



The Transformer

October 2016

717-866-4910

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

Dear Friends in Christ

We live at a time in America when long-standing sayings about religious sensibilities have come of age – that is, the adherents of these sayings are increasing, while the number of persons whose faith declaration is in keeping with Christian congregations, mainline or emerging, decreases.

Three of the sayings most commonly espoused are:

It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you're a good person.

All religions lead you to the same God.

I am not a religious person, but I am spiritual

You've probably heard one or more of these maxims; you may even agree with them. While each one deserves further dialogue, on just the face of the statement count me as a person who disagrees with each one.

From my observation of American culture, several factors contributed to their rise in popularity:

First, is the influence of a consumer culture and churches confusing marketing with witness.

In one form or another – billboard, TV, or social media – the average American gets exposed to 5,000 ad messages every day. Our children and youth are on the high end. That is an increase of 150% over the past thirty years. Wanting to catch the wave of attention grabbing, many churches have placed most of their “member recruitment” eggs in the advertising basket and called this evangelism. The result is perceived, if not actual, competition among different congregations for the person considering church membership. And those persons are decreasing in number. Congregational marketing has also given an imprimatur to “church shopping,” thus making ministry to the church consumer the primary driver for congregations rather than pursuing God's mission.

Second, is the influence of individualism.

Commitment to a community that holds to values and ideals greater than a person's immediate desires is on the wane. The reasons for this are many, but, as shown by social philosopher Robert Bellah and his research team, most Americans function with what they describe as “benign self-interest.” This means they connect to causes or espouse loyalty (like patriotism) only when it feeds their own desires and wants. Yes, most Americans do respond with a measure of generosity in the face of tragedy and great need. However, few of us are formed with the enduring qualities of merciful compassion, willing sacrifice, or extravagant generosity.

Third, is the influence of institutional dishonesty and this includes the Church.

The Gallup organization and other groups who gather information on American sentiments record creating mistrust for institutions – whether business, government, church, media, education, medical – and we mistrust the laws that govern our civic engagements. Again the reasons for this are many, frequently debated, and occupy pages of careful analysis in magazines and books. Irrespective of the causes, few of us find sufficient reason to extend trust. And this includes our friendships, colleagues, supervisors, pastors, service providers and more.

With mistrust, individualism, and consumerism comes aloneness. People yearn to find purpose and have meaning. We want and need to latch onto someone or something bigger than mistrust for institutions – whether business, government, church, media, education, medical – and we mistrust the laws that govern our civic engagements. Again the reasons for this are many, frequently debated, and occupy pages of careful analysis in magazines and books. Irrespective of the causes, few of us find sufficient reason to extend trust. And this includes our friendships, colleagues, supervisors, pastors, service providers and more.

With mistrust, individualism, and consumerism comes aloneness. People yearn to find purpose and have meaning. We want and need to latch onto someone or something bigger than ourselves. Some will taste a variety of religious expressions until they find one to their liking; others, as with most twenty to thirty year-olds will eschew organized religion and seek other kinds of spiritual feeding.

Now, I recognize this letter presents a “heavy load”; it asks you to engage in earnest thinking. I present this perspective to you because I want to expose the social milieu of our times and have you appreciate the kind of influence that weighs upon each of us.

With the Sunday message this fall, continuing through “Christ the King” Sunday, November 20, I will engage you in a sermon series called *Christian Basics – Practice & Belief*. I intend to present the essence of Christian teaching and its implication for our everyday lives – individually and communally.

It does matter what you believe, because belief is much more than mental accord. Yes, belief does engage the mind; it involves reason and careful thought. Belief also engages the heart - our emotions and our capacity to give ourselves to that which is true.

Hence Christian teaching puts forth belief and practice as the two dimensions of the same reality – if I believe, I behave in certain ways; likewise behaving in certain ways affects what I believe.

I hope the messages offered during the coming weeks will cause you to examine what you believe and how you live; and maybe prompt you to contemplate further steps the Holy Spirit would have you take as a person who is already beloved by God.

OCTOBER

In October I am attending two events and we are hosting one event related to our life together in mission and ministry.

On Saturday, October 15, from nine to noon, Friedens hosts an introduction to “Flourish.” Congregations from our Synod are invited to attend and receive a “taste” of what this process for congregational revitalization and missional focus involves. You are invited to come and be part of the dialogue as we discern how God is welcoming us into the good work going on in Eastern Lebanon County.

The week prior I will attend the Region 8 (the mid-Atlantic Synods) Missions Conference. This event will look at ways our Lutheran congregations are engaged in mission and ministry and how we might link together in doing God’s good work.

Then, during the third week in October, I will travel to Minneapolis to attend a “Reimagining Faith Formation” conference led by John Roberto and “Lifelong Faith Formation.” This conference will teach how congregation and families work together to to engage persons in a day to day experience of being formed as devoted followers of Jesus.

Be blessed this month as you observe the surrounding landscape awash with the colors of fall.

A brother in Christ,
Pastor Robert



Food Collection

On Sunday, October 2, food will be collected for the Lebanon County Food Bank. All gifts are welcomed. There is a need for frozen hams, canned meats and stews, canned fruit, canned vegetables, canned soups, peanut butter, towels/wash cloths, paper towels, baby wipes, and diapers



If you are interested in ordering a poinsettia to place in the church for Christmas, now is the time to do so. To order, please use the envelopes provided on the narthex bulletin

board and place it in the offering plate or bring it to the church office. The cost is \$6.50 each. You have a choice of red, white, pink or marble. The last day to order is **NOVEMBER 27**.

Go Beyond Golf for Good

Monday, October 17, 2016
 11:00 AM • Lunch & Warm-Up
 1:00 PM • Shotgun Start
 6:00 PM • Dinner

Conestoga Country Club
1950 Stone Mill Road, Lancaster, PA 17603

\$110 / person

Includes BBQ lunch, cart, greens fees, golf shirt, gift bag, and prime rib dinner.

Prizes for hole in one, longest drive, closest to the pin, longest putt, and 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place.

Go Beyond is a church-lead initiative to encourage, organize, and mobilize people to better our community through acts of service. Over the last few years, Go Beyond has worked alongside hundreds of churches, businesses, schools, organizations, and 10,000+ people to pack meals for the hungry and to serve the homeless, addicted, poor, and challenged in our communities and beyond.

Your participation in this event helps unite people to do good together and will offer hope and help to those who need it most.



OUR TITHES & OFFERINGS

August 2016

					% of Budget
Current Budget	Goal	\$30,450.00	Goal to Date	\$243,600.00	79%
\$365,409.00	Rec'd	\$21,746.00	Rec'd to Date	193,306.00	
Spang Crest	Rec'd	24.00	Rec'd to date	385.00	
Hunger	Rec'd	250.00	Rec'd to Date	1,065.00	

OCTOBER 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 9 AM— Contemporary Service 10:45 AM— Traditional Service	3	4 7 PM—Worship Committee	5 9:45 AM—Pastor’s Pericope Study 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band	6 6:45 PM—Life Group 7 pm—Chancel Choir Rehearsal— Choir Room	7	8
9 9 AM— Contemporary Service 10:45 AM— Traditional Service	10 Columbus Day 	11 7 PM—Property Committee	12 9 AM—Women Sew 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band	13 6:45 PM— Life Group 7 pm—Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7 PM—Church Council	14  DEADLINE: Newsletter Articles	15
16 9 AM— Contemporary Service 10:45 AM— Traditional Service	17 7 PM—Women of ELCA	18	19 9:45 AM—Pastor’s Pericope Study 6:45 PM—Praise &	20 6:45 PM—Life Group 7 pm—Chancel Choir Rehearsal	21 9 pm—Open Youth Room	22
23 9 AM— Contemporary Service 10:45 AM— Traditional Service	24	25	26 9 AM—Women Sew 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band	27 6:45 PM—Life Group 7 pm—Chancel Choir Rehearsal— Choir Room	28	29
30 9 AM— Contemporary Service 10:45 AM— Traditional Service	31					

Congregational Council invites you to join in their Service Project and experience the true joy in serving others

What:

We will deliver wish list items, sing Christmas carols, serve treats & drinks and enjoy fellowship with the residents of American House in Lebanon, PA

When:

SUNDAY DECEMBER 4, 2016

Leave Friedens at 1:00 pm, arrive at 1:30 pm at American House in Lebanon

How:

How can you help? Its easy!

- Join us on Sunday, December 4 at the American House in Lebanon
- Donate any items from the Wish List (place unwrapped items in box in Stauffer Hall)

Wish List:

- Adult Coloring Books, Colored Pencils
- Lanyards
- Male Body Wash, Female Body Wash
- Light Perfume for females
- Hand cream for females
- Warm Sox for males
- Bootie Sox for females (slipper type sox)
- Watches – male or female
- Puzzle Books (word searches, word fill ins, cross word)
- Jigsaw Puzzles
- Underwear for males (size 32 to 5X)
- Underwear for females (size 7 to 13)
- Umbrellas

Where are we going:

American House Personal Care Home
25 S. 9th Street
Lebanon PA 17042
717-272-6678, Contact Persons: Kelly / Cindy / Melissa
Parking: large lot on corner beside Farmers Market

Who are we serving:

73 residents
52 males (ages: 25 to 78)
21 females (ages: 40's to 50's)

Questions? Connect with:

Janice DuBois, Chris Heft, Valarie Herron, Jim Kneasel, Jon Koller, Elaine Lasch, Tom Morrissey, Sharon Riegel, Scott Stephenson, John Umberger, Rev. Robert W. Wallace, Jr.



Friedens Lutheran Church, Myerstown, PA
Special Church Council Meeting
One Year Review
 Location: Country Fare Restaurant, Myerstown, PA
August 25, 2016

Chris Heft, President, called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm.

Church Council Present:

Janice DuBois, Chris Heft (President), Valarie Herron, Jim Kneasel, Sharon Riegel (Secretary), Scott Stephenson (Vice President), John Umberger and Rev. Robert W. Wallace, Jr.

Excused: Jon Koller, Elaine Lasch (Treasurer), Tom Morrissey

Pastoral Search Team (Call Committee) Present:

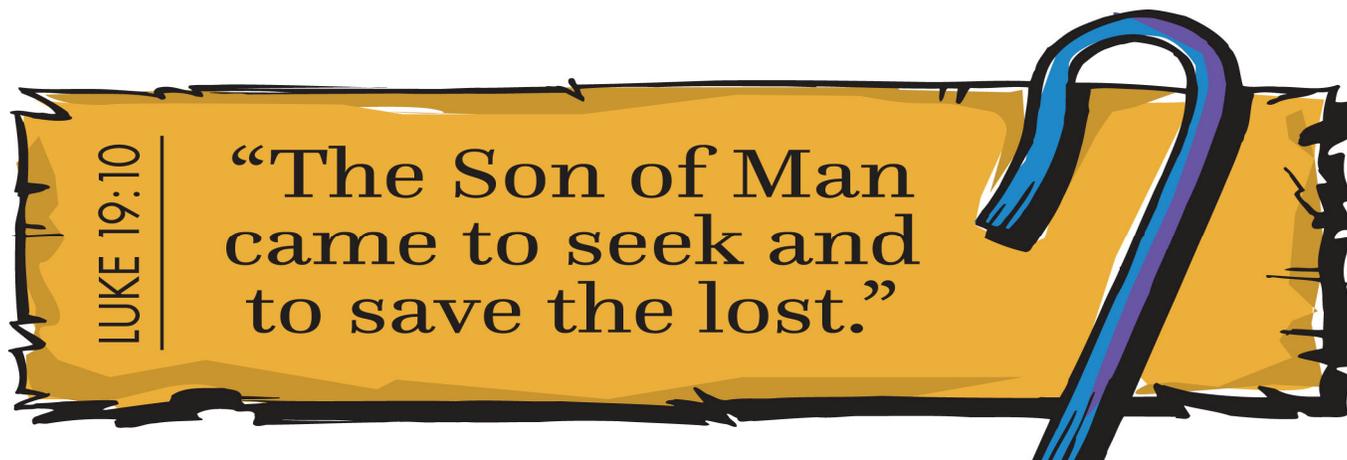
Tad Achenbach, John Flesher, Chris Heft, Sister Janice Ruch, John R. Smith

Excused: McKenna Achenbach

Special Guest Facilitator: Rev. Gretchen Ierian, Pastor at Trinity Lutheran, Lebanon

1. Chris Heft, Council President & Chairman, Pastoral Search Team, welcomed and thanked everyone for attending and opened the meeting with a prayer.
2. Rev. Gretchen Ierian facilitated a structured dialogue including a series of ten questions.
3. Rev. Gretchen Ierian led the group in closing worship.
4. Scott Stephenson made the motion to adjourn. Janice DuBois seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. Meeting closed with prayer by Rev. Wallace.

Sharon Riegel
Council Secretary



Friedens Lutheran Church, Myerstown, PA
Church Council Meeting
September 15, 2016

Chris Heft, President, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Present:

Chris Heft (President), Elaine Lasch (Treasurer), Tom Morrissey, Sharon Riegel (Secretary), Scott Stephenson (Vice President), John Umberger, Rev. Robert W. Wallace, Jr. (Pastor)

Excused: Janice DuBois, Valarie Herron, Jim Kneasel, Jon Koller

1. Tom Morrissey 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 Chapter 4. For next month Council will read Chapter 5.
 3. **Tom Morrissey made a motion to accept the July 21, 2016, Church Council Minutes. Scott Stephenson seconded. Motion carried**
 4. A discussion was held on youth ministry.
 5. The hiring of Gloria Tice as Choral Director made it necessary to set the worship start time for the traditional service at 10:45. Start time for contemporary service will remain at 9:00.
 6. Three areas of vision focus for 2016-2017 were discussed
 - Vision One – Family and Youth Ministry
 - Vision Two – Missional Revitalization Process
 - Vision Three – Administrative Infrastructure
 7. Constitution / Policies and Procedures will be reviewed and action taken at October meeting.
 8. The next **Council Spiritual Enrichment Retreat** is scheduled for **Monday, March 6, 2017 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm** at the church.
 9. **Council Social Time** is scheduled for **Friday, December 2, 2016 at 6 pm** at the home of Pastor and Cheri Wallace.
 10. Sharon Riegel provided an update on the **Council Service Project with American House in Lebanon**. Date of visit/service project is **Sunday, December 4, 2016 at 1:30 pm**. Youth will participate. Project is also open to the congregation.
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11. **Flourish Taster Event** involving other congregations in the Lower Susquehanna Synod takes place at Friedens on **Saturday, October 15, 2016 from 9 am to 12 Noon.**
12. **Missions Mission Moment** is scheduled for both services for **Sunday, October 2, 2016.** The blessing of the quilts will also take place this Sunday.
13. Time commitment with other ministries made it not feasible to launch the “Oasis of Grace” ministry, Christ-centered dialogue sessions on pressing issues of our time. Pastor will once more consider this beginning in the fall of 2017.
14. Pastor Wallace is seeking writing helpers for the church website.
15. Thank you received from Lutheran World Relief for gift of \$25.
16. Janice DuBois provided a written update from her recent visit with Stephen Deal, our sponsored missionary in El Salvador.
17. Pastor Wallace gave a verbal & written Pastor’s Report. **Tom Morrissey made a motion to accept the September 2016 Pastor’s Report. Sharon Riegel seconded. Motion carried.**
18. Tom Morrissey reported Property Committee did not meet in July 2016 or August 2016.
19. **Scott Stephenson made a motion to accept the July 2016 and August 2016 Financial Secretary’s Report. Tom Morrissey seconded. Motion carried.**
20. **Tom Morrissey made a motion to accept the July 2016 and August 2016 Treasurer’s Report. John Umberger seconded. Motion carried.**
21. Elaine Lasch reported the Finance Committee did not meet in July 2016 or August 2016.
22. **Next Council Meeting will be held on Thursday, October 13, 2016 at 7 pm (note this is the second Thursday). Chris Heft will coordinate our worship leader coverage.**
23. **Tom Morrissey made the motion to adjourn. John Umberger seconded.** Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Meeting closed with the sharing of joys & concerns and prayer led by Tom Morrissey.

Sharon Riegel
Council Secretary

