

# West Swamp News

Volume 13, Issue 3

April/May 2024

## A new Moderator starts his term

### Inside this issue:

Pastor's Corner	2
Commission News	3-5
Activity Photos	5-6
Easter Wordsearch	7
Calendar	8

### FYI

- Be on the lookout for info on the May Ripple Meal that Mission Commission is doing. Consider participating in this project.
- Honor the women who have nurtured and inspired you on Mother's Day, May 12.

Thank you for your support by allowing me to serve as Deacon and Moderator of West Swamp Mennonite Church. For more than 300 years, West Swamp has served the community by spreading the Word and missions work to our neighbors and those in need. I am confident that it will continue for many more years to come.

I would like to thank you my predecessor, Randy Rush for his years of service in this position and all of the help and assistance that he has provided to make this transition go smoothly. I am truly grateful.

At each Ministry Team meeting, we highlight something positive that has happened since the previous time that we met. In addition, we also discuss something that has been a challenge, so that we can work together to share ideas on how to smooth at the rough edges.

Your Ministry Team and those who assist them are working to provide a positive time of worship and fellowship. I am very grateful for everyone's help and contributions. Examples include the monthly Prayer Breakfast; Fellowship Time after Worship; and the Senior Luncheon, just to name a few. In addition, there a number of special events held throughout the year. Upcoming items include the annual Family Night (formerly known as the Hot Dog Roast), the Men-O-Lan Staff Picnic, our Sunday service at Camp Men-O-Lan with Solidarity & Harmony.

Mission work is a cornerstone of our church.

It is evident every Tuesday when the knotters and quilters get together. And that is just the beginning. Projects that we support from MCC Relief Kits to School Kits to My Coins Count to Code Blue and beyond are a testament to providing help where it is needed.

As we complete our Lenten journey, and continue down the "highway of life," let us always remember that God so loved the world, that He sent his one and only Son. What a precious gift we have been given. Let us rejoice and praise his name!

~ *Carl Raub*  
*Moderator*

## Pastor's Corner: Wash more feet

I am a church nerd. Yes, I am a pastor, but it goes beyond that. There have been times in the past when I have visited another church when I was on vacation from the one I was serving, and happily gathered up all the brochures and newsletters I could find to analyze to see how *they* were doing things.

One of the things I love collecting is church mission statements, because a good mission statement has the potential to help energize a congregation's engagement with Jesus and its community. I really like our new mission statement, derived from your input:

***Discovering together how to follow Jesus and make our community and world a better place.***

A number of years ago, I came across the mission statement of Bethesda United Methodist Church. It's just three words:

***Wash more feet.***

Carries quite an impact, doesn't it?

This past Thursday, we had our Maundy Thursday service, where we shared a meal, and communion, and as many people as wanted to washed one another's feet. *Maundy* is a weird word, and it sort of sounds like *Monday*, which is confusing. "Monday Thursday? What's that?" *Maundy* is from the Latin word *mandatum*, which means commandment. We get our English word *mandate* from it.

On Maundy Thursday we are remembering Jesus' new commandment to his disciples that they love one another, as he has been loving them. Before he gives that command to love, Jesus demonstrates love to his disciples. In the world of Jesus, everyone wore sandals, and everyone walked almost everywhere, so by the time you ate the evening meal, your feet were dirty. Before you reclined at the dinner table to share the meal, the most junior, the least important person present, or perhaps a servant, would remove everyone's sandals and wash their feet.

That night, as Jesus was sharing one last meal with his friends before his arrest, trial and crucifixion, he shocked them deeply when "he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him" (John 13:4 and 5).

Jesus demonstrated radical humility and positioned himself as a servant. He knew that even though he had told them explicitly that he was headed for a collision with the religious and political powers that would result in his crucifixion and resurrection, even though he had come into Jerusalem on a donkey to show that he was a different kind of king, his disciples still didn't get it. They were still hoping he

would inaugurate a political kingdom, and they were arguing over who would be greatest in his coming administration. So Jesus gave them this last unforgettable object lesson in humility and servanthood, and then he commanded them to follow his example.

**"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them"**  
(John 13:14-17).

There are times, like last Thursday, when we do this literally, we wash one another's feet. But Jesus is calling us to do more than enact a ritual once a year. Jesus is inviting, commanding us to serve our neighbors, by which he means anyone we encounter who needs our help.

It is time for us to wash more feet.

Peace,

~ ***Pastor Michael***