

West Swamp News

Volume 9, Issue 8

October '20

MCC celebrates 100 years

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FYI

- Daylight Savings Time ends on Nov. 1. Don't forget to set your clock back one hour before you go to bed on Oct. 31!
- A challenging sign seen this week: "Speak the truth even if your voice shakes."

This has definitely not been the celebratory year Mennonite Central Committee hoped or planned for, but drawing on their 100 year history, MCC is doing what it can.

While COVID-19 impacts have removed the chance to meet in person, MCC is excited to connect with many people, in the U.S. and beyond, through a livestream format on Saturday, Oct. 17.

MCC invites you to be part of **Celebration 2020: MCC at 100**. A gathering time featuring a look at MCC's first century begins at 6:50 pm, with the service start time at 7 pm. The service will include:

- snapshots from MCC leaders, partners and supporters; and stories from our history;
- a message of inspiration from Leonard Dow, longtime MCC leader and

stewardship and development specialist with Everence Financial;

- music to celebrate and reflect;
- and the opportunity to give thanks for all contributions to MCC, including gifts of money in our centennial year.

You can find the link for the livestream service here: <https://livestream.com/rctv/mcccentennial>.

MCC Centennial Offering

We will have a special offering container available on Oct. 4 if you would like to mark this 100 years of shared ministry by taking part in the nationwide MCC Centennial Celebration Offering. The offering will go to MCC's New Hope in the Name of Christ centennial fundraising campaign and will be invested in

- Life-saving water, sanitation and hy-

giene, health and food programs;

- Long-term ministry;
- Essential services for displaced and other vulnerable people;
- and Endowment, changing lives and bringing relief and hope for future generations.

West Swamp & MCC

In November, the Worship Commission would like to celebrate our connection with MCC. We are looking for people to share their story. Have you taken part in an MCC SWAP trip? Did you do a stint with Voluntary Service? Do you remember a story passed down by a parent or grandparent of their work with MCC?

Please contact Pastor Michael or a Worship Commission member. We know who some of you are, so *we* may contact *you*!

Worship: Moving inside safely

With the help of Nancy Jacobs and Jan Wieand, the Worship Commission is putting in place procedures to worship in safe and compassionate ways. We foresee moving indoors by mid-October.

When we move worship services indoors, everyone will be required to properly wear a mask. If you've forgotten your mask, we will have one available for you. Everyone will be requested and reminded to maintain physical distancing from other worshipers not in your family. In order to make that easier for everyone, there will be the option to listen to the service downstairs in the Fellowship room.

The worship services will be held upstairs in the sanctuary, with pews marked to guide us to pews safely distanced. We plan to have greeters and an usher to assist with any questions. Hymns and scripture readings

will be on the screen in front so that hymnals will not be needed, and offering plates will be placed in the sanctuary instead of being passed in the pews.

Windows and doors will be open as weather permits. Surfaces will be cleaned before and after each service; we are looking for volunteers to help with this—perhaps a different family or commission can volunteer each Sunday so that no single group or person is overburdened with the task. Hand sanitizers will be placed at several locations for our convenience. There may be other changes in place by the time we move indoors; as health guidelines change, we will adapt as necessary for the safety of everyone.

We look forward to worshipping safely indoors, and trust in God's presence wherever we worship. We can continue to show God's love to others by doing

what we can to keep each other safe and healthy.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

World Communion Sunday

We will still be holding our service in the pavilion area on Oct. 4, which is World Communion Sunday. As we all go through this time of global pandemic, what a fitting way to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world—celebrating communion together.

When you arrive that day, you will pick up an individual communion packet containing a wafer and juice cup. After the service please put the empty cup in the provided receptacle so they can be put in recycling.

To add a little more to the celebration, wear something from another country if you can.

Stewardship: Looking forward to being back in our house of worship

A couple months ago I wrote in the newsletter that most of the needed repair work on the elevator was complete except for an electrical component. Then came the flood on Aug. 4 which affected the basement pit and the mechanical works housed therein. Additional work was required for the elevator and Moyer's Services Group was called in to do remediation of the water damage in the basement.

In addition, two of the four sump pumps in the basement have been replaced and an insurance claim has been initiated. Moyer's Services Group will be back sometime in October or November to complete the drywall and painting work. The good news is that the elevator is back in service and ready for our return to indoor services.

I hope you all have had the opportunity to see the very nice job of shrubbery pruning that Bee-Lawn LLC did around the church.

Lastly, the August treasurers report shows a year to date deficit of \$3,465. Last year at the end of August we reported a deficit of \$5,997. Thank you for your continued financial stewardship.

~Randy Rush

Mission: A little knowledge is a dangerous thing

Since being involved in the *Trouble I've Seen* book study, I have been forced to pull my head out of the sand. Now realizing that I am a product of White Privilege, I am trying to be more aware of how that might be playing out in my current life activities. So a simple drive to Coopersburg the other evening got me thinking and researching and enlightened.

On my route to Coopersburg I decided to change it up a bit. Instead of turning on Reservoir Road like I normally do to head towards Rt. 309, I stayed on

California Road and turned on S. Mine Road. Much to my delight, I thought *then*, I noticed the progress being made on the Upper Bucks Rail Trail that will cross California Road near that point. You see, this slightly over three mile stretch of trail will connect the Highlands Trail to the Saucon Rail Trail, making a safe and scenic bike path from my garage to "The Inside Scoop" and beyond. For those that might not know "The Inside Scoop" is a wonderful ice cream shop in Coopersburg. The fact that I could bike to and from there so easily

on this trail would justify getting three scoops of ice cream, because I am exercising and burning calories by riding my bike.

But then comes my dilemma. How is this trail being paid for? Why would I even care? Should I just stick my head back in the sand? I might not like what I find out. Could this money be better spent by investing in black communities? No news media is making a big fuss about this trail that I know of, so it must be OK.

(Continued on page 4)

Putting our faith in action

Our world may seem very strange and different right now, but the needs of the homeless and less fortunate haven't changed. That's why we are excited to show our support for Ripple of Allentown again this year. We will be collecting donations for hygiene products and warm weather clothing Oct. 4-Nov. 5. The best times for drop off are Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9am-1pm, or after church services on Sundays. We will have a night time drop off in November (TBD). We will also be handling a to-go dinner for the Ripple Community on Nov. 8. I'll create a list of items needed for the meal as well as a sign up to help with filling the containers the day of the dinner. Please keep a look out for this information in the upcoming weeks. Thank you for all of your support in helping with this event in years past. I hope that we can make 2020 another great year of giving! ~ **Dana Searfass**

DISCO:

The Bible Project Sunday School class continues to meet on Sunday mornings. Beginning this Sunday, the class will go back to meeting at 9 am via Zoom.

Lynne and Ben Rush are leading the class and we are currently studying the book Isaiah. We would love to have more people join us. If you are interested, let Lynne know. If you are new to Zoom, let Lynne or Pastor Michael or myself know and we can help you.

The discussion group studying the book *Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism* by Drew G. I. Hart has finished. We had some really thought-provoking discussions during these sessions. We are

hoping to possibly have another group discussion based on Drew's most recent book, *Who Will Be a Witness*. Watch for more details to follow.

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. We need to stay connected during these uncertain times. Also, get out and enjoy the beautiful fall weather and God's creation. It's sure to lift your spirits!

Wishing everyone peace, love and good health.

~ **Lori Farrell**

Mission: Reflecting on being a white male

(Continued from page 3)

Well, I was still curious and I have the good old World Wide Web, so why not do a little research. After all, if it is on the internet it has to be true, right? So according to my information, this stretch on trail will cost about 1.6 million dollars. To me that sounds like a pretty large amount, but to some, not so much.

Could that money be used for something better? What if you were putting it towards some good teachers to help educate some eager to learn kids in inner-city Philadelphia. You could get 23 teachers for nearly \$70,000 per year. Considering the size of Philadelphia this does not seem like much, but when you think of the number of students one teacher can inspire and encourage, it could very well make a huge impact and be money well spent. Or maybe the funds for bike trails would still be available if there was fair school funding. Currently, mostly white school districts are much better funded than mostly black school districts.

My research also showed the source of the funds for this project. "Paul Gordon, Bucks County Planning Commission senior transportation planner, said the crushed stone trail in Upper Bucks will be 12 feet wide and cost up to \$1.6 million. It will be paid for with money from the state's Marcellus Legacy Fund, which distributes gas well impact fees for counties and mu-

nicipalities to use for recreation and other projects." (The Morning Call, Feb. 6, 2020)

So companies pay a fee, or some might say "a fine," to be able to drill for natural gas, known as fracking, in the Marcellus Shale. "Fracking is a hotly debated environmental and political issue. Advocates [or those making lots of money from the practice] insist it is a safe and economical source of clean energy and helps keep energy costs down, creates jobs, grows the economy; critics [or those not making the money], however, claim fracking can destroy drinking water supplies, pollute the air, contribute to the greenhouse gases that cause global warming and trigger earthquakes," according to information I found.

So what is my conclusion to this dilemma? If you research many things and dig deep enough you can probably find a reason to feel bad about most things. Like that the three dips of ice cream that I get from "The Inside Scoop." If I get it in a cone and two of the scoops fall on the ground because I cannot eat it fast enough before it melts, I feel bad. But if I get it in a dish that turns out to be Styrofoam, I feel worse because I know that dish will take 500 years to decompose.

There is so much to be depressed about in this world. And that is *before* Covid-19. But as long as we are here on this earth, we might as well try to make things better. If we are counting on the government to do that, no matter

who is in office, we will most likely to be very disappointed. The church must step up and be the hands, feet, mouth and ears of a loving God that cares for everyone and everything—all creation. It is so easy to criticize the government, but is the church setting the example? The church is supposed to be following the teachings of Jesus. Can the church do a better job of loving and caring and showing compassion and doing justice and giving mercy?

I think West Swamp does a pretty good job, but we can do much better. I also think the church in North America as a whole can do much better. Can West Swamp step up our game and challenge other churches in the area to do the same? We have done that with our stepping out on a limb of faith when we got the ball rolling for sheltering homeless in our area, which was the start of AHUB/Code Blue. We did the Clash of the Church Choirs in the recent past to help raise thousands of dollars for cancer research as part of the Relay for Life team.

These are just a few things of many over the years West Swamp has been involved in. I think we can continue to do such things and even some new things, just not sure what. As a congregation we can strive to figure that out together. With the leading of the Holy Spirit and willing followers, great things can and will happen.

~Rod Rush

Staying connected: What have YOU been up to?



From **Katie Stauffer**: Franklin will be 6 months old on Oct. 4. Recently he started some solids (oatmeal, fruits & veggies) and is loving it.



Gretchen Isaak poses with her housemates, Simba (left) and Chloe (right).



From **Rod Rush**: Well done! Mark Kemmerer delivered 76 school kits to the MCC Material Resource Center in Harleysville. During these unusual times West Swamp still comes through with much needed donations. Thanks to all who donated to this cause. The kits will make 76 children very happy and better students, I'm sure.

Staying connected



From **Katie Mood**: Paige, Olivia, Eli & Case on the first day of School 2020: We are making the best of hybrid education. *Below right*: Case is getting more confident on the 300. Penny poses in the beautiful afternoon sun.



From **Joann Rush**: One of the benefits of working from home—Randy Rush gets more time with his grand-daughter Addison.



Kid's Page



A PLANTING PARABLE

Jesus had to explain his Parable of the Sower to the confused disciples.

Directions: Use the word bank to answer the clues. Then fill in the correct words below to complete Matthew 13:23, NIV.

WORD BANK: sow, soil, wither, root, thorn, crop, seed, farmer

1. Plant part that absorbs water
2. Contains what's needed to grow a plant
3. To plant
4. Sharp part of a plant
5. What is harvested
6. To dry up and shrivel
7. Person who plants
8. The earth a plant grows in

"But the 2 falling on good 8 refers to someone who hears the word and understands it.

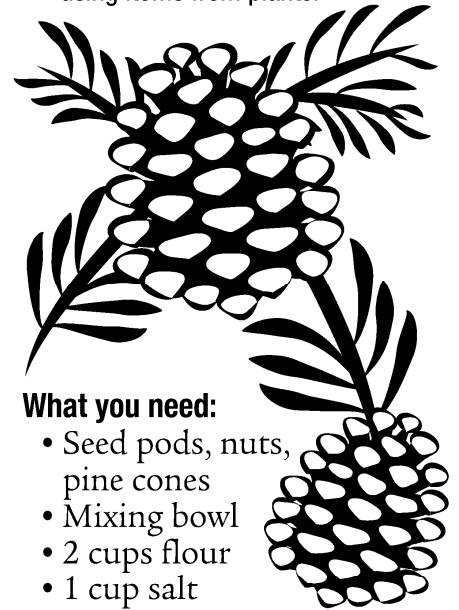
This is the one who produces a 5, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was 3 n."

M A T T H E W 13:23, N I V

Answer: root, seed, sow, thorn, crop, wither, farmer, soil, seed, soil, crop, sow

SEED impressions

Create autumn-themed artwork using items from plants.



What you need:

- Seed pods, nuts, pine cones
- Mixing bowl
- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup salt
- 1 cup warm water
- Adult help

What you do:

1. Go on a nature walk and collect seeds with interesting textures.
2. In the bowl, mix flour and salt. Gradually add water. On a table, knead the dough. (If too dry, add more water; if too sticky, add more flour.)
3. Flatten a ball of dough and stamp impressions in it with the seeds.
4. If desired, bake for several hours at 150 degrees until dry and hard. Or, to reuse dough, store in an airtight container up to 6 months.



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Reflecting God in our
living, loving and serving

Volunteer an evening at Care & Share

*Don Rosenberger and
Variety Store Manager
Katie Rowan check one of
the many boxes of dona-
tions that need sorted.*



West Swamp will have a volunteer evening at Care & Share Shoppes on Thursday evening, **Oct. 22, from 5:30-8**. Care & Share is located in Souderton and is a volunteer-driven business that receives donations and resells them in their thrift shops.

Since the COVID shutdown, our volunteer force has come back at about 35% of its former level. Where we had 1,000 volunteers helping us over the course of a month, we now have approximately 360 who currently feel comfortable. We've done a lot here to make the environment as safe as possible, including daily sanitation and fogging, and 100% mask-wearing in the shops. Currently we have adequate help to be open 10-5 daily, which is about 16 hours a week less than our prior schedule. The donor community has been overwhelmingly supportive. We have received more donations daily since re-opening the dock in May than we ever received in our largest single day prior to the pandemic! We are doing our best to get through the donations and sell them to raise funds for MCC.

Our service will be performed after the shops have closed for the day. C&S staff will be with us to guide our work. We will help unpack, sort and put price stickers on a variety of household goods, linens, toys and other items. It's like a treasure hunt!

We hope you can join us. Children age 8 and above are welcome with their parents. Contact the church office or Donald Rosenberger (215 723 0315) if you are interested in helping. Carpooling to Souderton can be arranged.

~ Donald Rosenberger



October
BIRTHDAYS

10/6 Matthew Opdyke
10/7 Deb Stevenback
Jan Wieand
10/14 Don Rosenberger
10/17 Case Mood
10/18 Paul Heimbach
Casey Parzych
Joann Rush

10/20 Amanda Wieand
10/21 Randy Rush
Sue Shelly
10/25 Corinne High
10/29 Dale Loch
10/30 Ken Roth
10/31 Jim Rosch