



# The Transformer

July 2016

717-866-4910

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

Dear Friends in Christ,

The week of our five year-old and two year-old grandsons fill home and lives with constant conversation and activity. Maybe little ones are the closest creation will ever come to perpetual motion. And it is a marvelous blessing having them visit for these seven days.

My letter to you this month addresses a decision we have to make.

## **Decision**

In June I spoke to the church council about my desire to change worship time(s) in order to provide an hour between the two services. Doing so will provide me the opportunity to connect with both congregants and guests. Currently, I can only greet folks at the door before getting robed and ready for the second worship. Such a change would also benefit other persons involved with the later worship.

How we make this decision is as important as the decision itself! At the council meeting we discussed the benefits and detriments to making a change. We also set four times when Friedens members can also engage in this dialogue. The council will then make their decision at the August council meeting.

Healthy decision making happens when we follow certain practices that include:

1. We respect each other's point of view
2. We listen to each other and grasp what a person is saying before expressing our own opinion.
3. We endeavor to discern how we best further God's work in our midst, and value this over what is most convenient for us.
4. We own our own opinion in public dialogue. This means I do not speak about "they" or "I heard."
5. We work together to understand what is best today. What was before may have interest, but has no bearing on how God's work fits into today's setting.
6. We use public dialogue to listen to one another and offer our own opinion. This means we avoid private opinion sessions to rally people to a particular point of view.
7. We honor the process and honor the decision.

What is before us are two questions. The first question is whether we will create an hour between the two worship services. If we say "yes," then we deal with question two that asks, "How will we create an hour between the two worship services.

Here are the four times the council set for us to dialogue with each other: July 17 at 6 pm; July 20 at 10 am; July 26 at 7 pm; and, July 31 at 6 pm. At each session we will use a process of small group table talk and large group reporting. This method of decision making provides every person the opportunity to listen, ask questions, and express their thoughts.

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Of course we also pray over the process and the decision. In particular, we ask God for three things: one – the ability to discern God’s preference; two – the ability to set aside what “I want”; and, three – the Holy Spirit’s guidance to lead both dialogue and decision.

Yes, how we make decisions, how we live together as the Body of Christ, is far more vital to our mission and ministry than the decisions we make. It is a blessing to serve as your pastor.

Together in Christ,

Pastor Robert

### **VBS**

The Friedens Vacation Bible School commences Sunday, July 10 and runs through Wednesday the 13<sup>th</sup>. Please pray for the staff, assistants, students and families engaged in this years program. I also invite all of you to join us for the last night celebration. If memory serves me correctly we gather in the sanctuary at 7:00 for celebration followed by snack and games. This evening provides all with a splendid opportunity to meet Friedens’ families and folks who live in the Myerstown area whose children attended VBS.

### **July 3**

On July 4th our nation celebrates the 240th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. What does it mean for us to live in a nation that extols “liberty and justice for all.” What are rights and what are responsibilities that go hand in hand? Finally, how do we live as dual citizens?

On July 3<sup>rd</sup> the Sunday message will consider these three questions with particular focus upon our dual citizenship. By birth or naturalization, we are citizens of the United States of America. By baptism, water and the Word, we are made citizens of the Kingdom of God. In what ways does one shape or influence the other and vice versa? How do we give expression by action and by voice to these loyalties, or, as a friend said so poignantly, “We have a right not to remain silent!”

I will craft the message to fit our worship service, and I will look forward to our follow-up conversations. Together we want to help each other discern the ways we have to live into our identity as people named and claimed as Kingdom citizens who are also citizens of the United States of America.



Thank you to Pastor Wallace for his caring visits while I was in the hospital. Thank you also to my church family and my children who sent cards, made phone calls and brought food for John and me. You have all blessed me with your caring, loving spirit and the love of Jesus was in each thought and deed. May God bless you all.

Love,  
Shirley Smith

Dear Friends,

Susan and I thank you for your presence at the worship service and luncheon yesterday to help us celebrate the 60th. anniversary of my ordination to the Gospel Ministry of the Church. We are grateful for the many cards—even got one from Shanghai, China—, gifts and good wishes. It was a joy to share in the worship service with our son, David, and Pastor Wallace. It was a very memorable day. Your kindness, love and hospitality was deeply felt by all of us. Thank you so much for your faithfulness, stewardship and service to the church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Blessings and peace,

Friends at Friedens,

Thank you for your prayers, concerns, flowers, visits, cards and telephone calls. Special thank you to Pastor Wallace and Sr. Janice. We also want to thank Janet Kehrli and Clara Grumbine for the beautiful prayer shawl they brought to me during my healing process. It was greatly appreciated.

Jim Wolfe

Thank you to Bruce Hehnly, Krall Excavating and John Rhodes, Jr. for the nice job they did on the handicap ramp.

Thank you from the Friedens Eight

The members of the 2016 Friedens Mission Team, Chris and Sharon Riegel, Jon and Jonny Koller, Marissa Kemmerling and Mark Garhart, Jim Kneasel, and Jan DuBois wish to thank the congregation for their support for the recent mission to Andrews, South Carolina (June 12-17).

Also, the **Dynamic Duo** of Jeff Gumpert and Kyanna Thomas participated in Habitat for Humanity during that same mission week (June 12-17) in Lebanon, PA.

Thank you to all who share their blessings with sweat, labor, and hours of commitment!



*He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8*

Greetings in the name of Christ,

I write to you today with heavy heart over the horrific tragedy that unfolded in the early hours of Sunday, June 12, when a gunman entered a crowded nightclub in Orlando, Florida, and shot 103 beloved children of our Creator God, killing 49 of us. It has been called the most deadly mass shooting in U.S. history.

Though the shooter's precise motives are unclear, police are investigating evidence that he targeted the Pulse nightclub because, while attracting a diverse clientele, it was particularly popular with members of Orlando's LGBTQ community. President Obama called it, "an act of terror, and an act of hate."

The shooting stands in stark contrast to the bold vote of our recent Assembly to become a Reconciling in Christ Synod, signaling that all are welcome, especially our sisters and brothers in the LGBTQ community. And last month the Synod Council adopted a similar Statement of Welcome.

As we all struggle to make sense of this, I commend to you Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's letter in response, in which she reminds us "We must speak peace and reconciliation into the cacophony of hatred and division. We must live the truth that all people are created in God's image.

Please take the time to read Bishop Eaton's words. Take the time to pray and lament. And above all, please take the time to find ways in which you can take action:

to love your neighbor,

to reach across dividing lines and listen to and get to know those whom you perceive to be different from you,

to contact your elected representatives and advocate for legislation that will help to reduce gun violence and affirm the rights of all people,

to do your part to end the evils of homophobia, racism, xenophobia, intolerance, and violence, and work diligently to make our congregations welcoming and safe space for all God's children.

I leave you with words of Martin Luther from his reflection on the Fifth Commandment (*Large Catechism*):

In the second place, this commandment is violated not only when we do evil, but also when we have the opportunity to do good to our neighbors and to prevent, protect, and save them from suffering bodily harm or injury but fail to do so. If you send a naked person away when you could clothe him, you have let him freeze to death. If you see anyone who is suffering from hunger and do not feed her, you have let her starve. Likewise, if you see anyone who is condemned to death or in similar peril and do not save her although you have means and ways to do so, you have killed her. It will be of no help for you to use the excuse that you did not assist their deaths by word or deed, for you have withheld your love from them and robbed them of the kindness by means of which their lives might have been saved.

Yours in Christ,




CHICAGO (ELCA) – The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), has issued a letter in response to the June 12 shooting that claimed the lives of 49 people at a nightclub in Orlando, Fla. This is the deadliest mass shooting in U. S. history. In the letter Eaton states, "We must speak peace and reconciliation into the cacophony of hatred and division. We must live the truth that all people are created in God's image."

**Eaton's letter follows:**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

"So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them." Genesis 1:27

We are killing ourselves. We believe that all people are created in God's image. All of humanity bears a family resemblance. Those murdered in Orlando were not abstract "others," they are us. But somehow, in the mind of a deeply disturbed gunman, the LGBTQ community was severed from our common humanity. This separation led to the death of 49 and the wounding of 54 of us.

We live in an increasingly divided and polarized society. Too often we sort ourselves into like-minded groups and sort others out. It is a short distance from division to demonization. Yesterday, we witnessed the tragic consequences of this.

There is another way. In Christ God has reconciled the world to God's self. Jesus lived among us sharing our humanity. Jesus died for us to restore our humanity. God invites us into this reconciling work. This must be our witness as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The perpetrator of this hate crime did not come out of nowhere. He was shaped by our culture of division, which itself has been misshapen by the manipulation of our fears. That is not who we are. St. Paul wrote, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new. All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ" (II Corinthians 5:17-20).

Our work begins now. We need to examine ourselves, individually and as a church, to acknowledge the ways we have divided and have been divided. We must stand with people who have been "othered". We must speak peace and reconciliation into the cacophony of hatred and division. We must live the truth that all people are created in God's image.

This morning your churchwide staff came together to mourn and to pray. We prayed for those killed in Orlando and remembered the Charleston Nine killed only a year ago. We prayed for the family of the shooter, for our LGBTQ brothers and sisters and for our Muslim brothers and sisters who now face the threat of retaliation. And we prayed that the Prince of Peace will bring us to the day when we stop killing ourselves.

Your sister in Christ,

Elizabeth A. Eaton

Presiding Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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## Food Collection

On Sunday, July 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



## Mission Reunion:

Thursday, August 4th, at 6:00 pm in Friedens pavilion.  
Hamburgers, hotdogs and drink provided.  
Veteran mission participants and families welcome.  
Members of Friedens who would like to hear more about missions are invited  
RSVP to 866-4910 by July 28, 2016.



"CAVEQUEST VBS is coming Sunday, July 10 - Wednesday, July 13, 6-8:00 pm! Registration is now OPEN!

Go to (tool bar, not Google) [www.groupvbspro.com/vbs/ez/FriedensMyerstown](http://www.groupvbspro.com/vbs/ez/FriedensMyerstown)

or call the church office to register. Ages 3 (potty trained) thru 6th grade are welcome! We are in need of adult and teen volunteers, so please see Kelly Stephenson or Holly Heft if you are willing to donate your time and energy!"

## SHUT-IN BIRTHDAYS

July 8  
Mrs. Irma Kuchinsky  
31L StoneRidge Poplar Run  
Myerstown, PA 17067

## OUR TITHES & OFFERINGS

May 2016

					% of Budget
Current Budget	Goal	\$30,450.00	Goal to Date	\$152,250.00	83%
\$365,409.00	Rec'd	\$28,467.00	Rec'd to Date	126,277.00	
Spang Crest	Rec'd	56.00	Rec'd to date	257.00	
Hunger	Rec'd	215.00	Rec'd to Date	1,190.00	

# JULY 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
<b>3</b> 9 AM— Contemporary Service 10:30 am— Traditional Service	<b>4</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>  Independence Day	<b>5</b> 7 PM—Worship Committee	<b>6</b> 5:30 PM—Youth Cookout at Pastor's home 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> 9 AM— Contemporary Service 10:30 am— Traditional Service VBS 6-8 PM	<b>11</b> VBS 6-8 PM	<b>12</b> VBS 6-8 PM 7 PM—Property Committee	<b>13</b> 9 AM—Women Sew VBS 6-8 PM 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 9 AM— Contemporary Service 10:30 am— Traditional Service	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band	<b>21</b> 7 PM—Church Council	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 9 AM— Contemporary Service 10:30 am— Traditional Service	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 9 AM—Women Sew 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 9 AM— Contemporary Service 10:30 am— Traditional Service						

**Friedens Lutheran Church, Myerstown, PA**  
**Church Council Meeting**  
**June 9, 2016**

Chris Heft, President, called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

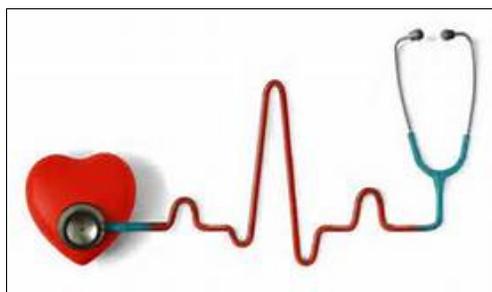
**Present:** Janice DuBois, Chris Heft (President), Jim Kneasel, Jon Koller, Elaine Lasch (Treasurer), Sharon Riegel (Secretary), Scott Stephenson (Vice President), Rev. Robert W. Wallace, Jr. (Pastor)

**Excused:** Valarie Herron, Tom Morrissey, John Umberger

1. Scott Stephenson opened the meeting with a liturgy.
2. Council received the book study “Pursuing God’s Will Together – A Discernment Practice For Leadership Groups” at the April 21, 2016 meeting. A discussion was held on the spiritual practice of solitude and silence and reflections on Psalm 131 & Luke 1: 46-55. For next month Council will read Chapter 3.
3. **Jon Koller made a motion to accept the May 19, 2016, Church Council Minutes. Scott Stephenson seconded. Motion carried.**
4. A discussion was held on youth ministry.
5. **Council Retreat** at the home of Pastor & Cheri Wallace is scheduled for **Monday, August 29, 2016 from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm.** Retreat will focus on the book study & the practice of contemplation & discernment.
6. **“One Year Review”** is scheduled for **Thursday, August 25, 2016 at 6 pm.** Participants will include Pastor, Council, Call Committee and a representative of Synod.
7. On **Sunday, September 11, 2016, Bishop James Dunlap** will preach at Friedens. A meet & greet for congregants will be held between services. A meal & dialogue with church council will begin at Noon.
8. A discussion was held on the gathering between the services.
9. A discussion was held on worship start times.
10. **Pastor Wallace made a motion for Council to plan a service project this year with American House in Lebanon. Jon Koller seconded. Motion carried.**
11. Thank you received from Lutheran World Relief for gift of \$50 given through the Lower Susquehanna Synod, ELCA.
12. **Janice Dubois made a motion to accept a resolution for Pastor Jack Lose upon his 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination. Jon Koller seconded. Motion carried.**

13. Pastor Wallace gave a verbal & written Pastor's Report. **Jim Kneasel made a motion to accept the June 2016 Pastor's Report. Scott Stephenson seconded. Motion carried.**
14. Jim Kneasel shared highlights of the Property Committee.
15. **Janice DuBois made a motion to accept the May 2016 Financial Secretary's Report. Jim Kneasel seconded. Motion carried.**
16. **Jon Koller made a motion to accept the May 2016 Treasurer's Report. Scott Stephenson seconded. Motion carried.**
17. Elaine Lasch reported the Finance Committee did not meet in June 2016.
18. **Next Council Meeting will be held on Thursday, July 21, 2016 at 7 pm.**
19. **Chris Heft made the motion to adjourn. Jon Koller seconded.** Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. Meeting closed with the sharing of joys & concerns and prayer led by Scott Stephenson.

Sharon Riegel  
Council Secretary



**LIFE LINE SCREENING** preventative checkups will again be held at Friedens on Tuesday, July 19, 2016. Two (2) courtesy checkup certificates have been provided in appreciation for Friedens' participation. Any Friedens' member interested in such a health screening can contact the church office for a certificate (first-come, first-serve) 866-4910. For more information see

[lifelinescreening.com](http://lifelinescreening.com)



Fly the  
FLAG