

THE LONGSWAMP UCC BEACON - MARCH 2020

Teaching, sharing and acting on what we believe.



From the Pastor

Rev. Dr. Katherine E. Brearley

Dear Members and Friends,

This month on March 19th we celebrate reaching the Spring Equinox when there are equal amounts of daylight and darkness. In Old Testament times the people of Israel were often dominated by cultures

where either the Spring or the Fall Equinox marked the start of the new year. By New Testament times the people of Israel were dominated by Roman culture which marked the start of the year much as we have it today. You will notice that the date we celebrate Easter varies each year. It's dependent on two different things. Easter always comes after the Spring Equinox. Easter also comes immediately after a full moon. Easter is the first Sunday that comes after the first full moon that comes after the Spring Equinox.

Sometimes as I read the Bible I am amazed that such a small group of people, God's people, could be so resilient. I think of all the things that happened to them, such as having to change when the year starts! I think of all the world events that happened around them. I consider how the Holy Land is subject to earth quakes, wind storms, drought, flash floods and plagues of insects. I read how God chose a place where mighty armies regularly marched out to fight each other, but also a place

of great inventions and innovations. Yet a group of faithful people – sometimes a small group – always turned to God in hope and prayer. God never let His people down: never abandoned them. Their stories in the Bible are written there to give us hope, and to show us who God is.

This Equinox the frogs will still emerge from winter slumber. This summer you will still see a Monarch butterfly. But times are rapidly changing. One day the Spring Peepers may just be a memory. The Monarchs – which take five generations to reach their primary breeding grounds in Mexico and Central America – may no longer visit this area. But God will still be God. God will still be calling people to come home to worship and obey Him. In the great changes and upheavals of life, God will always be with us.



In This Issue...

- Worship Events
- Conference News
- Can YOU help?
- LLC Updates & Events
- Surveys Needed!
- Easter Egg Hunt!
- And so much more!

Grace and Peace, Pastor Kathy

Sharing our Faith

March Sunday Worship 10:15am

March 1	Jesus said, "I am the Light of the World" John 9 - Celebration of Staff birthdays, Congregational Meeting: Approval of 2019 Closing Books, Election of Shirley Solt to Church Board, Vote on Constitutional Amendment.
March 8	Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd" John 10 - Special Loft Choir Anthem
March 15	Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life" John 6 - Faith World Christian Education, Holy Communion, Church Board Meeting after Worship.
March 22	Jesus said, "I am the Vine and you are the branches." John 15
March 29	Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." John 14

Some Dates to Remember

April 5th Palm Sunday – Hat Parade – Community Easter Egg Hunt
5pm - Passion Players from Huff's Church present the Last Supper

April 12th Easter Sunday Worship 7am & 10:15am

May 17th Holy Communion and Confirmation Sunday; Church Board Meeting

May 24th Pastor Kathy's Last Sunday



Easter Baskets & Card

For the Home Bound and Fragile

Part of our Sharing Ministry is to take care of those within our fellowship. Please sign the Easter card prepared for our Home Bound. On March 15th or 22nd Easter baskets will be available for delivery to our Home Bound. Please sign up to deliver a basket and visit with our folks who are not able to get to worship. They love to see a friendly face from their church.

Lenten Journaling

We have a small Lent Journal for you to use each week

during Lent. It has a short Bible passage and a prayer or reflection linked to our weekly themes. Pick a copy up at church.



Sharing our Faith



Ash Wednesday, February 26th, 2020 from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Longswamp UCC

200 Clay Rd., Mertztown, PA 19539

Sanctuary will be open for private prayer.

Church leaders will be present to give Anointing of Ashes and Holy Communion.

Ash Wednesday, February 26th, 2020 at 7 p.m.

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

50 Luther Drive, Mertztown PA 19539

Rev. Cheryl Meinschein

Wednesday, March 4th, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Christ Mertz Lutheran Church (Dryville)

16 Fleetwood Road, Fleetwood, PA 19522

Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Sassaman

Wednesday, March 11th, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church

121 S. Home Ave., Topton, PA 18562

Rev. Roger Ulrich

Wednesday, March 18th, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Christ DeLong (Bowers) UCC

65 Old Bowers Road, Kutztown, PA 19530

Rev. Ruth Doty

The Longswamp Loft Choir will join with St Peter's UCC and Christ – DeLong UCC choirs.

Wednesday, March 25th, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Hope Lutheran Church (Bowers)

550 Fleetwood Road, Bowers, PA 19511

Rev. Ruth Doty, Rev. Laura Stoneback

Wednesday, April 1st, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Christian Congregation Church (Mertztown)

318 Chestnut Street, Mertztown, PA 19539

Rev. Cheryl Meinschein

Sunday, April 5th, 2020 at 5 p.m.

Longswamp UCC

200 Clay Rd., Mertztown, PA 19539

Passion Players from Huff's Church present the Last Supper

A Leadership Update

Conference News

Two upcoming PNEC events of interest to you:

How to Design Worship Services Saturday March 28th from 9:00am to 3:00pm at PNEC Office 431 Delaware Avenue, Palmerton. It is designed to help regular church members develop and present a variety of worship services, using readily available resources from the Conference, the UCC website and other online and paper resources. Part of our Vision 2020 goal is to involve new people in worship design and here is a great opportunity to learn what is out there. Talk to Laurie Heagy our Sharing Ministries lead for more information.

The installation of Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates as the fourth Conference Minister of the Penn Northeast Conference on Saturday, April 4, 2020 at 2:00 pm. It will be held at UCC Greenawalds at 2325 Albright Ave., Allentown PA. The church is conveniently located off Cedar Crest Blvd, a mile north of Route 22.

FYI Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates is away on a trip to New Delhi, India to enhance relationships with the Church of South Indian dioceses. Just before her departure, she met with leaders and members of the LUCC Board, Search Team, Elders and Pastoral Relations Committee for an orientation about the process for our upcoming search to find a new pastor after Pastor Kathy's retirement. She will be catching up with this business when she returns.

The PNEC Board met recently.

It has fiduciary responsibility for the Conference. Treasurer Rev. Martin Nuscher gave a preliminary report on 2019 finances. Total revenue was about 92% of that projected, and expenditures were less than 89% of projections.

The work of PNEC is supported by your monthly gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM). Ten percent of the OCWM funds are forwarded to the national church; the remainder funds the work of the Conference here in PA. Members of the Board signed over 100 Certificates of Thanks to be sent to all the churches within PNEC that contributed to OCWM during 2019, and I am so glad Longswamp UCC is one of those churches.

More details about the upcoming PNEC Spring Meeting April 24-25 were shared. Details are available in our church office if you would like to go.

Much of the work for the PNEC Board is prepared in advance by working sub-groups. That way the sub-group can discuss the topic in depth, and the Board meeting time is reserved for essential business. The PNEC Board is modeling for our local churches how to be attentive and efficient in governance in today's world. We are hoping that LUCC can learn this.

Votes were taken on the following items of business for PNEC:

A Gift Acceptance Policy

A Conflict Resolution Policy ·

A Ways of Work document outlining how the Conference Board conducts its governance and oversight tasks.

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

Acting on Jesus' Teachings



Support Ministries

Can You Help?

During her time at Longswamp Church Pastor Kathy has taken on a variety of tasks. Some were previously done by the now disbanded Women's Fellowship. Some Pastor Kathy took on to help promote the mission and vision of

Longswamp Church. Some were tasks done by people who have now moved on. This is a list of some of the tasks with a brief description. You can get more details from Pastor Kathy or from the Church Office. A small amount of money is available from our Family Ministries funds to support these ventures:

Guest Welcome Bags The purpose of these Welcome Bags is that once they are handed to a guest they are a visible sign to everyone that this person should be welcomed as a visitor. Inside the bag are a few items including brief information about the congregation. New bags need to be made each month.

Sunday Refreshments The purpose of offering **simple** refreshments in the Bell Room is to encourage people in the congregation to fellowship with each other. It also offers a place of hospitality if guests wish to talk to someone. A person could just take responsibility for one Sunday a month if they wish, or someone could take responsibility for organizing other people.

Pew Card Packets Updated The purpose of Pew Card Packets is to have offering envelopes available, plus prayer/communion cards and a Welcome/Contact card. They have to be folded an exact way. These packets should be checked every two weeks and missing cards/envelopes replaced.

Kitchen Oversight The purpose of this ministry is to make sure the kitchen is always clean and tidy, ready for other people to use. People use the kitchen and people clean up. However, there are always one or two stray items, and one or two sticky spots. Items are sometimes left in the fridge and forgotten. Over time the drawers and cabinets get disorganized. The place where the bulk items are stored gets untidy. The Kitchen Oversight person quietly and cheerfully does that final bit of tidying and cleaning that used to be done by the Women's Fellowship.

Purchase of Small Quantity Paper Products The purpose of this ministry is to make good stewardship of our limited kitchen space by purchasing small quantities of paper plates and bowls of various sizes. Products should be ecofriendly, but sturdy. Keep receipts and the treasurer will reimburse.

Sanctuary Oversight The purpose of this ministry is to honor God's house by periodically walking through all areas of the sanctuary to tidy and remove stray items, and replenish tissue boxes and hand sanitizer as needed.

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Acting on Jesus' Teachings

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Gardening – Bell Room Entrance The purpose of this ministry is to provide a colorful and cheerful first impression to any person who enters the church building by the Bell Room door Monday - Friday. At the very least the area should be weed free and attractively mulched. Shrubs should be trimmed. The heated birdbath should be cleaned and filled with fresh water. If flowers are planted they should be maintained and removed when dead.

Notice Boards The purpose of this ministry is to present ourselves as a congregation that is vitally engaged in mission and the community. Notices need to be changed regularly and outdated items removed immediately.

Office Recycling The purpose of this ministry is to save our planet. Office paper and cardboard should be picked up and taken to a recycle center.



Newsletter – Our Church's Wider Mission The purpose of this ministry is to inform people each month of one way their OCWM mission offering expands the acting ministry of the wider church. Pastor Kathy can show you where to obtain this information.

Church Office Candy Pot This ministry has taken on a life of its own. It started as a small pot for use by office staff and volunteers. It's now become a large candy basket located in the Bell Room and accessed by everyone who uses the building. The purpose of this ministry is to offer a "sweet pick me up" to any person who enters or leaves the building via the Bell Room door. Candy should be bite sized and individually wrapped. This ministry can be whatever a person wants to make it: the basket could be filled once a week, or more if preferred. It isn't currently funded by Family Ministries, but possibly it could be. It just adds a sweet reward to a child, parent, delivery person or staff person who visits our church building during the week.

February Mission Update: Care Packages for our Lucc College Students



As Lucc's "Acting" Lead, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who generously donated the items we needed and gave monetary offerings which will be used to purchase more items for the care packages we are putting together for our Lucc members who are currently furthering their education at a college or university. Also, "thank you" to our members who wrote notes of encouragement which will be included in each care package. The care packages will be sent or hand delivered to our college students during the last week of February and first week of March. I'm sure our college students will enjoy receiving a special gift from Lucc. Jill Shade

Acting on Jesus' Teachings

Acting Ministries...



Our Church's Wider Mission Offering for March

Our OCWM offering supports the work of our partners in The Church of the American Ceylon Mission (CACM) which strives to provide educational, medical and social services throughout Sri Lanka. CACM services are focused on the people who are the ethnic Indian minority who are underserved or ignored by the Sri Lankan government. There is a particular focus on children and youth. CACM provides day-care, preschool programs, after-school programs, sports activities, leadership and vocational training.

We often think of an island paradise, but for children at risk for human trafficking and abuse even a country as beautiful as Sri Lanka can be a nightmare. CACM steps in working with partner churches to guarantee young people access to basic human rights. Your gifts to OCWM are a real blessing to a child physically far away from you, but close to God's heart. Thank you for your generosity.



Teaching What We Believe

Friendship Discussion Hour

- An adult Christian
Education experience,
Sunday mornings from
9-10 a.m. in Fegely Hall

March 8th & 22nd

**Continuation of the Bible
study: '20/20 Spiritual Vision'**

Everyone is welcome!

Contact person: Chris Freudig at
chris@longswampucc.com

Faith World

Christian Education for Children Sunday, March 15th

Here is a photograph of a bronze statue of Jesus washing the feet of a disciple. This month we think about how the faith community observes Lent, and foot washing can be part of it. Our Bible story is John 13: 1-17, the story of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. Come and watch a video of the deep Blue Kids learning about this in church. Our song this month is "A Whole New Level of Love." See you soon!



Teaching What We Believe



Longswamp Learning Center News

Have you, or is someone you know, starting to think about child care for your/ their children for this summer? If so, please contact Sharon Wetzel, the director, via email (sharon@longswampllearningcenter.com) or call the LLC office (610-682-9750) to find out more about the various programs we offer at our Keystone STARS 4 facility (LUCC site) and our Summer Camp program at LUCC for school-age children.

- ★ LLC, a very important mission of LUCC for more than 33 years, serves our community by providing quality care for the children of our local area.
- ★ 6 child care programs - infants, toddlers (2 separate classes), preschool, community preschool, and before/after school care offered at Brandywine Heights Elementary School during the school year, and Summer Camp for school-age children (held at LUCC).
- ★ LLC's play-based curriculum gives children a "hands-on" learning experience.

Welcome new LLC staff member!

The LLC administration, staff, and Board of Directors would like to welcome our newest staff member, Angela (Angie), who began working part-time on Monday, February 20, 2020. She is assisting in the rooms and also working in the LLC office.

LLC Celebrates Dr. Seuss's Birthday

The children and staff of Longswamp Learning Center will celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday during the week of March 2 - 6. Each day one of Dr. Seuss's famous books will be shared with the children and they will be doing a special activity each day. The special "Dr. Seuss" days are: Monday, March 2 - *Cat in the Hat with a special appearance by the Cat in the Hat*; Tuesday, March 3 - *Crazy Sock Day in honor of Fox in Socks*; Wednesday, March 4 - *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*; Thursday, March 5 - *Green Eggs and Ham*; and Friday, March 6 - *Hat Day - Wear your favorite hat to school. Follow our LLC's Facebook page for pictures!*



Summer Camp 2020 Fundraiser!



- ◆ Take a break from cooking dinner on Wednesday, March 18, 2020, and support LLC's Summer Camp 2020 fundraiser at the same time!
- ◆ Order delicious subs and/or pretzel sandwiches, which are made by R & K Subs in Palmyra, from the Longswamp Learning Center.
- ◆ The subs come with individual packets of lettuce, onions, and tomatoes.
- ◆ Completed orders and payment (checks made out to Longswamp Learning Center) must be submitted to the LLC office no later than 5:30 PM on Monday, March 9, 2019.
- ◆ Orders should be picked up between 3:00 PM and 5:30 PM on Wednesday, March 18, 2020, in Fegely Hall.

Family & Community Updates

March Birthdays

&

March Anniversaries

March 1 - Franklin Sterner

03/01/2014 Elizabeth & Mark Moser

March 3 - Kim Jenkins

03/05/1960 Barbara & Paul Weller

March 4 - Gail Zettlemoyer

03/14/1992 Dawn & Derek Strunk

March 5 - Larry Herbert

03/20/2009 Sarah & Timothy Reichel

March 6 - Dawn Strunk, Kim Toth

March 8 - Theresa Haffner, Allison Isamoyer

March 10 - Sandra Reppert

March 13 - Zachary Strunk

March 15 - Fern Reidnauer

March 19 - Corinne Reppert

March 20 - David Snyder, Sr.

March 21 - Robert Friedly

March 24 - Skylar Strunk

March 25 - Cole Fredericks, Susan Voortman

March 27 - Robert Scheirer

If you are a member of the church and would like your birthday and/or anniversary listed in upcoming newsletters or if there is a correction, please contact the church office at 610-682-6230.

Thank you Notes & Personal thank you's...

Dear Members of Longswamp UCC,

Thank you for your continued support of the Brandywine Food Pantry! We appreciate your recent monetary donation! Sincerely, St. Peter's UCC

Dear Friends at Longswamp UCC,

...Your gift of \$135.00 will go a long way towards helping us alleviate hunger, and financial crisis among our neighbors. Please visit us at FriendInc.org and [@FriendInc](https://www.facebook.com/FriendInc) for information and news about our upcoming projects. We are here to serve with you. ...

APRIL 2020 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for the April 2020 newsletter is

Tuesday, March 17th.

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

Family & Community Updates

Please Return Pastoral Search Survey Forms By March 15th

Every household has received a copy of the Penn North East Conference Church Survey. **Each voting church member should answer this survey**, so please obtain additional forms as needed. Only answer the survey ONCE. Thank you.

The purpose of this congregational survey is to help the Conference Minister decide what Interim Job Description is best suited for LUCC, and notify our Church Board of suitable interested candidates. Candidates will then be interviewed by the Church Board. The Church Board will select the Interim Pastor. An Interim Pastor is not elected by the congregation. Completion and return of the survey forms is the important next step on the pathway to getting a new minister. Please help PNEC help LUCC.

*** PLEASE RETURN TO CHURCH OFFICE**

Penn Northeast Conference
Congregational Revitalization or Transition Model Assessment

This tool is to be used by congregations within the conference to assist us in identifying supports, programs and development assistance that congregations may need. These distribute widely within the congregation. The membership survey must only be completed once. Submit copies of the assessment tool for completion and a summary report.

Please indicate the degree to which you believe that the following descriptions reflect the situation in your congregation by indicating "very much," "somewhat," or "not reflective of my church." The results of this survey will be compiled and will assist in the assignment of revitalization or transition support for the congregation.

Question or Statement	Very Much	Somewhat	Not reflective of my church
We have revised the church constitution and bylaws within the last two years.			
The church vision and mission statements are up to date and our annual goals reflect our focus toward them.			
The church has some conflicts within its leadership or members.			
The small groups, ministry teams, boards and committees of the church are fully staffed and effective in their work.			
The church's outreach focus is strong.			
We build and maintain good community relationships with our neighbors and community organizations.			
We are focused on our future, hopeful about the work of being church still to be accomplished.			
We understand the need to change and are willing to change to address the needs of our community.			
The church building is well used, on a regular basis, by us and by community groups and organizations.			
The church has multigenerational participation.			
We are seen as an inclusive and radically welcoming church by those who visit us.			

- During the week survey forms can be picked up from the church office. On Sunday forms are available in the sanctuary.
- Return survey forms on a Sunday to the box provided in the church sanctuary. During the week forms can be returned to the church office.
- Church leaders will ask you if you have returned your survey form. Please understand that they are just trying to get the forms handed in by March 15th.

Property Updates...



Well Punxsutawney Phil predicts an early spring! I know everyone here at Longswamp is looking forward to that! February so far has just been wet and cold. I have not been able to get a lot done outside. So there is work to be done inside the learning center. It will be getting a new facelift in the way of paint in the hallway. Long-overdue! And we just had the floors stripped and waxed. Not very exciting but necessary. That is all I have for now. God bless everyone and see you next month.

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

Family & Community Updates



We need your help!

Plans are underway for LUCC's Community Family Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, April 5, 2020 (Palm Sunday) beginning at 12:00 noon. We will need your help in filling over 1,000 plastic eggs with candy, stickers, small toys, etc. Bags of plastic eggs will be available in the church foyer beginning on Sunday, March 1, 2020. Please return filled plastic eggs to the appropriate box in the church foyer no later than Sunday, March 29th. We are also looking for donations of hot dogs, rolls, sauerkraut, pasta salad, drinks (water, tea, lemonade), chips, pretzels, and finger desserts. Please sign-up on the food list that will be posted in the church foyer as of Sunday, March 1st.

Welcome Our Newest Member

On Sunday, February 9th we welcomed a new member...

Edmund "Ed" Reiss,

Please welcome him into our Longswamp UCC Family!

We are in need of:

Greeters, Ushers & Lay Readers

- ✓ You do not have to be on the church board to usher even on communion Sundays.
- ✓ Lay Readers receive the scripture readings by Thursday before the Sunday they are scheduled to read.
- ✓ Please contact the church office if you are interested in volunteering.

Thank you.



Daylight Savings Time
Sunday,
March 8



First Day of Spring
Thursday,
March 19



LONGSWAMP UCC'S COMMUNITY FAMILY EASTER EGG HUNT

SUNDAY, APRIL 5, 2020

12 NOON – RAIN OR SHINE

3 AGE GROUPS (0 – 4, 5 – 11, 12 – 100)

PRIZES & REFRESHMENTS!

Please meet in the Sanctuary to Start

12:00 – 12:30 – Pictures with the Easter Bunny

12:30 PM – Egg Hunts Conducted by Age Group;

Free luncheon (hot dogs, etc.)

Tell your family and friends!

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

Church Business

Income and Expenses

Member giving	\$ 3,897.43
Other income	\$ 8,718.85
Total income	\$ 12,616.28
Expenses	\$ (11,724.90)
Net income (gain)	\$ 891.38
Building Fund Expenses	\$ 1,590.20
Memorial Fund Expenses	\$ 4,880.24

Account Balances (as of 1/31/2020)

General Fund Checking	\$ 7,354.10
Contingency Fund Checking	\$ 3,020.81
Memorial Fund Checking	\$ 5820.45
Memorial Fund CD	\$ 10,253.42
Building Fund Checking	\$ 50,016.09

January 2020 Financial Information

Notes from the Treasurer

Included in Other income are the lease payment from Sprint in the amount of \$1,725, the Learning Center facility use payment of \$2,045 and the workers' compensation premium reimbursement by the Learning Center in the amount of \$840.42. Included in Building Fund expenses are \$391 for water testing and equipment monitoring, \$600 for cleaning services, \$737 for the heating oil budget payment, \$552.30 for electric service, \$718.13 for propane to heat the sanctuary and boy scout cabin and \$1,240.20 for materials for the new shed site.



Palm Plants for Palm Sunday & White Lilies for Easter Sunday



To celebrate Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and His resurrection on Easter morning, we are giving members and friends of the congregation the opportunity to sponsor Small Palm Plants and Easter Lilies to adorn our Sanctuary. The small potted palm plants will be displayed on Palm Sunday, April 5th and the Easter Lilies will bring beauty and joy to our morning services on Easter Sunday, April 12th.

Please use this form to order your plants by March 22, 2020.

Place it and your payment in an envelope and put them in the offering basket or in the church office mail slot. Palm plants may be picked up after Palm Sunday worship and we ask that Easter Lilies remain until after the second service on Easter Sunday.

Your Name: _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

Palm Plants at \$3.50 _____ Lilies at \$10.00 _____ Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Longswamp Church

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

Our Newsletter

The Beacon

March 2020

Longswamp UCC

200 Clay Road
Mertztown, PA 19539

610.682.6230

secretary@longswampucc.org

Visit us on the web at
longswampucc.org

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PLACE
STAMP
HERE