

West Swamp News

Volume 9, Issue 5

July '20

Worship in the Green Phase

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FYI

- Contact the church office if you would like to coordinate maintenance of the courtyard garden.
- This is the week that we would have sent a SWAP team to Kentucky. Pray for SWAP as they try to finish projects with limited staff.

While our corner of PA has finally entered the Green Phase of re-opening, we still want to do our best to keep our congregation safe.

Beginning Sunday July 5, two things will be different with our worship on Sunday mornings. First, we will be meeting at 9:30 am, to take advantage of cooler temperatures.

Second, we will be meeting in the shade in and around the pavilion, using lawn chairs and maintaining safe physical distance between households. You are asked to continue to wear face coverings. This is because singing, an essential component of worship for us, pro-



Thank you to the Mood family & Windy Spring Farms for loaning us the flat bed during June.

duces clouds of aerosol droplets that hang in the air for some time.

If you wish to remain in your car, we will still be using the FM transmitter. Just remember to park every other space.

If you or a family member feel that it would be better for you to stay at home, we will continue to record the worship service and post it to YouTube. And we'll continue to send transcripts to members without internet access.



Rod Rush took this picture of our first drive-in service on June 7 (through the screened window on the stair landing).

Pastor's Corner: God is in control

There is a lot going on in our world right now that would prompt us to put a question mark at the end of that statement. A global pandemic with few effective treatments and no vaccines. An ongoing struggle in our nation and around the world against systemic and institutionalized racism. When there are so many things causing us to feel out of control, it is natural for us to ask, is God in control?

Even if I claimed to understand it, which I don't, a newsletter article is much too brief a space to do much with the idea of providence, God's gracious sovereignty over all creation. So I'll be content just to make two brief observations. They are both drawn from Acts 17:22-31, a sermon Paul preached when he was

passing through the Greek city of Athens. Because he's speaking to those with no background in the Hebrew Scriptures, Paul doesn't quote from the Old Testament. Instead, he quotes from Greek philosophers with whom his hearers would have been familiar. The first thing he does is assert that God, the creator of all, has coordinated human history, right down to the times and places where people live, *"so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though God is not far from any one of us"* (verse 27).

So the first thing we learn is that God is continually initiating a love relationship with us. That's what it means in a world like ours with so much pain and in-

justice to say that God is in control. God is incessantly working to do good to every person, to the whole of creation.

But the second truth that interlocks with the first is also critically important: God expects us to respond to the demonstrations of divine love and care in our lives. God works all around us and in us so that we will seek God, reach out for God and find God. My challenge to you in these days that feel so out of control, is to look for the places in your life where Jesus is showing you love, and respond to that love with trust and faith.

Peace,
Pastor Michael

Staying connected—and a biking invitation



From Sue Conrad Howes: Michael got a new set of wheels for his recent birthday! (We got the bike from Scott Roth at Bike & Sol and highly recommend it to anyone wanting a great used bike...or to tune up their current bike, like Sue had done.) We are enjoying biking together in the evenings, when it is a bit cooler.

An invitation from Lynne: I know that more people than just Pastor Michael and Sue are riding bikes these days. I think it would be fun do some group bike rides. Anyone interested?

If you would like to do some group bike rides, let me know:

- 1) What times are good for you—specific weekday evening, Saturday morning or afternoon, Sunday afternoon or evening?
- 2) What distance are you up for—10, 15, 20, 25 miles?

This would not only be a great activity for church members, but a good one to invite non-church friends to do with us.

So—who's up for a bike ride?

The rich young ruler, costly discipleship and the rich young ruler

In the story of the rich young ruler, found in Mark 10:17-22 and Luke 18:18-23, a young ruler approaches Jesus and asks him what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus answers him, "You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" But when the man says he has kept all these commandments since he was a boy, Jesus says there is still one thing he lacks. He tells the man to sell what he has and give to the poor, and then come follow him.

Even though the rich young ruler has kept all the commands and obeyed the rules all his life, that is not enough for his righteousness to be complete. He

might have thought that he was doing everything he should be, but Jesus tells him there is still something missing. What would help him more fully enter into the kingdom of God would be to make a sacrifice on his part on behalf of others.

I see a lot of parallels in this story between what it meant for the rich young ruler to inherit eternal life and what it means for us to work to combat systemic racism today. Most people probably would say they are not racist. Like the rich young ruler, we probably know the "commandments" of how to not be racist and follow them in our lives. However, if we, like the rich young ruler, think by following those rules we are doing everything required of us to dismantle systemic racism, we are mis-

taken. We are passively not being racist, but the "one thing we lack" is to be actively anti-racist.

Just like in the biblical story, for us, being anti-racist means giving up something. For the rich young ruler it meant giving up his wealth and following Jesus; it meant radically changing the way he lived his everyday life. For us, being anti-racist might affect our lives. It might affect our pockets books, our ballot boxes, and our feelings of security. It might be hard to give some of these things up, just like the ruler, who "became very sad, for he was extremely rich," but becoming anti-racist might also be what we need to do in order to more fully be part of Jesus' ministry and the kingdom of God on earth.

~ *Ben Rush*

Staying connected



From Elaine Propst: This year for the first time Lee and Nancy, his daughter-law, put out a garden, since Lee was retired and would have extra time. After preparing the soil and putting up a fence to keep the deer out, they planted different vegetables one being cucumbers or so they thought. Found out that a least a few of the plants are zucchini. As you can see one grew rather long before it was found.



From Jan Wieand: Karen enjoying the lake. She's really doing water therapy for her hip.

Mission: You have heard that it was said

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, uses this phrase to take a common teaching of the day to the next level. In Matthew 5:20 Jesus lets the “righteous” of the day have it. Jesus says “I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.” Then Jesus goes into these “You have heard that it was said” statements where Jesus takes it to the next level.

The first is “You shall not murder.” Jesus’ next level is that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. The next is “You shall not commit adultery. But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Uh oh.



Jesus Welcomes All.

<http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=57521>

Let’s move on. “You have heard that it was said, do not break your oath.” All you need do is simply let your ‘Yes’ be yes and your ‘No’ be no.

Lastly Jesus says, “Love your neighbor and hate you enemy,” but Jesus tells us, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Really? Does Jesus expect us to live up to this next level? Would Jesus say today, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Black lives matter’, but I ALSO tell you all life matters.”?

Jesus came for us all. He shed his red blood for the red blood flowing in the bodies of all—red and yellow, black and white, they are all precious in his sight, as the children’s song goes. They are all precious in His sight because he loves all life. Plant, animal, human. We are here to take care of His wonderful creation. Yes, black lives do matter. Yes, male and female live do matter. Atheist lives, Christian lives, Muslim lives and all other religion’s lives matter. Yes, unborn life does matters. Yes, poor peoples’ lives matter and rich peoples’ lives and all those in between. Yes, older peoples’ lives matter, just like younger peoples’. Yes incarcerated and returning citizens and free lives matter. Yes non-American lives matter, just like American and Native American lives. Republican, Democrat, Independent and all the rest lives do matter. Yes, Cowboy fans’ and Eagles fans’ lives do matter. Our educated and not so educated lives matter.

Yes, people that do not drive to our liking lives do matter. Yes our animals and trees and plants do matter.

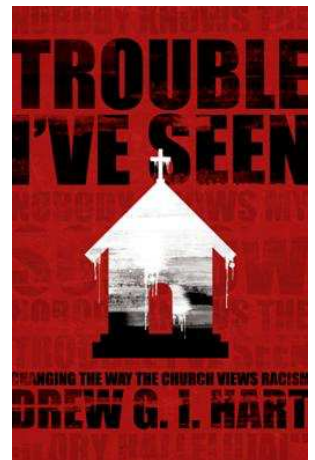
So I just put words in Jesus’ mouth, but I feel that is what he might have to say today. So if that is the case, we really have our work cut out for us. As a church we need to figure out how we in some way can take a stand for these lives because they do matter.

Do we start with Black lives? We are involved in homeless lives. We do help directly with minorities with involvement with Ripple, Crossroads and Solidarity and Harmony. We are not totally out of it with trying to understand the needs of the needy. But I for one can and should try to know more. The book study of *Trouble I’ve Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views*

Racism can be a starting point to see how the Lord will lead us in our efforts.

Maybe with the slower pace we have been in due to COVID-19, we can take the time to dive in and learn to use our lives to matter more for the good of all life.

-Rod Rush



Staying connected: The Moods rebuild

From Katie Mood: I recently heard on the radio a new spin to the old phrase, “God only gives us what we can handle.” The commenter eloquently re-phrased it as “God helps us handle what we are given,” which simply erased all the questions of why God would give us difficult and tragic things to deal with. He is there to help us no matter what cards we are dealt. Thank the Good Lord for his promises! We are making great progress on rebuilding our home. These last few weeks have been more of a sprint relay than a marathon with farming and building. But as Matt always says, “It’s really coming together.” Thank you all for your continued support through prayer and check ins. [A couple more ore pictures on page 8]



Staying connected



Jan Wieand: My granddaughter Michaela has been raising a motherless fawn (left). It's not the first time she's been a foster mom. [Below] is a picture from 2012.



Katelyn Opdyke: I wanted to make sure I sent in some pictures of these cuties. They're all enjoying their summer taking walks, riding bikes and playing outside whenever possible.


Kid's Page






WATER WORKS!

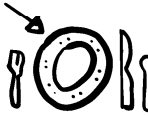
The gospels record Jesus' miracles, many of which involve water.


Directions: Using the illustrated equations, fill in the blanks to describe each miracle. Use the Bible references for help.

 + e _____
Water changes to _____
JOHN 2:1-11

 - k + d _____
Heals a man born _____
JOHN 9

 - op +  - w _____
Calms a _____
MATTHEW 8:23-27

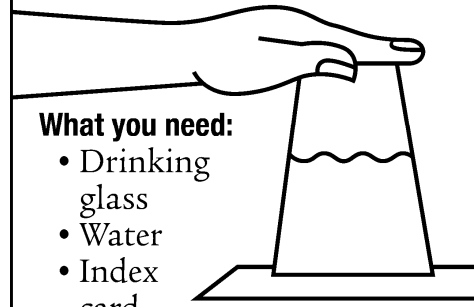
f +  - d _____
Catch of _____
LUKE 5:1-11

 - ch + er _____
Walks on _____
MATTHEW 14:22-33

Answers: wine, blind, storm, fish, water

UNSEEN BUT
active

This experiment illustrates that although God is invisible, we can see his work all around us.



What you need:

- Drinking glass
- Water
- Index card

What you do:

1. Practicing over a sink, fill the glass halfway with water. Then press the index card snugly atop the glass with one hand.
2. With the other hand, hold the base of the glass and carefully flip it over.
3. Remove your hand from the card. It should stay on the glass, without spilling the water! The invisible air in the glass creates a suction with the card, preventing the water from spilling out. Research air pressure to learn more.
4. After perfecting the trick, amaze others with it. Then talk about how God, like the air in the glass, is unseen but active.



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Reflecting God in our
living, loving and serving

The Moods rebuild



July BIRTHDAYS

- | | | | |
|------|---------------------|------|------------------|
| 7/2 | Haley Stauffer | 7/22 | Kevin Riley |
| 7/3 | Richard Rosenberger | 7/27 | Marian Heimbach |
| 7/5 | Pov Sar Loch | | Evelyn High |
| 7/9 | Mike Olimpo | | Mark Kemmerer |
| 7/14 | Lindsay Baver | 7/30 | Sue Conrad Howes |