

West Swamp News

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June/July 2025

Memorable experiences: What are yours?

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FYI

- Joyful Noise 10, a music festival that benefits local food pantries, is June 14, 10 am-7 pm, at the Univest Performance Center at the Park at 4th.
- MC USA Convention, *Follow Jesus 25*, is July 8-12 in Greenboro, NC.

Can you name a memorable experience or introduction to something from your formative learning years?

I remember three specific things...

First, was my introduction to the story of Noah in a children's Bible. Being called by God to build a huge ark to save a pair of every animal that roamed the earth before the rains came. To care for them while on the water. Then to release them all when the waters subsided. As a young child, I was so amazed with the task that God gave Noah to do and what all it took to make it happen. I had to read it again.

Second, was the first time I saw "The Ten Commandments" on television. It was a very long movie for a youngster to watch. But I was fascinated with the story of Moses from the book of Exodus. And

what a story! Being rescued from the water as a baby, growing up believing he was a son of Pharoah, then learning the truth, being spared from death by being exiled, finding God on the mountain, returning to Egypt demanding the release of God's people from bondage, Pharoah finally relenting after numerous plagues, and the people's exodus from Egypt, to Moses receiving the Ten Commandments from God. That was quite a lot of highlights to happen to a single person! Despite its length, I am still mesmerized by the film every time that I see it. I just wish I had the chance to see it on the big screen.

Third, was my introduction to classical music by going to see "Fantasia" at the movies. I experienced the film at the Boyd Theatre in Bethlehem, which had an incredible

stereo sound system in its time. While the theatre is now gone, it was an event that I can still remember to this day. The stunning animation on a huge motion picture screen being set to incredible classical music conducted by Leopold Stokowski with The Philadelphia Orchestra. Sequences that included "The Dance of the Hours," "The Nutcracker Suite," "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," "The Night on Bald Mountain," and the final sequence "Ave Maria." When the film ended and the lights came up, I was in awe of what I had just experienced. I was so struck by the music that I asked for the vinyl album soundtrack for Christmas that year so I could experience the music all over again. I still have the vinyl set in my collection today.

~ Carl Raub
Ministry Team

Pastor's Corner: Why I am an Anabaptist

Five hundred years ago this January, the Anabaptist movement started in Zurich, Switzerland, when a group of friends who had been studying the Bible together baptized one another. Since then, in spite of severe persecution and frequent division, the Anabaptist movement has spread around the world and is now growing and thriving not just in Europe and North America but also in South America, Africa and Asia. As we celebrate that anniversary and consider what it means for us to thrive as twenty-first century Anabaptists, I wanted to tell you the story of how I became, and why I remain, an Anabaptist.

I did not grow up Anabaptist. There are practically no Mennonites in my home state of Louisiana. The only church in the state affiliated with Mennonite Church USA is a Spanish-language congregation in the New Orleans area. I first heard of Mennonites in a Christian ethics class in college, where we read some of John Howard Yoder's writings on pacifism. In seminary, I became fascinated by the early Anabaptists, but I only knew of them as people in church history texts, not as members of a vibrant faith. That all changed when I met Sue. Through her, I was introduced to twenty-first century Anabaptist life, and I found a home as a pastor within Mennonite Church USA, and later, within our own Mosaic Conference.



Three things led me to become and to remain an Anabaptist. **First, it's all about Jesus and his Kingdom.** The writer of Hebrews says this about Jesus: "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being" (1:3). The apostle Paul puts it this way in Colossians 1:15: "The Son is the image of the invisible God." If you want to know who God is and what God is like, look at Jesus. Anabaptists have always emphasized following Jesus in daily life, imitating his example, and building his Kingdom here on earth, expanding the space where what God wants to happen, happens. As Palmer Becker puts it in *Anabaptist Essentials*, "the center of our faith is Jesus." We follow his counter-cultural Way.

Second, we don't have a flat Bible. Although we look at both the Hebrew Bible Old Testament and the New Testament as the

inspired Scriptures, because Jesus is the center of our faith, we privilege the Gospel accounts of his life, ministry, teaching, death and resurrection. Particularly we privilege portions of Jesus' teaching like the Sermon on the Mount. When we interpret the Bible, we do so through the lens of Jesus. This helps us to properly understand parts of the Bible that are difficult, like Hebrew Bible accounts that seem to suggest God initiating violence. We also read the Bible in community, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Third, we care about more than people's eternal destiny. As Anabaptists, we care deeply, not just about what happens to people when they die, but what is happening to them in the here and now. That's why we understand that the way of Jesus is never the way of violence, and so we reject violence and killing in any form. It's why we have developed Mennonite Central Committee, to meet people's needs around the world. It's why we look after the needs of people in our community. It's why we care about racism and oppression, and why we work on behalf of immigrants and refugees.

These are not all the reasons I am an Anabaptist, but they are some of the main ones. What about you?

Peace,

~ *Pastor Michael*

DISCO: Summer break

Prayer Breakfast is taking a summer break and will start again in September.

The TLC class finishes on May 25 and also takes a break for the summer. See you in September!

You are welcome to join the Bible Project class over the summer to get your Sunday School fix. We are currently taking a deep dive into the story of Jo-

seph. One thing we've learned—though Joseph seems to be the main character, Judah's role is just as important. (After all, Judah's is the line from which the Chosen Seed will come!)

The portrait of the two brothers, Joseph and Judah, is really about one thing—a beloved son who gives up his own life as a substitute for many so all might be saved. Remind you of anyone?

If the 8:45 start time daunts you, remember: you can join by Zoom while enjoying your morning beverage, and still have time to make it to church for the worship service! Let me know if you would like to be added to the Zoom link email list.

~ Lynne Rush

Mission: Summer happenings

We have two events coming up in early June:

We are hosting the Men-O-Lan staff picnic on June 6. We need food donations for the picnic and volunteers to help with set up, serving and clean up that night (5-7 pm).

On June 7 we will have a table at Trumbauersville Community Day, with a craft and cookies for the kids. We will also be giving out water bottles and information about West Swamp. We need people to sign up for shifts to staff our booth.

Last year, MCC shipped 52,481 school kits to communities in Burundi, Chad, Malawi, South Sudan, Ukraine, the U.S. and Zambia. MCC hopes to collect 25,000 school kits in 2025.

There are sign up sheets in the fellowship hall for both events. Call Karen (215-317-8424) for information or to volunteer.

I know school hasn't quite ended yet, but it won't be long before

Back-to-School sales start. Keep in mind we'll be collecting for MCC School Kits in August.

~ Karen Parzych



Stewardship: Spring maintenance

Spring maintenance has gone smoothly this year thanks to Stewardship Commission members, volunteers, and Dave's Services who took over the lawn maintenance work for this season for an exceptionally low rate with no cuts in quality of service. Elevator inspections are up to date, mulching was performed around the church, cemetery, and playground, and fortunately the recent rains are greening things up. Typical periodic maintenance has been standard. On the budget side of things Pat and I will be looking into CD renewals for savings that have al-

ready been allocated to the two CDs that the church holds to maximize safe returns on funds not currently being used. I have also now received one response from Men-O-Lan regarding our questions from the annual business meeting, but we make seek another more definitive response prior to distributing to the congregation.

Please make it known to the community that the pavilion, playground, and church facilities are for rent. Lynne has placed notices on the lit sign and our website, but personal social media posts and pages could be a

useful platform for attracting customers. I will also be reaching out to a couple local townships regarding our facilities for any overflow bookings they may have with their own "parks & rec" facilities.

An additional request: if you have items that are not used by the church stored in the enclosed pavilion space, please remove them. At some point I will be removing unused items that cannot be sold or retained for future service, and I don't want to dispose of anyone's personal belongings.

~ Alex Parzych

Worship: Summer happenings

Summertime is here! With that, the heat will also be here. As we have done the past several years, we will hold worship services in the fellowship hall when the temps get higher. We'll keep you posted as to when we'll begin that.

Join us after church on June 1 when Worship Commission hosts fellowship time.

Pentecost is June 8. Help us decorate the sanctuary by wearing colors of flame. Both Chimin' In and the Choir will participate in the worship service, presenting their last songs for the season before their summer hiatus.

Thank you, Lynne, for the time you put into the selection of mu-

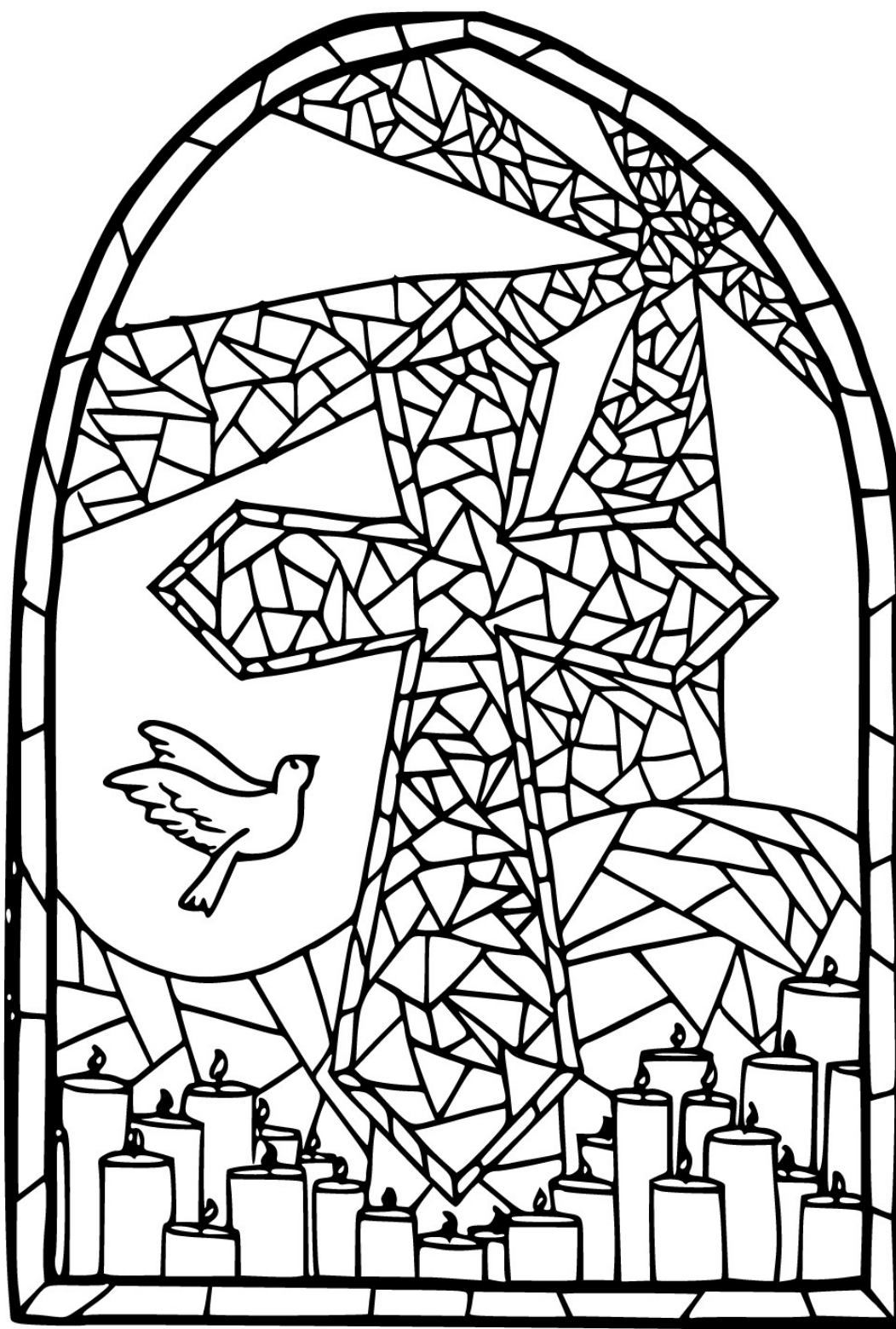
sic (which usually ties in to the sermon topic), and all the rehearsals, and for your own arrangements you often make for

choir or chimes. It is appreciated greatly!

~ Joan Hallman



Holy Spirit Coloring Page





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Reflecting God in our
living, loving and serving

Calendar of Events

June

3, 7 pm—Community Com.
4, 6:30 pm—Music Practices
and Party
6, 5 pm—Men-O-Lan Staff Picnic
7, 4 pm—Trumbauersville Comm. Day
8, 10:30 am—Pentecost Sunday
10, 7 pm—Mission Com.
15, 12 pm—Sunday Lunch Bunch
17, 7 pm—Ministry Team
19, 12 pm—Senior Luncheon
24, 7 pm—DISCO

July

1, 7 pm—Community Com.
8, 7 pm—Mission Com.
15, 7 pm—Ministry Team
17, 12 pm—Senior Luncheon
20, 12 pm—Sunday Lunch Bunch
22, 7 pm—DISCO

Regular Activity

Tuesdays, 8 am—Knotting & Quilting



June

6/3 Mike Opdyke
6/4 Linda Rice
6/6 April Huff
Michael Opdyke
Jeff Searfass
6/9 Leon Propst
6/12 Kaitlin Kennedy
6/14 Michael Howes
6/17 George Mellan
Eileen Riley
6/22 Brook Stauffer
6/23 Marian Hinkle
6/27 Shawn Husvar
Eli Mood
6/29 Cindy Raub

July

7/1 Jonathan Opdyke
7/2 Haley Stauffer
7/3 Richard Rosenberger
7/5 Pov Sar Loch
7/22 Kevin Riley
7/27 Evelyn High
Mark Kemmerer
7/30 Sue Conrad Howes