

THE LONGSWAMP UCC BEACON - APRIL 2020

Teaching, sharing and acting on what we believe.

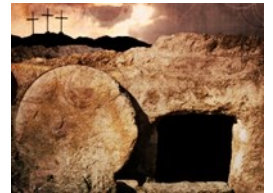


From the Pastor

Rev. Dr. Katherine E. Brearley

Dear Members and Friends,

How much of the Gospel message do you know by heart? I think we all know the joyful story of Christmas and the birth of Jesus. What about remembering the story of the Last Supper, the crucifixion and burial, the empty tomb and the appearances of Jesus? These stories are at the heart of our faith and they are called “The Kerygma”, the most essential proclamation of the truth about Jesus. Let’s think about this. There isn’t one absolute true story. The four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, each tell the story in a slightly different way and some parts can never completely fit together. That’s OK for God. Each gospel addresses a unique community with its own challenges and its own questions. God is OK with that. All the gospels agree on some key facts: Judas betrayed Jesus. Jesus celebrated the Last Supper; he was arrested and condemned to death; he was crucified by Roman soldiers and died; he was buried in a cave like tomb. Early on Sunday morning women went to the tomb and found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. In different ways and in different places, often surrounded by mystery, the risen Jesus appeared to – and spoke to – his disciples. To be a Christian is to believe, through faith, that these facts are true. We can, and do, believe different things about what this means. Based on these facts we can, and do, believe different things about the relationship between Jesus and God the Father. We can, and do, believe different things about what the mystery of the risen Jesus means to our own lives. God’s OK with that. To be a Christian is simply to believe the story of the first disciples, that in some mysterious and unknowable way Jesus was raised from the dead and appeared to the disciples. That belief does not come from logic – it will never come from logic. That belief comes from the power of the Spirit pouring itself into your



heart, opening your eyes to see God at work, and calling you to follow Jesus on The Way to complete the kingdom of God.

In This Issue...

- Worship Updates
- Conference News
- LLC Updates
- Church Office Information
- And so much more!

Join with the whole Christian world in the great celebration of the resurrection on April 12th. No, we won’t be physically all together this year. We can all pick up a Bible and read the story for ourselves. You will find it at the end of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. If you don’t have a Bible download a Bible app such as biblegateway.com. Choose a translation you can understand such as the Good News Bible, the Living Bible or The Message. Or check your TV or streaming listing for live streamed virtual services or **check us out on Facebook for our live-streaming every Sunday at 10:15am.**

May the Risen Lord be with each one of us, Pastor Kathy

Sharing our Faith



10:15am April Worship Schedule

There are no gathered worship services planned at this time.

We will be live streaming worship on Facebook every Sunday at 10:15am for those of you who have a computer and Facebook. If you do not have a computer or Facebook, find one other person, if you can. Use the phone if needed. Jesus says, "Where two or three are gathered in my name I am there in the midst of them."

Pray this prayer as you start your worship: "Lord Jesus, be with us here at this moment. Be present in power and assure us that the day will come when we see you in glory."

A suggested order of worship. You can find your favorite hymns on U-Tube...

- Sing one verse of a hymn you know, such as Amazing Grace.
- Pray together thanking and praising God.
- Read a short passage of scripture. The story of Holy Week and Easter starts at Luke 22. The story is found in each of the gospels in their final chapters.
- Talk to each other about what strikes you as curious about this passage. If you could ask Jesus a question about it what would you ask?
- Sing another hymn or praise song. You may know The Old Rugged Cross
- Now pray what we call the prayers of intercession. These are prayers where you share your concerns with God – not because God doesn't already know them, but to put into words what you see as pressing needs. We are also unburdening ourselves of our worries. We are reminding ourselves out loud that we are never facing things alone. End with The Lord's Prayer.
- Sing your final hymn. One that you know, perhaps How Great Thou Art.
- Say this Early Church blessing to each other, "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forever. Amen."

Easter Sunday April 12th The sun will rise at 7:23am



Easter Baskets & Card For the Home Bound and Fragile

Part of our Sharing Ministry is to take care of those within our fellowship. Easter baskets will be available for delivery to our Home Bound as soon as it is safe to do so. Please check in on our homebound friends and neighbors with a phone call. They may need supplies or just to hear a friendly voice to chat with for awhile.

A Leadership Update

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



Conference News

Along with the rest of the world, PNEC is doing its best to complete the work of the church despite the restrictions, uncertainties and anxieties brought about by the current spread of the Corona virus. For example, planning and details for both Rev. Bonnie Bates' installation Ceremony on April 4th at Greenawalds Church and the Spring Conference meeting scheduled for April 24th and 25th at the Chateau Resort in Tannersville are moving forward on pace, even though we all know there is a growing possibility that one or both may have to be rescheduled. It seems every day there is a new directive or stumbling block causing plans to shift again.

In the midst of a planning meeting last week, we heard that the National UCC had recommended prohibiting all the national staff in Cleveland from traveling by air. Since the Keynote Speaker for our Spring Conference meeting was scheduled to be Karen Georgia Thompson, an Associate General Minister for Wider Church Ministries and Operations, the planners now need to determine if she is willing/able to travel by car from Cleveland. If not, the next option may be (like so many others have done in this uncertain environment) to revert to a taped message or having her join the meeting by Zoom. But, everyone is doing their best to stay healthy, stay positive and accomplish what is humanly possible and not be overly anxious over the rest.

The Nominating Committee will present a slate of candidates to fill the roster of the Board, Teams, Committees and General Synod Delegates at the Conference meeting. New policies are being developed, new Conference goals will be approved, Search Committees like our own are being supported, future ministers are being guided toward their ordination and new sources of income will be developed to support all this activity to augment the support that comes through OCWM giving.

I certainly hope in my next monthly message, some of these actions will have come to pass and I will be able to report on the results. And I hope the worst of the scare over the virus will be waning rapidly.

As always, if you have any questions about the work of the PNEC, please feel free to contact Helena Lindquist at hklindquist@ptd.net.

MAY 2020 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for the May 2020 newsletter is

Tuesday, April 21st.

Please have all articles and announcements to the church office by this date.

Acting on Jesus' Teachings



Acting Ministries...

Our Church's Wider Mission Offering Helps Refugees

Is your heart stirred with compassion when you read stories of how desperately Jews tried to flee from the Nazis in WWII? Do you wonder why so many countries refused to help, including the USA? Well, at this very moment thousands of people are trying to flee from North Africa to escape persecution, torture, violence and human trafficking. They crowd boats and rafts trying to reach the Italian island of Lampedusa off the coast of Sicily.

There, if they are lucky, they can connect with project Mediterranean Hope which is run by our partner church, The Waldensian Church. They are part of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy running a refugee program. They have developed "The Humanitarian Corridors Program" which guarantees the safety of both refugees and Italian residents. It also rescues the most vulnerable refugees, flies them to the mainland and supports them through the legal process to obtain asylum.

Thank you for your generous support of Our Church's Wider Mission Offering which is taken on the first Sunday of the month. Use the envelope found in your offering packet (if you have one) or use a Mission Envelope found in the pew.

Thank you for your prayers for our partners, the small Waldensian Evangelical Church of Italy. The Waldensians were people in the mountains of northern Italy who separated from Rome in the 1100's! With the rise of the Reformation in neighboring Switzerland in the 1500's, and the theology of John Calvin, the Waldensians became part of the Reformed tradition. They are now part of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and celebrate World Wide Communion Sunday with us on the first Sunday in October.

LUCC Supports Brandywine Heights Middle

School's WHY (Wellness & Health for Youth) Club



A "BIG THANK YOU" to everyone who supported Brandywine Heights Middle School's WHY (Wellness & Health for Youth) Club, an after-school program for 6th-8th graders, by purchasing items they use regularly and/or making monetary offerings which were then used to purchase some of the items that were

requested by the directors of the WHY Club. The students and directors of the WHY Club were extremely grateful for LUCC's generous donations.

Teaching What We Believe



Longswamp Learning Center News

Mandated Closing of LLC

The health and welfare of our LLC children, their families, and staff have always been and will continue to be of utmost importance at Longswamp Learning Center. In an effort to maintain a healthy environment for everyone during these difficult times, our LLC staff continues to teach our children the importance of utilizing excellent hygiene practices no matter where they are - at home, at the Center, or out in the community. We started to perform additional daily cleaning/ sanitization of furniture, equipment, surfaces, etc. throughout the Center in the hopes of keeping everyone safe and healthy.

As per the mandated orders that Longswamp Learning Center received from PA Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning on Monday, March 16, 2020, we were informed of the mandated 14-day closing of all licensed child care centers in Pennsylvania. The closing went into effect as of 12:01 AM on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 and was to end on Monday, March 30, 2020. However, we remain closed due to the continued mandate for child care centers throughout our state to remain closed until at least Monday, April 6, 2020. As of the writing of this article, the Director and the LLC Board of Directors have not been informed when the Center will be able to reopen. The LLC Board would like to express our sincere gratitude to Sharon Wetzel, the Director of LLC, for all her hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, a big "Thank You" to our LLC staff members who coordinated and posted the extra online activities for our LLC children to do at home during the mandated shutdown.

Summer Camp 2020

Calling all school-age children! Would you like to have a fun-filled summer vacation? If so, join the LLC staff at our Summer Camp 2020! The first week of the camp is Monday, June 8 - Friday, June 12, 2020 and the last week is Monday, August 17, 2020 - Friday, August 21, 2020. The Summer Camp organizers are in the process of finalizing plans for this wonderful adventure. Summer camp information and registration forms will be available in the very near future by contacting Sharon Wetzel, director of Longswamp Learning Center, via email (sharon@longswampllearningcenter.org) or by calling 610-682-9750. Come and join the fun at LLC's Summer Camp 2020!

Summer Camp 2020 Fundraiser

A big "THANK YOU" to the LUCC members who purchased subs and/or pretzel sandwiches from Longswamp Learning Center's fundraiser on Wednesday, March 18, 2020! The LLC staff held several fundraisers throughout the school year in hopes of defraying the transportation costs for Summer Camp 2020. Thanks again for your continued support, and we hope you enjoyed your sandwiches!

Family & Community Updates

Coronavirus Information Regarding Church Office

The Church Office is closed except for **Tuesday from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM** when Dawn will be in to check phone messages and answer phone calls. **Also, the Bell Room will be open during this time to drop off Food Pantry items, Eggs for future egg hunt, and Radcliffe receipts.** For all other business or spiritual guidance, please contact Pastor Kathy at 610-295-9599. Everyone, please stay well, be safe and God Bless.

Food Pantry Donations: The Brandywine Food Pantry is open and still supplying food for those in need in our area. They are in need of everything. Please consider donating and dropping off any items in the marked basket in the Bell Room.

Plastic Easter Eggs: Eggs can be filled and dropped off or if you are unable to fill the eggs you can drop off the unfilled eggs in the marked basket in the Bell Room.

Radcliffe's Receipts: Please remember to drop off your Radcliffe's receipts in the marked box in the Bell Room. This is a very easy way to assist your church. Please do not roll them up as it is difficult to tally the amounts since they won't lay flat.

Ways to get your weekly offering to the church.

1. Electronic Giving - Go to our website and click the "Donate Now" box
2. Mail it to the church office at 200 Clay Road, Mertztown, PA 19539.



LUCC's Community Family Easter Egg Hunt

In an effort to practice social distancing and keep everyone healthy, the decision has been made to postpone LUCC's Community Family Easter Egg Hunt until a later date. Please watch for updates on LUCC's website, Facebook page, the Sunday bulletin, and future church newsletters for the date on which we will hold our ever-popular Community Family Easter Egg Hunt. Please contact Chris Freudig (chris@longswampucc.org) if you have any questions about the Egg Hunt.

April Birthdays

&

April Anniversaries

April 2 - Grace Reed

04/04/1986 Cindy & Timothy Masenheimer

April 9 - Nancy Snyder

04/05/1975 Susan & Jeffrey McElrea

April 22 - Leo Desrosiers, Richard Shupp

04/27/2019 Amber & David Snyder, Jr.

April 24 - Katherine Brearley

April 30 - Weylin Eck

Church Business

February 2020 Financial Information

Income and Expenses	
Member giving	\$ 4,994.30
Other income	\$ 3,770.62
Total income	\$ 8,764.92
Expenses	\$ (8,327.20)
Net income (gain)	\$ 437.72
Building Fund Expenses	\$ 9116.32

Account Balances (as of 2/29/2020)	
General Fund Checking	\$ 7,723.34
Contingency Fund Checking	\$ 3,020.81
Memorial Fund Checking	\$ 5,820.49
Memorial Fund CD	\$ 10,253.42
Building Fund Checking	\$ 47,903.97

Notes from the Treasurer

Included in Other income are the lease payment from Sprint in the amount of \$1,725 and the Learning Center facility use payment of \$2,045. Included in Building Fund expenses are \$173.99 for water testing and equipment monitoring, \$600 for cleaning services, \$737 for the heating oil budget payment, \$576.13 for electric service, \$3,493 for replacement of electric panel and service in Boy Scout cabin and \$3,216 for heating repairs in Schubert Haus. Correction to Treasurer's Report in the February newsletter: \$4,730 of the total expense listed for Memorial Fund expenses was incorrectly reported as an expense for January 2020. This amount was correctly reported as an expense incurred in December, 2019 in the Treasurer's Report included in the January newsletter. In short, this was a duplication.



Property Updates...

This month we started painting the hall in the learning center. While I was checking the property this month I came across some rotting trees. Well, if you noticed there were more than just a few trees rotting! They were extremely dangerous so we made a decision to take them down with much distress because of their beauty and age. Thank you so much, church family, for your support and understanding. I hope and pray everyone is well. God Bless, Elliott

Please contact Maintenance Manager, Elliott Smith at elliott@longswampucc.org with any questions.



Longswamp Church

*Planting seeds of faith by teaching,
sharing and acting on what we believe.*

Our Newsletter

The Beacon

April 2020

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PLACE
STAMP
HERE