



The Transformer

August 2016

717-866-4910

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

Dear Friends in Christ,

Over recent weeks, I have enjoyed several days set aside for play. Now you might assume that since a pool sits alongside our house playtime means enjoying splashing about the water on hot summer afternoons. That is Cheri's delight. For me playing involves excavating rocks, which in Mt. Gretna means landscape gardening. The plot recently finished is lined with rocks unearthed as I worked to change dirt into garden soil.

TEACHABLE MOMENT

Last month, I wrote about evaluating the start times for our two worship services. The council set four occasions when congregants could engage for dialogue and discernment around this question. As of this writing three sessions have taken place with twenty-five persons participating. The final session is Sunday evening, July 31.

The question regarding worship start times is a missional question, albeit not a critical one. What is most important about this question is how we address it. This is a "teachable moment." How we handle this question can help us learn how to hold dialogue in such a way that builds relationships, and how to discern God's will together.

As your pastor, I believe strongly in the significance of choice and in the dignity of our gathering together in the decision making process. This August pastoral letter is not to influence your sentiments regarding whether or not changes get made. In fact, I do not currently have a preference either way. My desire is for us to arrive at our best understanding of God's preferred future! Hence, I write to encourage you to remain close to God as we delve into this question and into all future matters.

CHAPTER THREE

When our congregation council gathers each month, our meeting begins with worship and study. We are reading a book entitled *Pursuing God's Will Together* by Ruth Haley Barton. In July we read and discussed chapter three that addressed the dynamic of discernment. The author offered this simple definition: **discernment** is a quality of attentiveness to God that, over time, develops into the ability to sense God's heart and purpose in any given moment.

Hence, with any question we encounter, individually or in community, we first ask, "Where is God unfolding 'his' work of love and redemption?" Then, after a suitable time to observe, gather information, reflect, and pray, we become aware of what God is doing in, through, and around us. Our next question asks, "*How is God calling us to participate in what God is doing?*"

Yes, we practice transparency by identifying and sharing personal thoughts and feelings. Then, after doing so, we surrender them in order to join together in pursuit of God's will.

You see, the Church is where Christ is the "head." It is founded upon the cross and open tomb for the purpose of being the heart and hands for God's mission in the world. The church does not exist to meet my perceived needs, rather, through the church, I am formed as a disciple of Jesus and we are formed as a mission community. In various ways we carry the reality of God's love, forgiveness, and redemption to the greater community around us.

THREE PRAYERS

That is why, when followers of Jesus face any question, they give voice to three prayers.

First, is the prayer seeking God's will to prevail in our decision making. While this may seem obvious, do we not often fail to do so?

Scripture tells us that when we attend to our calling as followers of Jesus, the Spirit will show us the next step to take. While we may not have the dramatic experience like Moses following the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, we do have this promise:

So, humble yourselves under God's strong hand, and in his own good time he will lift you up. You can throw the whole weight of your anxieties upon the Lord, for you are his personal concern (1 Peter 5:6-7, Phillips).

Second is the prayer for indifference. Indifference is a positive term signifying that "I am indifferent to anything but God's will." After expressing my point of view, I surrender it to the process and listen. The prayer for indifference inevitably causes me to address this question, "Is there anything I need to set aside so that I can be open to what God wants?"

Third is the prayer for wisdom. Scripture instructs:

If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you (James 1:5, NRSV).

Our dialogue sessions have surfaced valuable insights. Good reasons to support the change and good reasons to refrain from making the change have been raised. Also, related questions have surfaced. God's wisdom will help us process what we learned

GOING FORWARD

Again I emphasize that my desire is for us to learn how to pursue God's will together.

So, let us engage in practices of healthy dialogue and spiritual discernment. Here is a hand full of suggestions as we travel together along this path:

Make the three prayers your own

Make time to participate in dialogue sessions

Make it your practice to speak openly and listen intently (rather than gathering with the like minded to complain?)

Express your own point of view, respect what other persons express, and join together seeking the way God would lead us

Engage in behaviors that "speak truth in love" and "build the Body of Christ" and refrain from behaviors that do not

I do not foresee our being able to discern an answer to this question prior to the end of this year. The council is committed to learning and putting into practice the spiritual discipline of discernment.

Until we arrive at our best understanding of God's preferred way, our worship start times remain the same. The exceptions are those Sundays when we have the "ONE" worship service (August 21) and when Bishop Dunlap preaches on September 11. The Bishop requested we hold an adult forum that day that would give him an opportunity to interact with congregants. To honor his request, we will alter the worship start times for both services by fifteen minutes to create an hour-long adult forum.

Thank you for reading this lengthy letter and for considering the ways we will walk together as followers of Jesus who are gathered as Friedens Lutheran Church.

Peace and Joy,

Pastor Robert.





Food Collection

On Sunday, August 7, 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

SHUT-IN BIRTHDAYS

August 9
Mrs. Millard Hamilton
170 StoneRidge Poplar Run
Myerstown, PA 17067

August 10
Mrs. Martha Klein
StoneRidge Poplar Run
450 E. Lincoln Ave.
Myerstown, PA 17067



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.

TREASURER

A PLEA FROM THE TREASURER –
Please forward to the folder in the church office for the treasurer all invoices for purchases you made for the church. I'm getting statements for charges made but I do not get the original invoice. I need that invoice. It is very inconvenient tracking down the purchases.



OUR TITHES & OFFERINGS

June 2016

					% of Budget
Current Budget	Goal	\$30,450.00	Goal to Date	\$182,204.00	81%
\$365,409.00	Rec'd	\$20,195.71	Rec'd to Date	148,273.00	
Spang Crest	Rec'd	49.00	Rec'd to date	306.00	
Hunger	Rec'd	235.00	Rec'd to Date	1,425.00	

AUGUST 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 7 PM—Worship Committee	2 5:30 pm—Swim Party for 4th & 5th grade youth at Wallace house	3 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band	4 6:00 PM—Mission Reunion—Pavilion	5	6
7 9 AM—Contemporary Service 10:30 AM - Traditional Service	8	9 7 PM—Property Committee	10 9 AM—Women Sew 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band	11	12	13
14 9 AM—Contemporary Service 10:30 AM - Traditional Service	15 	16	17 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band	18	19	20 7 PM - Congregational Council Cottage Meeting
21 ONE WORSHIP SERVICE Picnic	22 7 PM—Visitation Team	23	24 9 AM—Women Sew 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band	25 6 PM—Council & Call Committee Committee	26	27
28 9 AM—Contemporary Service 10:30 AM - Traditional Service	29 5:30 pm—Council Retreat at home of Robert & Cheri	30	31 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band			



Friedens will be supplying check-in personnel and overnight monitors for the homeless shelter from Monday, September 26, 2016, through Sunday, October 9, 2016. We will again be hosting the shelter at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church on Lehman St. in Lebanon City. Two check-in persons are needed each night from 8:30 P.M. until 10:00 P.M. and two sleepover persons are needed each night from 10:00 P.M. until 7:00 A.M.

The requirements for the check-in person are as follows: You need to be able to check a box on a piece of paper. You need to be able to smile and talk to someone who could probably use some encouragement. You need to be willing to meet about 30 new friends, some of whom will give you more than you could ever give to them.

The requirements for the sleepover persons are as follows: You must be able to turn off lights at 10:00 P.M. You must be able to sleep on a sofa or a comfortable recliner. You must be able to turn on lights at 6:30 A.M.

The guests who attend the shelter are not violent. They are not aliens from another planet. They are people from our county who are desperately looking for a safe place to sleep for themselves and often for their young children.

At our recent hosting of the emergency shelter at Friedens, about half of the guests were children under the age of 5. One of the adult guests, a 62 year old lady, delivers papers during the day, walking about 5 miles throughout the city, all on a bad knee.

If you want to welcome the weary to a safe shelter and live the gospel, please sign up on the sheet posted in the narthex or contact Jim Biever at 717-821-0130 or jbiever5543@comcast.net.



The church council and Pr. Wallace would like to hold a church picnic on Sunday, August 21 following "ONE" Worship service.

For this to happen we need the following: Overall coordinator and two associates; Mean Manager and associates; Grill Master and associates; Play Organizer; Clean-Up Wrangler and associates. Sign-up Sheet is posted on the hallway bulletin board. If some of us can carry the work load, all of us can enjoy a great day together.

Date Saver:

Labor Day 2016, September 5th, will truly live up to its name in Myerstown, PA. This day has been chosen as a Myerstown Cleanup Day by the **Go Beyond Project** of Harvest Bible Chapel (formerly Myerstown Elementary building). If you took part in the shoe and aluminum can collection(s) in May 2016 you are somewhat familiar with the **Go Beyond Project** which strives for community mission beyond our church walls.

Consider helping in the **Go Beyond Myerstown Cleanup**. Details will follow in the near future.

**Friedens Lutheran Church, Myerstown, PA
Church Council Meeting
July 16, 2016**

Janice DuBois called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

Present: Janice DuBois, Chris Heft, Valarie Herron, Jon Koller, Elaine Lasch (Treasurer), Sharon Riegel (Secretary), John Umberger, Rev. Robert W. Wallace, Jr. (Pastor)

Excused: Jody Appleby (President), Frank Armstrong (Vice President), Jim Kneasel, Bev Levengood

1. Opening Reading/Prayer: Janice DuBois & Pastor Wallace opened the meeting with devotions and prayer.

2. Minutes/Reports/Communications:

a. **Jon Koller made a motion to accept the June 25, 2015 Church Council Minutes. Valarie Herron seconded. Motion carried.**

b. **Chris Heft made a motion to accept the June 2015 Financial Secretary's Report. Jon Koller seconded. Motion carried.**

c. **Valarie Herron made a motion to accept the June 2015 Treasurer's Report. Jon Koller seconded. Motion carried.**

d. Pastor Wallace gave a verbal & written Pastor's Report.

e. Thank you letter from Peninsula-Delaware Conference of the United Methodist Church Hurricane Sandy Recovery for recent monetary gift & the work of the Mission Team who traveled to Crisfield, Maryland in June.

3. Finance Committee did not meet in June 2015.

4. Property Committee held a meeting in July 2015. Playground ground covering is currently a big issue. Pastor Wallace has a contact that has much knowledge in this area.

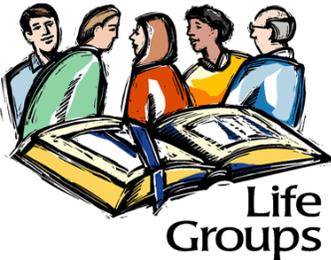
5. A Capital Campaign Report was available. As of June 2015 the Campaign Goal of \$149,000 is short \$4,751.21.

6. Jon Koller made the motion to schedule a Blended Installation Worship Service for Pastor Wallace on Sunday, September 20, 2015 at 10:30 am with breakfast served at 9:00 am. Janice DuBois seconded. Motion Carried. Pastor Wallace will coordinate the Blended Installation Worship Service with Worship & Music Committee. Jon Koller will coordinate a group to plan the breakfast event.



7. Council agreed to restart Fellowship Time, which is held between services, on September 13, 2015. On September 20, 2015 the breakfast event will be held in place of Fellowship Time.
8. Council received a request from Lutheran Camping Corporation to have a rep make a presentation at a future Council Meeting. After discussion Council decided to decline a visit at this time.
9. **Pastor Wallace made the motion to have the congregational council call the congregation to prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to open our hearts, minds & imaginations to discern God's preferred future for Friedens Lutheran Church. Chris Heft seconded. Motion carried.**
10. **Pastor Wallace made the motion to have the congregational council sponsor ten cottage meetings for the purpose of shaping a Friedens Lutheran Narrative from the collected stories. Janice DuBois seconded. Motion carried.**
11. **Pastor Wallace made the motion to have the congregational council identify and appoint persons to work together as a data collection team to locate, record and report the relevant data for assessing "where we have traveled, and where we are now." Janice DuBois seconded. Motion carried.**
12. **Pastor Wallace made the motion to have congregational council identify three to five persons to work with the Pastor to fashion the preliminary Friedens narrative & the set of appreciative inquiry questions from the collected stories & data. The steering committee would make its report to the congregational council at the November 19 meeting. Janice DuBois seconded. Motion carried.**
13. Annual Lutheran World Relief In Gathering Sunday will be held on Sunday, September 13, 2015. This is also ELCA's "God's Work, Our Hands" Sunday.
14. **Next Council Meeting will be held on August 20, 2015 at 7 pm. The Congregational Council Cottage Meeting will be held at this time.**
15. **Jon Koller made the motion to adjourn. Valarie Herron seconded.** Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m. Meeting closed with the sharing of joys & concerns and prayer led by Janice DuBois.

Sharon Riegel
Council Secretary



We will begin a fall Life Group starting the week of September 11th. We will meet Thursday nights at 6:45 pm in Stauffer Hall. Meetings will conclude at 8:45 pm. We will use the book 'The Good and Beautiful Life' as the basis for our discussions. Sign up sheets will be posted in Stauffer Hall beginning the week of August 21st. Book distribution will be September 10th. Please connect with John Flesher with any questions (jpeflesher@comcast.net, home phone: 866-8807).

FAITH FORMATION: “Basics in Luther and

Lutheranism” – With the approach of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, Lutherans and many others want to know what the big deal was – and is! – about Martin Luther’s understanding of the gospel and its application to everyday life. This course will provide an overview of Martin Luther’s (and Lutheranism’s) basic teachings, including Justification by Faith Alone; Distinguishing Law and Gospel; the Theology of the Cross; The Word and Sacraments; the Event Called Church; and Christian vocations in the World.

World renowned Lutheran teacher and writer, Dr. Timothy Wengert, will teach the course live at Philadelphia Seminary and broadcast at Friedens in the parlor meeting room on Tuesdays, September 6, 13, 20, & 27 at 7 pm. Cost is \$10.00 for the course and you can register with the church office or with Pastor Robert.

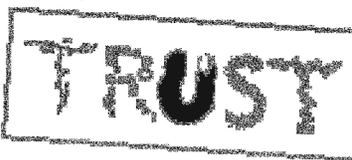


Thanks for the prayers, cards and
Visits while I was in the hospital.
Thanks again.
God bless everyone.
Love,
Arabelle Yarnall

CHILDREN’S CHURCH is participating in Lutheran World Relief by sewing school back packs. We will fill these back packs with school supplies and encourage all to participate. Starting Sunday August 7th we will be collecting school supplies. Look for posters and containers for your donations. Thanks in advance for your support.

TRUST POSTER

No matter what your face, God is with you. Make this poster as a reminder to always trust God.



What you need:

- Cardstock
- Glue
- Twigs (a 3" piece and a 2" piece)
- Pebbles
- Black paint
- Paintbrush
- Sand or glitter
- Broken crayons (2 or 3)

What you do:

1. On the left side of the cardstock, trace a 3"-high letter T with glue. Place twigs on the glue lines.
2. Trace an R of the same size. Place pebbles on that glue.
3. Use black paint to make a U.
4. Trace an S in glue. Pour sand (or glitter) on top.
5. Make another T with glue. Place the crayons on top.
6. After the poster dries, shake off the excess sand (or glitter) into a trash can.