



# The Transformer

January 2016

717-866-4910

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*Friedens Lutheran Church, 301 W. Washington Ave., Myerstown, PA*

. Dear Friends in Christ,

Blessings to you and your loved ones as we enter 2016. It is an election year in our nation, therefore an occasion to truly seek the Lord, be still, listen and discern.

## **Communion Practices**

Prior to becoming pastor at Friedens, I served two years at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary as a visiting professor of Lutheran Studies. During 2015 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America conducted a study of communion practices. Students in each of the three classes I taught received the assignment to write a 1500-word essay on one aspect of communion practices. Two matters commanded the attention of these students as well as other Lutherans across the country: one, when does a person begin to receive the Lord's Supper; two, is it appropriate to extend "radical hospitality" by inviting all persons to receive the meal, including those who are not as yet baptized?

The conversations in our class was alive, vibrant, respectful and informative. Being an advocate of creating safe places (what I call "Oasis of Grace") to discuss matters of faith and life, these dialogues were a blessing.

## **Recovering an Ancient Tradition**

Over the course of my journey as a person committed to lifelong learning, I have found sufficient biblical and confessional support to change my thought and practice with respect to welcoming persons to the sacred meal. In fact, as a result of expanded ecumenical dialogues that now includes persons from the Orthodox tradition Christians are rediscovering ancient understanding and practices observed by the early church that were lost in the west when political factions brought about a split between the western and eastern branches of the Christian Church.

One of the practices lost was offering the Holy Communion immediately following baptism, including infants. An uncompromising understanding of God's grace supported this practice. Western Christianity became Influenced by a philosophy that exalted the importance of human understanding and the misinterpretation of a key passage in 1 Corinthians. As a result, various restrictions to receiving the meal were put in place:

Lay persons were kept from viewing the celebration of the communion liturgy

Lay persons could only receive the bread

Lay persons must have a proper understanding about the meal prior to receiving it

Correctly, these restrictions are mostly gone from Christian practice.

## **David's First Communion**

At the time when I was confirmed, youth (and adults) could not receive the Lord's Supper until they were baptized and confirmed. Prior to confirmation, children remained in the pew, while confirmed persons would go forward to receive the sacrament. On Pentecost Sunday ninth grade students were confirmed and the following week received their first communion.

My confirmation class included David. He was a man in his early thirties who functioned with the mental ability of an eight year-old. Because he was not capable of a "proper understanding," David had never received Holy Communion. The pastor who came to our congregation prior to my ninth grade year, learned about David and invited him to the table. David was confirmed with us and the next week received his first communion.

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### Bring the Children to Jesus

Friends, I personally believe, based on confessional and biblical principles, that Jesus invites all to receive the sacramental meal variously called the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, and the Eucharist. As I look over the five decades since I first received the meal, my understanding has grown and appreciation has deepened. Hence, I come to the table with a greater sense of awe, mystery, and thankfulness.

You have probably noticed I extend the meal to children unless parents ask me not to offer the meal to their child. Parents have the key responsibility to nurture their child in the Christian faith – a responsibility they accepted when the child was baptized. The role the church and its pastors have is to help teach and to preside at the table.

I am offering opportunities to engage in dialogue about the Lord's Supper. Sessions are set for adults only and for families. Unlike the practice of having "first communion instruction" and being done, it seems to me that believers of all ages are better served through ongoing teaching and dialogue. More than information to learn we practice faith that is formed.

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen us and keep us to eternal life.

A brother in Christ,

Pastor Robert

### Schedule

Saturday sessions are 9 a to 10:15 a; Sunday sessions are 4 p to 5:15 p  
 Family sessions open to children of all ages but will have a particular focus  
 Prior registration will help me to better prepare

Sat. Jan 16 – Adults

Sun. Jan 17 – Families, focus Kindergarten and under

Thur. Jan 28 – Adults at 10 a – 11:15 a

Sat. Jan 30 – Families, focus grade one through five

Sun. Jan 31 – Adults

Sat. Feb 6 – Families, focus grade six through eight



Print copies of Pastor Robert's recent sermons are available at the counter alongside the bulletin board in the corridor between the



## Food Collection

On Sunday, January 3, food will be collected for the Lebanon County Food Bank. All gifts are welcomed. There is a need for frozen hams, bottles of juice, canned meats and stews, canned fruit, canned vegetables, canned soups, peanut butter, towels/wash cloths, paper towels, baby wipes, and diapers.



**On Sunday, January 17<sup>th</sup>**, members of Friedens will again be preparing and serving the evening meal at the Lebanon Rescue Mission. We need about four more volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, please sign the sheet in the narthex on the bulletin board. If you would like to provide some needed supplies, please sign the sheet as well.



## ANNUAL MEETING

Annual Congregational Meeting (with lunch) will be held on Sunday, February 21, 2016 at 11:30 am in Stauffer Hall. Annual Reports from Staff & Team/Committee Leaders are due to Janet Moyer, Church Secretary by no later than Sunday, January 24, 2016. Annual Report packets will be available for review beginning Sunday, February 14, 2016. **One Worship Service will be held on February 21, 2016 at 10:30 am in Sanctuary.**



Friedens Lenten booklet for 2016 will be an Augsburg Fortress publication called Bearing Fruit. Bearing Fruit is a daily devotional based on the letter to the Colossians. Each devotion contains a reading from Colossians, a quotation to ponder, a reflection, and a prayer. One booklet per household/residence will be ordered upon request. Requests for large print will be honored. Name(s) not necessary. Place in offering plate to facilitate our count for ordering.

### OUR TITHES & OFFERINGS

#### November 2015

				% of Budget	
Current Budget	Goal	\$27,266.00	Goal to Date	\$299,926.00	85%
\$327,195.00	Rec'd	\$26,688.00	Rec'd to Date	255,145.00	
Spang Crest	Rec'd	55.00	Rec'd to Date	\$ 488.00	
Hunger	Rec'd	235.00	Rec'd to Date	\$ 3,100.00	

# JANUARY 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
<b>3</b> 9 AM— Contemporary Service 10L30 AM— Traditional Service 10:30 AM—Youth Group	4	5	<b>6</b> 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band  7 PM—Epiphany Worship	7	8	9
<b>10</b> 9 AM— Contemporary Service 10L30 AM— Traditional Service 10:30 AM—Youth	<b>11</b> 6:30 PM—Finance Committee—Parlor	<b>12</b> 7 PM—Property Committee	<b>13</b> 9 AM—Women Sew  6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band  7 PM—Adult Choir	14	<b>15</b> 	16
<b>17</b> 9 AM— Contemporary Service 10L30 AM— Traditional Service 10:30 AM—Youth Group	18	19	<b>20</b> 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band  7 PM—Adult Choir	<b>21</b> 7 PM—Church Council	22	23
<b>24</b> 9 AM— Contemporary Service 10L30 AM— Traditional Service 10:30 AM—Youth Group	25	26	<b>27</b> 9 AM—Women Sew  6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band  7 PM—Adult Choir	28	29	30
<b>31</b> 9 AM— Contemporary Service 10L30 AM— Traditional Service 10:30 AM—Youth Group						

**Friedens Lutheran Church, Myerstown, PA  
Church Council Meeting  
December 17, 2015**

Jody Appleby, President called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

**Present:** Jody Appleby (President), Janice DuBois, Valarie Herron, Jim Kneasel, Jon Koller, Elaine Lasch (Treasurer), Bev Levensgood, Sharon Riegel (Secretary), John Umberger, Rev. Robert W. Wallace, Jr. (Pastor) **Excused:** Frank Armstrong (Vice President), Chris Heft

1. Prior to the meeting Council enjoyed caroling at the home of Frank Armstrong.
2. Minutes/Reports/Communications:
  - a. **Janice DuBois made a motion to accept the November 19, 2015 Church Council Minutes & the November 22, 2015 Congregational Meeting Minutes. Jon Koller seconded. Motion carried.**
  - b. **Bev Levensgood made a motion to accept the November 2015 Financial Secretary's Report. John Umberger seconded. Motion carried.**
  - c. **Jon Koller made a motion to accept the November 2015 Treasurer's Report. Janice DuBois seconded. Motion carried.**
  - d. Pastor Wallace gave a verbal & written Pastor's Report. **John Umberger made a motion to accept the December 2015 Pastor's Report. Valarie Herron seconded. Motion carried.**
3. Elaine Lasch reported Finance Committee did not meet in December 2015.
4. Jim Kneasel shared a report of the Property Committee meeting of December 2015. After length discussion, Council agreed to form an Ad Hoc Committee to address security concerns. Ad Hoc Committee to be comprised of Pastor Wallace, Jon Koller (Council Rep), Property Committee Rep and State Police Rep.
5. Communications:
  - a. Christmas Greeting from Gettysburg Seminary.
  - b. Thank you from Girl Scout Troop 70663 for allowing their troop to hold their meetings in our church.
6. A Capital Campaign Report was available. As of November 2015 the Campaign Goal of \$149,000 is short \$1,451.21.
7. Jody Appleby and Chris Heft of the Nomination Team for new Council Members in 2016 were not available to provide an update.

8. Annual Congregational Meeting (with breakfast) will be held on Sunday, February 21, 2016 at 9:00 am in Stauffer Hall. Annual reports from staff and team/committee leaders are due to Janet Moyer, Church Secretary by no later than Sunday, January 24, 2016. Annual Report packets will be available for review beginning Sunday, February 14, 2016. One Worship Service will be held on February 21, 2016 at 10:30 am in Sanctuary.
9. Nine Lessons & Carols Worship Service, December 19, 2015 at 3:00 pm
10. At the November meeting Council reviewed the Foul Weather Policy. Elaine Lasch will confirm with Jim Biever that appropriate connections have been made with WGAL. Update was not available at this meeting.
11. **Next Council Meeting will be held on January 21, 2016 at 7 pm. Sharon Riegel will provide devotion/opening prayer.**
12. **John Umberger made the motion to adjourn. Jon Koller seconded.** Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m. Meeting closed with the sharing of joys & concerns and prayer led by Pastor Wallace.

Sharon Riegel  
Council Secretary



I hope everyone had a great Christmas,

We have started planning for 2016. Below is list of events and dates for you to mark your calendar.

Youth starts back up January 10 lesson for the day is God is -----?  
We will meet Sundays from 10:30 till 11:50, we will not meet Easter or Mothers Day.

**Jan 22 23 & 24** - Jr High at Youth Quake Harrisburg.

**February 6** - Baskets of love. Youth will make and deliver meals to shut-ins and widow and widowers

**Feb 26 27 and 28**—Sr High VA Beach Trip. More information to follow.

**March 19-20** - sleepover and game night. 5:30 till end of first service.

**Apr 8-9** - service project with Lutheran Church from Jonestown in Washington DC **Apr 22,23 and 24** - retreat

**May 13-14** - Relay for life

**May 22** -last Youth Group meeting for summer.

We will have a few summer activities. More information will come later.

Here is one summer activity we are starting to look at. The kids thought of having a Carnival style picnic. We are thinking of doing this as a Church picnic with a chili cook off. Also to do this in conjunction with Bible School and invite all the children and parents that visit with us as well.

Guided by Christ  
Kerry, Kim, Angi and Eric