



News from the Hill...

St. John-Hill U.C.C. 620 Hill Church Road, Boyertown, PA 19512 April 2018

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Alleluia! Christ is risen. Christ is risen, indeed. Alleluia! There is no day more special than Easter. In Easter the church celebrates the resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah, from death. It is in every way a time to know that God's answer to death is life!

Resurrection is God's sermon to us. In a world where the predominant word seems to be "No!" God provides an emphatic "Yes!"

When we were training our puppies in their younger days, we would use the term "No! No!" when they did something that was wrong. They have come to know "No! No!" as our disapproval of things like barking, begging for food, and pulling on their leash when walking. A simple command of "No! No!" usually meets with their stopping whatever they are doing. It works quite well.

The negative of "No!" has a way of communicating in ways that are deep and broad. How many times in our lives have we heard that word? From our parents as children, to our friends, to our spouses, to the words we speak to others--"No!" not only grasps at one's attention, but also indicates that there is something wrong.

It has gone array. Life, that is, has gone off course. Being created in God's own image, in God's love, in God's creation, life should mirror the beauty and gracefulness of the Holy One. Yet, we tend to be very aware of when, and how often, our thoughts and actions--when lined up with God's way--do not reflect our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. When the opportunities and possibilities of each day are coupled to our thoughts, words, and actions, we experience a "No! No!"

A wise philosopher once said: "Guilt is the feeling of doing something wrong. Shame is the feeling of being something wrong."

We live in guilt and shame because we are broken. At the very core of our being something is not right. Our desires and how to achieve them is often an expression of our egos rather than a sharing of God's will. The traditional prayer of confession is spot on: "We have erred and strayed from your way life lost sheep...we have followed the desires and devices of our own hearts...we have not loved you or our neighbor as you love us."

I pray that prayer often. Do you? Being human requires such acts of repentance. We do well to acknowledge our sin and to seek forgiveness from God and one another. Such is the beginning of redemption and reconciliation. And, if there is anything that the world needs most, it is reconciliation. Our local church communities, the neighborhoods and towns we live in, our nation, and the global community are--in one way or another--in conflict. It is as if there is a booming "No! No!" that we hear in such times and places.

The promise of Easter, nonetheless, goes beyond even that. When we are in the most distinct "No!" zone, there is another word that God proclaims. The "yes" of Easter--following the brutal violence and death of Jesus by our hands--is God's way of saying "it does not have to be that way." We, as an Easter people, can be free from all that binds us to sin. We, as a people who are already in the process of resurrection, can grow and deepen in God's way of life.

Lent has been our time of owning our "No! No!" stuff. Easter is the time to invest in God's "yes" and live as those redeemed and ongoingly becoming more and more the people God created us to be,

To that we say: "Alleluia! Christ is risen. Christ is risen, indeed. Alleluia!"

In Christ's life-giving love...

Pastor Mary

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Saying “goodbye” is never easy. Saying “hello” is no different.

When we greet a person, we are telling them “you are welcome.” When we dismiss a person, we are wishing them a good future. That is why it is a “good” bye.

I bid you good-bye as your pastor in thanksgiving for the time we have shared. I say good-bye in regret for what could have been but was not. I share this good-bye wishing you all the best in your future endeavors. As a congregation, and as individual people, I hope each moment and experience is cuddled in blessing.

We achieved some wonderful things together. But, as in all things, I’ve made some friends and I’ve found some foes. I truly wish that were not the case. Yet, as human persons, such is the reality of our relationships.

Thus, I am not deterred by those who welcome my leaving. Rather, I grieve the reasons why such conflict was necessary and deemed as appropriate.

The Bible speaks volumes to us about our relationships. St. Paul, especially, reminds us, time and again, to be kind and gentle in patience and forbearance...to encourage one another, building up the common life that is shared together. Nonetheless, St. Paul wrote those messages to communities that were in conflict. He wrote those words that speak to the core of our being because the church is in conflict.

Don’t get me wrong. Conflict is not always a negative. Conflict can lead to growth and deepening of relationships. However, that can only happen when everyone works together for resolution that is of justice and peace. Peace, in this context, is more than the absence of conflict. Peace is the total wholeness of well-being in the love of God and one another.

I admit, openly and without hesitation, that I am not perfect. None of us are. We all have things about ourselves that need to change. We all have stuff that needs to be healed. We all are at odds with one another, to some degree or another, that needs to be reconciled. And, yes, the perfection of that wholeness will only come on the other side of this earthly journey.

In this final newsletter article, I would like to challenge each of us in the ways of being more as God would have us be. I would like us to move on into whatever the future holds about living in “kindness, gentleness, and humbleness”...to being as those whom Jesus gave reference in the beatitudes...to striving to be “of one accord”...to find places of unity and build harmony where there is diversity.

There are things worth being in conflict over. When the reality of God and God’s love is in question, there can be no conflict. Rather, it is in the smaller things that conflict is unnecessary. We have likes and dislikes. We have our own theologies of what is true and what is not. We have our own bias of what is authoritative and what is not. We have our own bias of what God wants for us and what God wants for others. Really! Are such secondary and lesser things all that important as to divide a people and prevent them from being one in Christ?

Anything we place before the primary reality of God and God’s love we are committing idolatry...we are participating in blasphemy. We Protestant and Evangelical people really need to place the Scriptures and theological teachings of the church in perspective. God, and God alone, is whom we are to worship and follow. An informed understanding of the bible and the traditions of the church (all the way back through history, including the story of the Hebrew people and those from whom they descended) gives us much to think about. There is much that we need to unlearn, that we might learn better. There is much that we must rethink, that we can understand in more helpful ways. There is much that we must let go off, that we might grasp the greater and better things.

I challenge each of us to that very task. And, in that task, may you fare well. Thus, my good-bye is in hope and prayer that the things that divide us will come at last to unite us.

In God’s love, grace given, unconditionally...

Pastor Mary

Consistory News

The Consistory met on Tuesday, March 13th, 2018 and discussed, reported and voted on the following items:

Secretary's Report: Minutes from the February Consistory meeting were reviewed and approved.

Treasurer's Report: General Operating Fund Income and Expense Summary for February 2018.

Operating Fund	February 2018	2018 YTD	February 2017	2017 YTD
Income	\$8,408.50	\$16,613.38	\$8,768.50	\$20,135.37
Expenses	\$7,676.36	\$17,746.38	\$5,999.63	\$16,834.86
Income vs. Expenses	\$732.14	(\$1,133.00)	\$2,768.87	\$3,300.51

• Benevolence received for January was \$234.00 and will be sent to PSEC. Year to date total is \$440.00

Reports from the various committees were reviewed. Their activities can be seen elsewhere in this newsletter.

Communion will be celebrated on Easter Sunday, April 1 at both the 7am and 9:30am services.

Pastor Mary will be on vacation April 7th through April 13th. Pastor Bob Witmyer has graciously offered to provide pastoral care while Pastor Mary is on vacation. Contact information will be available in the bulletin or by calling the church office.

Pastor Mary has announced that she will be resigning as our pastor. We would like to thank Pastor Mary for her ministry at Hill Church, and pray for God's blessing as she goes to serve Him in a new setting. Pastor Mary's final service at Hill Church will be April 29th.

We have been in contact with our Conference Minister, Rev. Bill Worley, to begin discussions regarding our upcoming pastor search. We will keep you updated as we meet with Conference staff to start the search and call process. We understand that during this time of transition we will all be experiencing and coping with varying emotions. We pray that each of you find healing and comfort during this time, and that we can be filled with a spirit of excitement and anticipation for what God has planned for Hill Church.

Last month we announced that Wendy Shane will be resigning as treasurer of Hill Church at the end of 2018. We are now accepting applications to fill this position in order to allow ample time for any necessary training. Applications can be found in the Narthex or the church office. If you have any questions please feel free to ask a consistory member.

Anita Brady has decided to step down from her position on consistory. We would like to thank Anita for her service to Hill Church. We also welcome George Benjamin to consistory. At our annual meeting in February the congregation voted to accept George as our newest consistory member.

Consistory Pre-Service set up for April will be provided by Bonnie Helmick and Mark Hile. The next monthly Consistory Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 10th at 7:00 pm.

In Christ, Your Consistory: George Benjamin, Bob Fleming, Dottie Fronheiser, Rick Furches, Bonnie Helmick, Mark Hile, Ray Kochey, David Mutter, Arlan Schaeffer, Terry Shane, Matt Weller, and Pastor Mary Lake-Dillensnyder.

Choir Notes



Wed. April 4----- Sr. Choir 7:00 PM
Wed. April 11 ----- Sr. Choir 7:00 PM
Wed. April 18 ----- Sr. Choir 7:00 PM
Wed. April 25 ----- Sr. Choir 7:00 PM



Elmer Miller
Organist/Music Director
610-367-5613 or e-mail elmerhm@dejazzd.com

Christian Education News



VBS is soon here...we will be "Shipwrecked" this year awaiting to be "Rescued by Jesus." Mark your calendar for June 11-14! More details will be in upcoming bulletins. Our donation wall is in the Narthex...please help us make VBS a fun time for the kids!

The next meeting is April 2 at 7 pm.



Greetings from the Park Committee

Spring has sprung, and the snow is finally disappeared. Get that spring fever going and come out and give us a hand for our upcoming work day - April 14th. We normally meet at the Creek Side Diner for breakfast about 7:00 AM or at the church parking lot about 8:00 AM.

Any questions call Mark Hile 610-367-6572 Terry Shane 610-367-7938

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.
~1 Peter 4:10 (ESV)



MISSION TEAM NEWS

Mission Trip Birdsboro 2018 is now in the planning phase. Want to be a part in helping God's Kingdom? Mark your calendars for July 18-21 and come join us for a spirit filled experience helping others. Registration forms will be available in March. Contact Connie & Mark Hile or Terry Shane for more information. Come experience God in faith & deeds.

Mission: Birdsboro 5K

Servants of Christ Welcome – As a way to raise funds and awareness for Mission Trip Birdsboro, our congregation is partnering with St. Paul's UCC, Birdsboro to host the events surrounding the April 21st Mission: Birdsboro 5K. There are a number of ways to serve that day: Staffing a display table for our congregation, assisting with parking, facilitating free family activities, and/or being a part of the community project team. A sign up will be available in early April so that you can join in this work of sharing the good news of our congregation and the living presence of Christ at work within our communities!

Mission Opportunities

Whether you are in need of help or you want to help others, our Hill Church Mission Team is here for you.

Cemetery Board News

The next meeting will be Tuesday April 17 at 7:30 PM at St. Joseph's Lutheran Church.

Volunteers are needed to help straighten Tombstones on Monday May 7 at 6:00 PM.

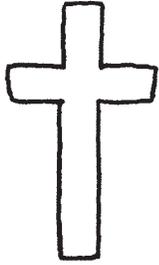


On Saturday June 9, 2018 at 10:00am there will be a ceremony for Pvt. Charles K. Mest. The Sons of Union Veterans would like to welcome all who wish to attend, it would be their honor. We will be doing a color guard, honor guard with volley, a few speeches, prayers and taps. They would also welcome anyone in the congregation who may be related to Charles to say a few words as well.

News from the Women's Guild

On Tuesday March 6th our Dryville dinner was canceled because of snow and is rescheduled for our Tuesday April 3rd meeting night at 6pm, Please bring your spouses. Spring is on its way. Women's Guild voted to give \$200 to Wernersville for Easter.

Announcements from the Hill



Easter Worship

Sunday, April 1

7 am Worship
with Holy Communion

9:30 am Worship
with Holy Communion

Community Outreach Collection

April, May & June we will take a break from community organizations and help with donations for VBS here at Hill Church. The donation board is in the Narthex.

GROCERY CARDS

Don't forget grocery cards for Giant, Redner's and Weis Markets are available for purchase. They may be used towards groceries, gas and pharmacy purchases and make terrific gifts! We receive 5% for every card you purchase which will be used to support our Church Missions program. See Connie Hile to purchase your cards today!

Fundraiser



Contact our sexton, Charles Anhalt, for discounted in-house tile and carpet cleaning. 20% of all proceeds received will be donated to our church in honor of you. Contact Charles at 484-333-1424.

Aluminum Can Collection

The youth group continues to collect and recycle aluminum cans. You can put your bags of cans through the side window of the barn at the church that is facing the road any time you have a full bag. We use the money to support our many activities and also to help sponsor a child in the Philippines.

Church Contact Information

Rev. Mary Lake-Dillensnyder - Pastor

Rev. Jim Rogers – Pastor Emeritus

Mr. Elmer Miller – Musical Director/
Organist

Mrs. Nikki Weller – Church Secretary



Mr. Charles Anhalt - Sexton

Mrs. Wendy Shane - Church Treasurer

Church Telephone: 610-367-8114

Church Website: www.stjohnhillucc.org

Church E-mail: office@stjohnhillucc.org

Hill Church Events

Holy Communion
1st Sunday of the Month
Park Committee Work Days
2nd Saturday of the month at 8 am
Joyful Noise Offering
3rd Sunday of the Month
Children's Message
3rd Sunday of the Month
Newsletter Deadline
3rd Sunday of the Month
Choir Rehearsal
Every Wednesday September thru May
(see newsletter for times)

Here is a list of ongoing committee meetings. These meetings are open for anyone who wishes to attend. Most meetings are held in the Christian Education building.

Christian Education
1st Monday day of the month at 7 pm
Women's Guild
1st Tuesday of the month at 7 pm
Consistory
2nd Tuesday of the month at 7 pm

Want to get involved? These are our upcoming community events.

Ham Supper
3rd Saturday in May
VBS - Shipwrecked
June 11-14, 2018
Mission Trip Birdsboro
July 18-21, 2018
Ringgold Band Picnic & Concert
1st Saturday in August
Buckwheat & Sausage Supper
1st Saturday in October
Turkey Supper
1st Saturday in November

Mission Opportunities - Whether you are in need of help or you want to help others, our Hill Church Mission team is here for you.

For more information on any of these items, contact the church office at 610-367-8114

Church Contact Info

Church Phone # 610-367-8114
Church Website: www.stjohnhillucc.org
Church E-mail: office@stjohnhillucc.org

Pastor Mary Lake-Dillensnyder

Musical Director/Organist - Mr. Elmer Miller

Church Secretary - Mrs. Nikki Weller

Sexton - Mr. Charles Anhalt

Consistory President - Matt Weller

Consistory Vice President - Arlan Schaeffer

Trustees - Mark Hile, Bill Moyer, Terry Shane

Christian Education Superintendent - Elmer Miller

Cemetery Board President - Elmer Miller

Park Committee President - Mark Hile

Women's Guild President - Megyn Weller

Mission Team - Mark Hile

Youth Group Leader - Pastor Mary