the year, there is a lot to do. There are presents to be chosen, purchased and wrapped. There are trees to be found and decorated. There are lights to be hung. There are menus to be planned and food to be purchased. There are travel arrangements to make and holiday journeys to be taken. There are Christmas cards to be printed, addressed and mailed.

It's a lot. It's easy to get stressed out and irritable, or to feel overwhelmed and depressed. I want to encourage you this year to prioritize being over doing.

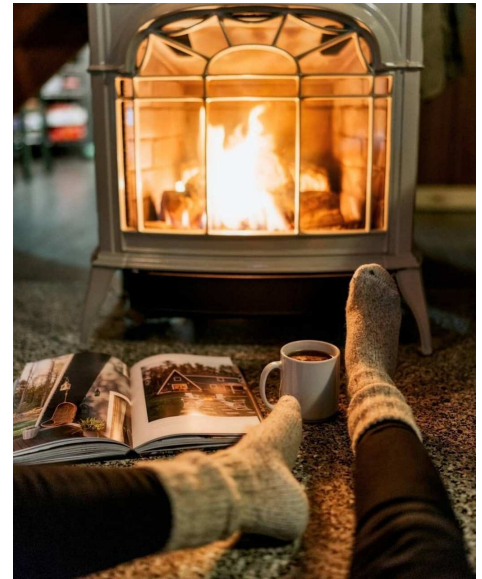
This is a year to do less, not more. It's a time to minimize and streamline. Most of all, it's a time to work on being.

Being with others. Maximize

time with friends and family. Enjoy long, uninterrupted conversations. Tell stories, even ones that you've told often before. Listen deeply. Rest in one another's company.

It's also a time to be with yourself. Make time for solitude. Learn how to be alone but not lonely. Take a walk and enjoy the cooling weather. Settle in with a book you've been meaning to read. Feel deeply. Enjoy some favorite music.

And it's a season for being with God. Mark out time to pray and reflect. Ponder what it means in your life that "to us a child is born, to us a son is given" (Isaiah 9:6). What does it mean that in Jesus, God has taken on all that it means to be human?



There is a lot to do this time of the year, but I challenge you to let being come ahead of doing.

Peace,

~ *Pastor Michael*

Worship: *Dare to imagine!*

Our Advent journey inspires us to imagine our journey into the future with God—both individually and as a congregation. What new and exciting things is God preparing for us? What foundations have we built that will be the springboard for our next venture?

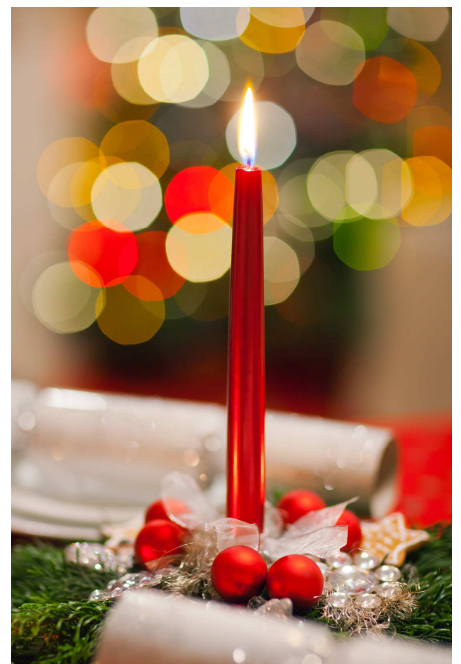
As we journey to Christmas and beyond, we dare you to imagine God's goodness, God's embrace, God's song, God's face, God's robe and God's dance.

Use that imagination to add to the collage in the fellowship hall. Bring photos, newspaper head-

lines, pictures clipped from magazines, hand-drawn pictures or doodles or whatever else you want to create. Don't limit your imagination!

Join us Friday evening, Dec. 24 at 7 pm for a **Candlelight Service** of "Lessons & Carols." We'll trace the Christmas story through scripture and song and end with our traditional "Silent Night" candle lighting.

~ *Lynne Rush*



Community: Our cookies are famous!

Do you love to bake Christmas cookies? We need your help! For the past several years, we have been assembling decorated boxes of Christmas cookies for the Quakertown Salvation Army Christmas Carnival. These are given to local families in need, along with other food items and Christmas gifts. Again this year, the event will be a drive-through

distribution, and will be held on Saturday Dec. 11. What a nice way to share Christmas joy with others!

One event organizer said they look forward to our “famous” cookies, and they place them on top of the boxes of food to look festive! We would like about 100 dozen cookies in all, but any

amount you would like to donate is very much appreciated. Please bring cookies (in marked containers if you would like them back) to church by 7 pm on Friday, Dec. 10. If you need someone to pick cookies up at your house, let Nancy Jacobs know. Thank you!

~ Nancy Jacobs



DISCO: Forming small group connections

The members of the Discipling Commission have been working on putting together some new small group ideas and although we were hoping to have groups meeting together by the fall, getting them organized and finding leaders has proved a bit challenging. Now with the holidays upon us, we thought best to wait until the new year, possibly February or March to get them roll-

ing. Some ideas we came up with for small groups are a sermon discussion group, a prayer group and a family relationship group. We would like to thank everyone for their input and encourage you to keep an eye out for more information coming in the new year.

The Bible Project Sunday School group continues to meet every Sunday morning at 9am. We are

currently reading through Luke and we always welcome new perspectives. We encourage you to join us either via Zoom or by meeting in-person at church. Let Lynne know if you are interested or if you need help with how Zoom works.

We hope everyone takes time this advent season to foster meaningful relationships with their family, their church family

Community: Collecting gift cards

Christmas shopping season is upon us already! While out shopping, there is a great way to help less fortunate folks in our community. Pick up a small gift card to be given to someone who stays at the Code Blue shelter in Quakertown. (The shelter is run by Advocates for the Homeless in Upper Bucks County).

The Community Commission will put together small Christmas gift bags containing a gift card and some Christmas treats, to be given to the guests at the

shelter during the Christmas weeks.

There is a small Christmas tree in the church foyer on which to clip your donated gift cards. Recommended amounts are \$5 to \$10 dollars, to local stores such as WalMart, McDonalds, Target, Burger King, Dunkin' Donuts and WaWa. Please bring cards to church by Sunday, Dec. 19. Thank you very much!

~ Nancy Jacobs



Mission: The journey of a relief kit

Thanks to all who contributed to our Bucket of Thanks project. We collected 41 complete kits, along with sundry extra items.

Glenn High and Carl Kiesel loaded the kits and drove them to the Material Resource Center in Ephrata, where they were unloaded into Gaylord boxes. Next, MRC vol-



unteers packed them into buckets. The buckets get stacked and shrink-wrapped for shipping to destinations like Haiti, Venezuela, Syria and more.



Caleb's Cocoa: A fundraiser for Code Blue

Sunday, Dec 12

Stop by anytime between 2 & 5 pm

Everything is \$1—Hot Cocoa (free toppings) & Baked Goods

Front yard of 207 North Ambler Street, Quakertown



Hi! I'm Caleb! I'm 11 years old. In the summer of 2018, on a family trip to Baltimore, MD, I saw a lot of people who were homeless. This made me very sad and I wanted to do something to help them.

My parents told me that Quakertown has people who are homeless too, and that there is a shelter in

Quakertown to help them in the winter. I knew right away I wanted to help.

In 2018, I held a hot cocoa stand out front of my house with the hopes to raise \$100. The night before the stand, my dad and I talked about how we serve a BIG God and He is our Father and we can ask Him for anything. So I decided I wanted to ask him for

more than \$100, I wanted to ask Him for \$1000. (That's a lot of money!) So my dad and I prayed together and asked God that we would raise at least \$1000 for the homeless shelter.

We could barely believe it: we raised \$1000 that day. Donations kept coming in, and a week later we were over \$1700.

The next year, 2019, God provided in even BIGGER ways and with many people in the community helping to run the stand, donating baked goods, over \$4000 was raised! We were so thankful!



In 2020, due to COVID we made the hard decision not to have a real stand but had a virtual online stand that raised over \$1000 again.

Despite COVID, we are holding the Cocoa Stand again this year in person! We hope that YOU can join us. Stop by, fellowship, and drink some hot cocoa! **Every single penny goes straight to the homeless shelter!**

Live Music
at
1:45, 2:45
3:45 & 4:45

Hope to see
you there!





west swamp
mennonite church

2501 Allentown Road
Quakertown, PA 18951

Phone: 215-536-7468
FAX: 215-536-7709

E-mail: westswamp1@verizon.net

Reflecting God in our
living, loving and serving



A D N H P W P J Q B T G F F S Q V
 Y D M Q M I A A S T A R R L G F R
 F X F A G R D O N K E Y A S Q L J
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ANGEL	GIFTS	MYRRH
ANIMALS	GOLD	PEACE
BABY	JESUS	SAVIOR
BETHLEHEM	JOSEPH	SHEPHERD
DONKEY	MANGER	STAR
FRANKINCENSE	MARY	WISE MEN



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December

- 12/1 Pauline Stelmach
- 12/4 Dennis Wieand
- 12/7 Debbie Bauman
Wayne Moyer
- 12/9 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