

What We've Been Up To...

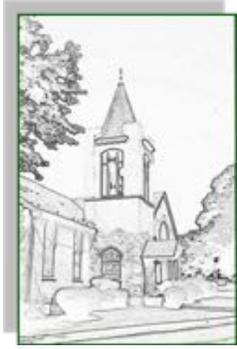


Good Friday and Easter



Earth Day clean up





A ministry student appeared before the Committee for Ordination, which put her through a series of difficult questions. She handled all of them quite well, which prompted an old-school member of the committee to try and stump her with a really difficult question, a theological conundrum. He asked her, “Would you be willing to go to Hell for the sake of the gospel?” Without skipping a beat, she replied, “I’ll do better than that. This entire committee can go to Hell...for the sake of the gospel!”

The subjects of Hell and judgment have been primary concerns of religious thought since religion began. I remember when my son, Tanner, was born. We were dragging our feet getting him baptized and a family member warned me that, God forbid, if something happened to him before he was baptized, he would go to Hell. I recently wrote in a sermon that, for the first twenty years or so of my life, the main reason I went to church was so that I could avoid Hell. I’ve had many conversations throughout my life in which people, both clergy and non-clergy have expressed their concerns that I wasn’t believing the right things, practicing the right way, that I wasn’t “worshipping in the fullness of the faith” (my Roman Catholic friends), that I wasn’t “one of the 144,000 elect that are going to make it to Heaven” (my Jehovah’s Witness friends), or that I wasn’t “saved, born again, or hadn’t confessed Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior” (my fundamentalist evangelical friends).

I’ve been thinking about these lately because of a movie I watched on Netflix, called, “Come Sunday.” The movie tells the story of Pentecostal Bishop Carlton Pearson, who experienced a change in his religious thinking. Near the beginning of the movie, Pearson has a conversation with a woman attorney on a plane, and offers to “save” her, if she is willing. This is the focus of his preaching and ministry- to convert people, to save them, to prevent their souls from going to Hell. Of course, it goes without saying that he and his church are certain they know who is saved and who needs saving.

Pearson experiences a spiritual crisis when he sees a news story about a humanitarian crisis- the genocide in the African country of Rwanda in the mid-nineties. He learns of countless innocent children who are killed. Next Sunday in church, he wonders to his congregation, “Does God send all those thousands of children to Hell because they’ve never learned of Jesus? If so, then God is a monster.” That doesn’t go over so well with the faithful. He is accused of being a heretic, and loses his church, and many of his friends.

Eventually, he is brought before a council of African-American bishops. He poses a question to the chairperson, Bishop Ellis, “Is there someone who you loved, that you know is in Hell right now?” “My Daddy,” Ellis answers, and then goes on to detail all of the terrible sins his father committed. “Would you get him out of Hell, if you could?” Pearson asks him. “Of course,” Ellis answers, “He was still my Daddy...I loved him.” Pearson asks, “Why do you believe you are more merciful than our God?” Again, that doesn’t go over so well with the council, and Pearson is booted out of the Pentecostal Church.

During the end credits, we discover that Pearson is now a pastor in a Unitarian church. The movie provokes some interesting reflections on the topics of Heaven and Hell, judgment and mercy, and I would recommend it. Near the end of the movie, Pearson is invited to preach at the church of UCC pastor, Yvette Flunder. In his message, he wonders why some people are so afraid of a God who loves unconditionally...and reasons that maybe it is because if they were to believe in such a God, that would mean that they would have to love that way themselves.

“For God so loved the world...”

Blessings,

Pastor Bob

Evangelism and Outreach

Food Bank

Thank you for continuing to remember the urgent needs which our food banks seek to address. Canned goods and other non-perishables are always in demand. Please bring **anything** you think would be appreciated. Consider donating spices. Spices allow cooks to add flavor to food without additional salt. Think about buying cumin, cinnamon, coriander, onion powder, garlic powder, cloves, oregano, basil, parsley, cayenne pepper, rosemary, thyme, bay leaves, or any other spices you commonly cook with.

Please keep your cans coming and place them in the pantry shelf. May's food of the month is personal hygiene items and healthy cereal.

Tortoise & Hare 5K Run and Walk

The 20th annual Tortoise & Hare Race is now underway for **Memorial Day, Monday, May 28, 2018** at Wind Gap Memorial Park! This event supports Project Child, the Child Abuse Prevention Coalition of the Lehigh Valley and is a program of Valley Youth House. Please run or WALK with us on Memorial Day! Register online at <https://racewire.com/register.php?id=7266>

Relay for Life

Relay For Life is coming up on Friday, June 8 at 12PM through Saturday, June 9th at 12PM.

We hope you will mark your calendar with the dates and come over to walk a lap with us, spend time getting to know us or catching up in the tent, or just connecting with God and those loved ones in your life who have suffered from cancer.

Nazareth Middle School, 94 Friedenstahl Ave., Nazareth, PA

Donations

Thank you for considering others when cleaning out your closets, however the organizations we support with donations are overwhelmed with clothing, including coats. Please drop them at Salvation Army or Goodwill instead. Shoes that are in good condition and appropriate for people who live on the streets are always in demand though. (Also, work boots for recently employed men are desired. They need to stand long hours so these should be new and comfortable.) If you have shoes or boots to donate, you can drop them in Fellowship Hall in the green bin under the table.

Mother's Day Flower Sale

We will be accepting orders for our annual geranium flower sale to benefit Relay for Life on April 29th and May 6th. See Amy Knitter, Denise Polkowski, or Karen Bernecker to place your order.



Vet's Children's Closet Coming Together

The Children's Closet project at the LVHN Veteran's Health Center in Allentown is starting to take shape, with support from Forks UCC. The Vet Center has three "closets" – one for women, men and now children – that are stocked with new clothing, shoes, and emergency staples. But the children's closet also has toys and small gifts. These items are available for veterans and their families who are in distress. Families might be homeless, suffering a tragedy, facing serious medical issues, or deployed overseas. Case managers at the Vet Health Center can take the clients on a "shopping trip" in these closets to help ease the difficulty of the situation.

Thanks to all who support our dinners and events, 10% of the profits are tithed to help others in our community. Our congregation donated funds that were used to purchase the cube storage units that are now in place for the Children's Closet.



Submitted by Gary Barraco



Creative Worship

Thank you to those who participated in the Palm/Passion Sunday presentation and Easter morning breakfast.

Stewardship and Finance

As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you.

Genesis 9:9

I will take you as my people, and I will be your God.

Exodus 6:7a

At its heart, covenant is about belonging. We belong to God. As the Body of Christ we also belong to each other. God commits to us and we, in turn, commit to be God's people. "Covenant knits us together. God initiates covenant and never betrays the call, gifts, and promises given to God's people."

The church exists because God's Holy Spirit has called us together and bound us in covenant for the purpose of a particular mission: "God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be servants in the service of the whole human family, to proclaim the gospel to all the world, and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

Bound together in this covenant, as disciples, we form what many call the beloved community. We have insisted, always, on the importance of "walking together in all of God's ways." As centers of hope and transformation, local churches, Associations, Conferences and national ministries join in Our Church's Wider Mission. It's who we are together!

"When we give to our churches, we do so to empower the church to live into God's call. We also sanction the wider church by giving to Our Church's Wider Mission. The church in turn shepherds us to live into [our] calling as a new kind of community."

As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye can not say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

1 Corinthians 12:20-21

Christian Education

Sunday School

Sunday School continues through May and will come to a close on June 10th. As we prepare for next school year, please consider **volunteering** to teach Sunday School for a few weeks. We would like to have a co teaching model every week and need lots of volunteers to fill those roles. You would need your PA clearances for volunteering. Please see a member of the Christian Education committee if you have questions.

Vacation Bible School

Mark your calendars for Vacation Bible School this year: July 16th-20th. Please see Amanda Knitter if you'd like to volunteer!

Youth Retreat

Our youth will be attending at retreat from May 4th through the 5th. Please keep them in your prayers.

Making ConneXions

We are eager to know more about the people who worship with us. If you would like to share yourself and “make a connection”, please email Alice Hornbake (wmhornbake@yahoo.com) for the form. Thank you!

Featuring:

Tyler Grogg from Easton, PA is a sixth grade student at Easton Area Middle School and has been attending Forks UCC for a year:

★If you had to describe yourself in five words, what would they be?

Kind, Responsible, Joyful, Optimistic and Perfectionist

★Where do you like to vacation?

Disney World

★If you could change something in the world, what would it be?

There would be no more poor people

★What makes you wildly happy?

Seeing my family enjoy themselves and love each other

★Which of your parents are you most like and why?

My mom because we are both perfectionists, love animals and have a similar, nearly identical personality



Altar Flowers

If you would like to sponsor altar flowers, select your Sunday and affix your name and intention (“In honor of” or “In memory of” or “To the Glory of God”). The arrangements are \$30. Another way of showing your love is to opt out of having flowers, rather choosing to have a single candle on the altar and your flower money will be donated to a charity of your choice. This is a powerful way to honor the day but make a difference in our world. Please make checks payable to “Forks UCC” with the notation “Altar Flowers”. Simply drop your payment in the offering plate. Thank you.

Altar Guild for May - Amy Knitter

Altar Flower Sponsors for May

May 6 - OPEN

May 13 - Gregg & Tracey Cressman

May 20 - OPEN

May 27 - Will, Alice, and Eleanore Hornbake

Those Serving

Greeters/Offering Collectors

May 6 - Bob & Margaret Zabe/Barb Huff and Rocky Starner

May 13 - Vic & Anna Zeeman/Ron & Joan Mumaw

May 20 - Tracey & Gregg Cressman/Brandon Cressman and Ashley Cressman

May 27 - Brenda DeLong and Carolyn Mitch/Lorna & Bill Driesbach



Celebrate with our Church Family

Happy May Birthdays

02 Donna Bolling	20 Walt Francis
02 Shirley Thatcher	20 Wayne Hochwarter
08 Alyson Beers	21 Derick Whitmore
10 Keith Kresge	21 Evan Dugan
10 Ian Wagner	23 Reagan Margelot
11 Ryan Fry	24 Churck Ottaviano
13 Barry Durie	25 Randy Dewalt
13 Erika Negrin	25 Nancy Fry
14 Dorothea Setzler	25 Chris Happel
15 Amy Knitter	26 Louise Bartholomew
17 Gregg Cressman	27 Jerry Kinsey
19 Margaret Zabe	28 Alison Fleming
19 Karlee Flyte	29 Charise Jones
19 Nina Sales	29 Josh Hahn
20 Anna Laudenslager	30 Eleanore Hornbake



May Anniversaries

Kris & Jack Sales	5/03/1997
Nancy & Randy Fry	5/05/1979
Vilma & Jim Milham	5/11/1996
Kalyn & Charles Kolb	5/12/2012
Tracey & Gregg Cressman	5/14/1994
Salome & Matthew Audenried	5/19/2007
Cindy & Steve Aicher	5/23/1987

Confirmands

Ashley Cressman, Gavin Gaul, Hannah Gutekunst, Shanon McCollian, Tanner Riehl, Samantha Shook, Tagan Steward, Riley Williams

Visitation List

Please see the Church Directory or contact the Church office or a member of the visitation team for addresses. Earl & Dolly Abel, Fred Bolling, Mary Correll, Corinne Eberts, Tony Jiorle, Dorthy Kortz, Marge Markley, Florence Saylor, Perma Seiple, Irene Tenges, Bonnie Warren



May 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Choir rehearsals TBA	3	4 Youth Retreat	5 Youth Retreat
6 6th Sunday of Easter <i>Communion</i> Parish Life Mother's Day Tea	7 7PM Stewardship/ Finance	8 6PM Spiritual Council 7PM Consistory Meeting	9	10 Ascension Day Luke 24:44-53	11	12 Paint, Pray, Pizza Party 5:30PM
13 7th Sunday of Easter <i>Happy Mother's Day!</i>	14 7PM Christian Ed.	15 6:30PM Evangelism & Outreach	16	17	18	19 Saturday Worship 4:30PM
20 Pentecost Sunday John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15 <i>Strengthen the Church offering</i>	21 6:30PM Adult Fellowship	22 6:30PM Parish Life	23	24	25	26
27 Trinity Sunday John 3:1-17 <i>Memorial Day Worship</i>	28 Memorial Day Tortoise & Hare 5K	29	30	31		

Sundays

8AM - Meditative Worship

10AM - Worship

