

West Swamp News

Volume 14, Issue 2

February/March 2025

Standing with Solidarity

Inside this issue:

Pastor's Corner	2
Commission News	2-4
Prayer Breakfast Pix	5
Calendar	6

FYI

- Start saving your coins for My Coins Count collection during Lent.
- Don't forget to turn your clocks ahead on Mar, 9. Spring ahead!

Joan Hallman and I had the privilege of worshiping with our friends at Solidarity and Harmony on Feb.2. We were there to show our support for them, as immigrants have reason to be concerned about their status here in the U.S.

I came away with the feeling of "no fear at S&H" as the worship was lively and full of joy and thanksgiving to our Lord and Savior Jesus. Joan and I were thanked for being there, but as often is the case, I came away feeling the more blessed.

The lines of a song we sang in the service spoke to me. Part of the song went like this:

"I'm no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God...

I am surrounded by the arms of the Father...

I am a child of God...

—*No Longer Slaves*, by Bethel Music

As I sang along in this congregation of people that should have way more fears than myself, I was overcome by their lack of fear.

Lord, thanks for these reminders that you have your arms around us because you love your children. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight.

~ **Rod Rush**

On the way down to Philly, Rod and I talked about what we may be walking into, at the Haitian church. I hadn't even given a thought to possi-

bly finding trouble at the church, with immigration authorities. I was thinking it was a safe haven, and yet, after the service, people could be "carded" by authorities. I was not worried for myself, as I felt my "white privilege", albeit not in a good way. I felt safe, but that accentuated racism attitudes.

The service was wonderful! As we do at Men-O-Lan, it was in Creole and English, thus lasting from 11-1:30. However, it didn't feel that long, with all the sing-

(Continued on page 4)



The worship team at Solidarity & Harmony Church lead in songs of praise. (Photo by Rod Rush)

Pastor's Corner: Be doers of the word

A spiritual discipline is any practice in which we engage that helps us grow in our relationship with Jesus. One of the bedrock spiritual disciplines in my life has been spending time daily in prayer and Bible study.

I started this discipline when I was in junior high school. My Sunday School teachers had challenged us to read through the Scriptures over the course of the year, and if we did each week's reading, we got a gold star by our name on a wall chart in our Sunday School room.

For some reason, getting a succession of gold stars was highly motivational to my 13-year old self, so each week, with the help of a devotional guide, I would work through the readings.

Across the course of the year, I read through the Bible, from Genesis to the maps in the back.

What that daily discipline looks like has changed for me over the years, but I still, forty plus years later, begin the day with some prayer and digging into the Scriptures. For a few years now, I've been using an edition of the New Testament that I work through in forty days. I'm absorbing long sections of Scripture, and I get a sense of the big story arcs in the gospels and Acts, and the larger themes in the letters.

I have this same New Testament in audiobook format, and since last fall I've been listening to, rather than reading, each day's

portion of Scripture. Listening, rather than reading, I have noticed different things. Different passages, different sentences, and most heavily with me. I need to concentrate in a different way to absorb what I'm hearing.

As I have been listening to the New Testament, I have reflected on a couple of sentences in the book of James. He writes:

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do" (James 1:22-25).

So I am confronted with the reality that what Jesus wants is not just to get Scripture *into* me, but also *out* of me. That's to say that the words of Scripture need to be translated into my actions as I follow Jesus day by day, moment by moment, and as he lives out his life through me.

I want to invite you, first of all, to let the words of Scripture flow into your life on a daily basis. Engaging with Scripture is

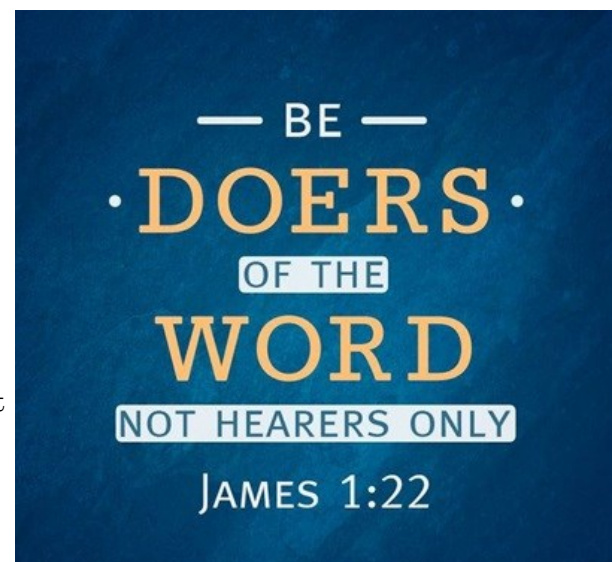
like going to the gym or exercising: something is better than nothing, and any effort laps the people on the couch. So start with five minutes and see what happens.

But I also want to encourage you to let Scripture flow out of your life: let what you are taking in be translated into what you do each day. Being patient with a difficult person. Responding with kindness instead of reciprocal irritation to a cranky member of your household. Washing dishes that you didn't make dirty. That's how Jesus gets out into our world, and it becomes a better place.

Oh, and if you want to try listening to Scripture, YouVersion and Bible Gateway have free audio Bibles built into them. You can find the app on the Apple or GooglePlay app store.

Peace,

~ Pastor Michael



DISCO: Disciples are learners

The Discipling Commission has open positions for congregational representatives. In this role, a person has the opportunity to make Prayer Breakfasts happen, discern curriculum resources for the Topics, Learning, and Discussion Sunday School class, and share in facilitating classes. If you are interested in any of these opportunities, please contact Katie Mood 267-733-2141.

The TLC class has started watching *The Chosen* Season 1. This is a television-style program depicting the ministry of Jesus and His disciples. In class, we watch half an episode and discuss questions related to the episode. If you have not seen the series, please join us for a revolutionary depiction of the gospels. If you have already watched the series, you are encouraged to

watch again and extend your study through our discussion. This series will take us through the beginning of May.

The Bible Project class continues to meet and work through the book of Genesis. They just studied the very center of the Jacob story—the birthing of the tribes of Israel. Out of this highly dysfunctional family God shaped a chosen people, not out of any merit of their own but because God is faithful to his promises. It is a relief to know that despite our flaws and mistakes, God will continue to work in and through us. The class is welcome to anyone who wants to take a deeper dive into the scriptures.

Romans 12:2 reminds us of the importance of studying scripture; “Do not conform to the pattern of

the world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing, perfect will.” As disciples of Jesus, we are invited to let God change the way we think rather than the behaviors and customs of the world. Through study, discussion, and prayer, we are able to understand what God wants us to do. Harold Percy said, “Disciples are learners. As disciples of Jesus we are called to the lifelong adventure of learning to follow Him closely and faithfully.” I hope you find this reminder encouraging and keep it at the forefront of your thoughts as you engage with people in your daily life.

~ *Katie Mood*

Community: Thank you from the commission

Through the generosity of our church family, we were able to provide 85 packages of Christ-



mas cookie to families in need. Volunteers from the Salvation Army and the Quakertown Ministerium distributed them Dec. 14, at their annual Christmas event. Thank you, cookie bakers!

Another celebration is the successful poinsettia sale. Your support of this project enabled us to send a check for \$62.75 to Menonite Central Committee for Emergency Relief projects. Other activities of the Community Commission were sending Christmas Cards to some of our senior members, and supporting

the monthly Senior Luncheon and Fellowship Hour.

~ *Nancy Jacobs*



Stewardship: New ways to be good stewards

The winter months continue to be a slow period for both repairs and improvements outside of the most routine maintenance work. This is great for the budget, and I want to again thank Dave's Services for their continued donation of labor, salting, landscape material disposal, and more.

However, I want to keep focusing on springtime maintenance and fundraising. As mentioned at the

annual business meeting, the Ministry Team is looking into new ways to fundraise. Some of these include the direct or peripheral use of the new playground.

Springtime maintenance should be typical and handled largely by members and donations. Please remember to let me know if you think of any good options to investigate for lawn care this sum-

mer. I'm looking for someone who is both adequately available and economically viable, or any volunteers if you are willing.

I appreciate all those who have pitched in over the first year of my term as Stewardship Deacon in order to make it what I think has been a successful year for the Stewardship Commission. Looking forward to another one!

~ Alex Parzych

Standing in solidarity

(Continued from page 1)

ing, praising, and communion. I did not sense a hint of fear for their situation. I seemed more worried than them. They believe they are in God's hands, and he will help them through these hard times.

Pastor Benjamin said there are about 10 people undocumented, and 20 who are here on Biden's program (which has been discontinued, but hopefully "grandfathered in").

They asked Rod and I to say a few words. I mentioned that we wanted to let them know, they are not alone, and we will do what we can to help them. "Luke

10:27 says 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself,' and you are our neighbors. God bless you all."

~ Joan Hallman



Worship: Lent is coming

Winter is almost over, and it's time to look toward the Lent season, beginning with our Ash Wednesday service (Mar. 5), including the Maundy Thursday meal (Apr. 17), and ending with Easter (April 20).

Our Lenten series is "The Hardest Part: Hurt we carry, hope we find" by Kate Bowler. Join us as we explore how God's love shows up, even when everything feels like it's falling apart.

Reminder: After church on Sunday March 2, there will be a workshop for worship leaders. If you are currently a leader, or are thinking about it, please stay and get some information. There's free pizza!

~ Joan Hallman

Community: Fellowship time

It is fun to have refreshments to go along with our time of fellowship and conversation after Sunday worship services. If you agree, and would like to help the “foodies” on the Community Commission provide “goodies”, please check out the sign-up sheet on the bulletin

board in the Fellowship Room!

If you want to donate snacks but aren’t able to serve in the kitchen, that’s ok. We can do that part! Perhaps you have a special occasion you’d like to celebrate and share with us. It doesn’t have to be elaborate! Please con-

sider signing up for a Sunday this year. Thank you!

~ Nancy Jacobs



February prayer breakfast faces



(Top left) Carl and Cindy Raub talk with Brenda Landt.

(Top right) Cheryl Fritzing, Lynda forsythe and Deb Stevenback partake of fresh cut fruit and other goodies.

(Left) Ernie Reich and Corinne High always enjoy time together.

(Right) Nancy and Don Jacobs and Katie Mood sit down to eat after making sure everyone else is served.





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

Calendar of Events

February

2, 9:30 am—Prayer Breakfast
4, 7 pm—Community Com.
5, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In Practice
11, 7 pm—Mission Com.
12, 6:30 pm—Worship Com.
16, 12 pm—Sunday Lunch Bunch
18, 7 pm—Ministry Team
19, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In Practice
19, 7:15 pm—Choir Practice
25, 5 pm—C&S Volunteer Evening
25, 7 pm—DISCO

March

2, 9:30 am—Prayer Breakfast
2, 11:45 am—Worship Leader
Workshop
4, 7 pm—Community Com.
5, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In Practice
5, 7 pm—Ash Wednesday Ser.
9—First Sunday of Lent
11, 7 pm—Mission Com.
16, 12 pm—Sunday Lunch Bunch
18, 7 pm—Ministry Team
19, 6:30 pm—Chimin' In Practice
19, 7:15 pm—Choir Practice
20, 12 pm—Senior Luncheon
25, 7 pm—DISCO

Regular Activity

Tuesdays, 8 am-Knotting & Quilting



Birthdays

February

2/4 Karalynne Parzych
2/6 Nancy Propst
2/10 Paige Mood
2/15 Ernie Reich
2/21 Kinsley Searfass
2/22 Michaela Wieand

March

3/5 Judy Scheetz
3/9 Jason Stevenback
3/11 Rick Hinkle
3/12 Alicia Loch
3/14 Julia Huff
3/16 McKenzie Huff
3/27 Bruce Bauman
3/29 Pat Bevan