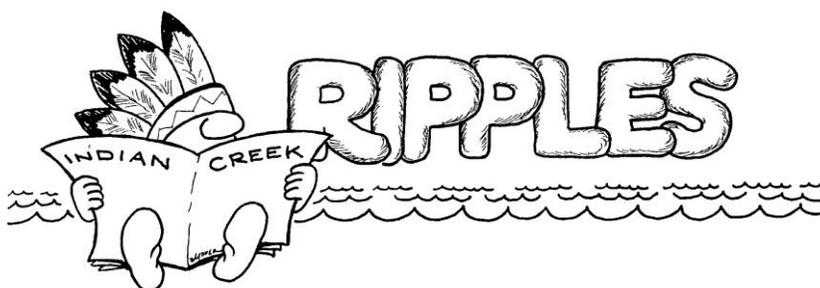


February 2024 (Vol. 21, No. 2)



Indian Creek Church of the Brethren
821 Main Street, Harleysville, PA 19438

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Sunday Schedule

9:00 am – Sunday School

10:00 am – Worship

Office Hours

Monday-Friday

9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Church Staff

Mark E. Baliles

Pastor

Ashley Boyd

Administrative Assistant

Don Ziegler

Custodian

Kathy Moyer

Wee Folk Director/Teacher

Heather Thomsen

Wee Folk Assistant Teacher

Parting Words – Ripples Edition

So here it is...the last Ripples cover article I will write as pastor of the Indian Creek Church of the Brethren. I've written more than two hundred of these. This one is different...and more emotional. What do I want to say?

The answer to that question is easy. As I woke up this morning and turned my thoughts to this article, there were simply two words that were front and center in my heart and mind. This is what they were: *Thank You*.

Thank you, first, to God for giving me the privilege of serving this congregation as pastor and for faithfully loving me and leading me throughout these last 28 years.

Thank you, next, to Reba, for entering this journey with me, for loving and serving this congregation alongside of me, for growing with me, and now for walking with me as we say a difficult 'good-bye' ("God be with you") and as we carry this church and its people in our hearts and into this next chapter of our lives. Along with Reba, thank you to our kids for walking so much of this with us. Of course, that choice wasn't always theirs. But it was their choice to allow their lives to be nurtured by members of this congregation and to be channels of blessing to so many people in return.

Finally, I want to thank this church family... the Search Committee that first saw reason to believe we might be a good fit... the congregation for providing consistent, steady, and supportive employment for me as I worked to provide for my family... those who were ahead of me, those who got behind me, and all who walked beside me... those who were role models to us and to our children... all who gave us broader families of which to become a part, who treated us as your own kids, and who deeply loved our kids, as well... those who became some of our dearest friends... those who served beside me and those who sang beside me... those who helped lead me, those who helped me lead, and those who shared in congregational care... each one who has used your own gifts, however great or small, for God and this church.... all who have learned and grown from me and beside me, and all who have been a part of my own growth. Thank you to all for your love and support, your confidence and trust, your patience and forgiveness, and your generosity and care. May God bless you all and bless others through you...always.

With love and deep affection,
Pastor Mark (your partner in the journey for a time,
your brother in Christ... always)

Pastoral Transition

Pastor Mark has accepted the call to serve another congregation. He and his family will be greatly missed! Please join us for worship and the farewell luncheon on February 18 after church.

So now it is time for us here at the Indian Creek to seek a new pastor. Since our congregation is part of the larger Church of the Brethren, we will receive assistance in this process. The first step is for our Atlantic Northeast District Executive, Pete Kontra, to propose an interim pastor to help with pastoral duties while we search for a new permanent pastor. The Leadership Team is responsible for interviewing and hiring the interim pastor. This process is currently underway. Pete has a couple of candidates in mind and is working to make a presentation to the Leadership Team. There may be a period of time between Pastor Mark leaving and an interim pastor starting here. Our Witness and Worship Team is working to call people to fill the pulpit during this time, just as they do whenever Pastor Mark is away. If anyone has suggestions for pulpit supply, please talk to Sue Moyer or Kevin Bedell.

The Leadership Team is also working to put together a Search Committee. This committee will, with Pete's guidance, develop a congregational profile which will be used by district executives and prospective pastoral candidates to determine who may be the best fit as pastor for our congregation.

The Congregational Profile will:

- Gather demographic congregational information
- Determine pastoral financial support parameters
- Articulate congregational hopes, dreams, and vision for the congregation and new pastor

The Search Committee will interview prospective pastoral candidates and negotiate on behalf of our congregation. Once the committee has agreed upon one candidate who then accepts the invitation to move forward in the process, the next step will be the committee presenting the candidate to the full congregation for familiarization and a vote to call the candidate as our next pastor.

We are very close to naming our Search Committee. Once named, the committee will begin the process by receiving orientation from Pete. The process of finding a new pastor is not necessarily a quick one. It is not unusual for the process to take 12-18 months. For some congregations it is taking years.

Please look here in future Ripples issues for updates as we walk this journey of transition together.

Blessings,
Kevin Bedell, Leadership Team Chair

The three words that changed my life:

I love you,
always and forever My beloved sons and daughters.

Approach Me with confidence knowing all your achievements, through me will be accomplished.

Pray without ceasing, and continue to commune with Me.
Allow Me to be your comforter and love through Me.

Remember I give grace and I know your true beauty.
Find patience and take comfort in allowing Me to be faithful in the places you cannot see.

Trust that I am adequate and always faithful.
Reach out to Me and see that I am gentle.

My yoke is easy and My burden is light,
My presence comes with joy and peace so continue to hold on tight.

Kindness is important and goodness just as rare, so take them from Me and I will always give more for you to share.

Written by: Ashley Boyd
(Your favorite admin Asst.)

Youth Group News

Stepping Up

Article and photos by Donna Parcell



For our January activity we decided to spend the afternoon with Valeria Kramer. Did you know that Valeria will

turn 100 this summer? The youth didn't know that, and they were really impressed. Jadon, Joseph, Kadlin, and Claire had fun talking with Valeria and hearing stories about when she was younger. Valeria enjoyed telling us about what life was like in Vernfield when she was a girl, stories of growing up in a family with 10 children, what Indian Creek was like, attending school, and how much the world has changed during her lifetime. We absolutely laughed the hardest when she told us the infamous story involving a bathtub and the local police. Ask her about it!



After talking with Valeria for awhile, she taught us the family favorite card game of Flinch. We had one practice round to help us learn the game, and then it was time to get serious. It is a really fun game, but we quickly learned that you have to be paying attention. Valeria flinched us with wild abandon! We couldn't believe it! We think she might have felt sorry for us, because after the game she treated us to homemade cookies. We had a really fun time. Thanks for having us, Valeria!

When the youth group heard that the Nurture team wasn't able to find a teacher for the Nursery Sunday school class, they responded, "Micah needs a teacher!" and immediately offered to help out. The youth really enjoy Sunday school, and know the importance of making it available for everyone. It was agreed that they would be helpers once a month, and Miss Donna would be the teacher.



Micah loved having Jadon and Claire as helpers on his first day. They were very enthusiastic about the rhythm band, did some puzzles, sang songs, read stories, helped Micah put in his offering and add his attendance sticker, and did a great job building towers. Most importantly, they helped Micah understand his Bible lesson. When Micah was asked what he learned about in Sunday school, he enthusiastically answered, "God!" Well done Jadon and Claire! We are so grateful for the youth group's willingness to serve!





by Donna Parcell

The Nurture/Fellowship-sponsored church event for January was bowling! A group of us met at Earl Bowl on a Sunday afternoon for a really fun time. Team 1 consisted of Arlene, Bryce, James, Kevin, and late entry ringer Dottie. Team 2 was Micah, Jane, Claire, Donna Maicher, and Donna's cousin, Karen. Cheerleaders were Sarah, Dennis, Donna Parcell, and Chris Spigel. At any given point, either Arlene or James had more points than all of team 2 combined, but everyone had a great time.



Dottie tried to lull everyone into false security by getting a 1 in the first frame, but quickly bouncing back to win the game. Meanwhile on team 2, they seemed to be confusing bowling with golf and trying to get the lowest score. Soon everyone was tempted to use Micah's bowling ramp. Karen had the best follow through by far, and also the best distance before the ball hit the alley. Bryce couldn't believe that while he was more accurate, Sarah's ball speed was double his. Most ball speeds ranged from 6 to 12 mph. Sarah's highest ball speed was 23 mph.

Both Bryce and Arlene couldn't quite complete the ever elusive split, and Kevin managed a field goal but alas it was the wrong sport. Team 2's goal was to break 50, and Donna Maicher came so close to breaking 100 but it was too much pressure and she ended up with 93. Bryce almost had a turkey, and team 2 was already gobbling for him, but again the pressure was too much.



Every time Micah bowled he clapped for himself and then asked for more, sometimes bowling the second half of Jane's frames. And Claire, well let's just say we think she is an undercover

professional bowler. We laughed hard, bowled some, and really enjoyed the time of fellowship with each other.

Women's Breakfast in Sellersville was amazing.



Small Talk

by Kathy Moyer

Last week, the Wee Folk welcomed a special guest to morning circle time ... Harleystown Hank!

Regina Wenger, from the Mennonite Heritage Center, accompanied Hank and shared a lot of great insight as to how Hank and his cousin, Punxutawney Phil, became prognosticators of the weather! Presenting a very engaging lesson, the children were able to share in the discussion, answer questions, hear the story of *The Night Before Groundhog Day*, and even give Hank a good-bye hug! As Hank makes his way around the community this time of year, we were so delighted he was able to stop by to greet all of us, too! It was a day we will not soon forget, and perhaps will spur some of us on to attend the annual celebration at the Mennonite Heritage Center on Groundhog Day, very EARLY in the morning! In honor of the day at school, we will be making groundhog puppets and using a flashlight to see their shadows! However, most of us are hopeful for an early spring, despite whatever Hank's forecast may be!

In February, the Wee Folk will be busy working on learning their full names, addresses, and phone numbers, while also getting ready for valentine fun and festivities. This year, we will continue with January's penguin theme, and make Valentine Penguin holders to collect cards and treats from classmates on our party days, February 13 & 14.

Our puppet theater will be transformed into the **Wee Folk Post Office** this month, equipped with paper, envelopes,

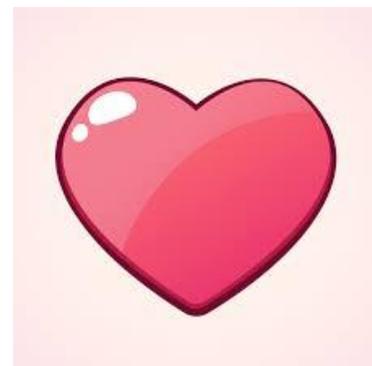
stamps, and a very official mailbox! Our Wee Folk families are sure to enjoy the many loving messages they receive as the children visit our new mail center. In the process, the children will be working on handwriting skills, without even realizing it!

Show-and-tell this month is filled with possibilities, as the children come prepared to share a picture of someone they LOVE! We anticipate learning more about the people who are extra special to us, and why!

Toward the end of the month, we will lead the children in a unit on Dental Health, and learn good hygiene practices and good eating habits to help keep our smiles healthy and bright!

This month we will also hide another new Bible verse in our hearts: Proverbs 17:22 – "A joyful heart is good medicine!" Set to music and sung by Steve Green and friends, we enjoy this special way of memorizing scripture through the year. And at the end of the month, the children also look forward to a small prize to celebrate their accomplishments.

Hugs and Kisses ... with much love from all of us at Wee Folk!





DEACON SPOTLIGHT

And you shall remember all the way in which the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandment or not.”

-Deuteronomy 8:2

The old Presbyterian lectionary calls for a reading from the Old Testament from the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy on New Year's Day. It is Moses speaking. He stands on a low ridge facing the peoples of Israel who are about to end their forty years of seemingly aimless wandering in the desert and enter the Promised Land. They can see that land stretched out before them as some endless panorama of possibility behind Moses. Moses while speaking, gazes over their heads back toward the wilderness and tells them that what happened there was not aimless nor without purpose. The people were to remember “all the way” of the wilderness, the whole trip.

As the new year comes upon us, we probably have a great desire to put the old behind us and “Call it to mind no more.” Maybe the past year felt like so much aimless wandering in the wilderness; or maybe the past year seemed like forty years to us. If we are still licking our wounds or bemoaning unfinished business, we will want to say “be done with it” and push on. But you know what they say about people who refuse to remember the past – they end up repeating it.

Last year is a part of our wilderness wanderings and we too should remember “all the way.” That journey of the spirit involves not only great testing in life's desert places, but in times of blessing that we had never known before. We gained wisdom about God's dealings with us and have found him to be our bridge over troubled waters. A pagan might say we lucked out despite a fickle fate. As Christians, though, we know God gave us a strong, dry ship of faith to ride out the storm. And it is only in the storm that the ship's strength is shown and our courage proven. There is no reason to be brave when life is calm.

The wilderness of the past year should be remembered because it showed us more of what was in our hearts that should not be forgotten. It showed God's great care of us in times of need with blessings unheard of before. It becomes recollection of precious and sacred memories which strengthen our faith and hope for the future. As we travel into the future, let us recall the God given moments when we were proud and forgetful and he humbled us, when we were empty and he filled us.

“And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know; that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but that man lives by everything that comes out of the mouth of the Lord.”

-Deuteronomy 8:3

Light from the Hill, Selected Reflections by Reverend R. Bruce Shannon, pages 66 and 67



I am a Christian

When I say "I am a Christian"
I'm not shouting "I am saved."

I'm whispering "I get lost"

That is why I chose this way.

When I say "I am a Christian"

I don't speak of this with pride.

I'm confessing that I stumble

And need someone to be my guide.

When I say "I am a Christian"

I'm not trying to be strong.

I'm professing that I am weak

And pray for strength to carry on.

When I say "I am a Christian"

I'm not bragging of success.

I'm admitting I have failed

And cannot ever pay the debt.

When I say "I am a Christian"

I'm not claiming to be perfect.

My flaws are too visible

But God believes I'm worth it.

When I say "I am a Christian"

I still feel the sting of pain.

I have my share of heartaches

Which is why I seek HIS name.

When I say "I am a Christian"

I do not wish to judge.

I have no authority

I only know I'm loved.

Maya Angelou



February Birthdays

- 1 Larry Cassel
- 2 Donna Maicher
- 6 Brydon Bateman
- 8 Bob Lane
- 10 Sarah Parcell,
Amber Allebach
- 15 Cindy Limbert Frankenfield,
Glenn Bateman
- 16 Donna Derstine
- 17 Don Ziegler, Danielle Rostick
- 18 Donna Parcell
- 19 Colin Keiper
- 22 Louise Force
- 23 Theresa Wampler
- 25 Dottie Mininger
- 28 Joyce Watts, Sue Moyer

Early March Birthdays

- 4 Cathy Moyer

If we are missing *your* birthday, please let the Church Office know! We want to include everybody in our monthly birthday notice.