



The Transformer

January 2017

717-866-4910

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

Dear Friends in Christ,

I write to you this month, while taking a break from playtime with two exuberant grandsons. Later this morning we will take a walk.

As Friedens enters 2017, there are many reasons for us to give thanks - our Advent pilgrimage and Christmas worship services, the reputation we have in the community as a caring place, the commitment shown by so many of you who make all the gears of our ministry synchronize.

It is also well for us to attend to the key questions every congregation must routinely ask: How is God at work in our community? How is God calling us to get involved?

The answer to these questions emerge out of spiritual practice called discernment. Discernment is a process through which Christians listen, observe and sense God's preferred and promised future. Discernment is an intentional activity by which Christians welcome the presence of God and follow the leading of God. God wants followers of Jesus to live the kind of lives, and engage in the kind of good work, that conveys divine love, justice, healing, and restoration. This includes the work of helping each other mature as followers of Jesus. It also includes those works of ministry that fit who we are and where we are.

And we must note, just because something happens does not mean it is God's will. That is called "Kismet." It is the belief that events happen beyond a person's control because they are determined by the fates.

Christians believe God has a preferred and promised future into which God calls the Church to participate. We believe God will bring human history to fulfillment according to God's divine plan. BUT God does not move you and me upon a game board called life, as if we are mere pawns.

We have choices, including whether we will seek the presence of God.

God became physically present in the world through Jesus. Today God is present through the Risen Christ, drawing persons into a personal relationship and endowing the baptized with particular skills and passion to accomplish what God wants to happen.

From comments and reflections culled over the past year, I believe 2017 is a year we are to commit to ourselves to "practicing the presence of God."

Pastor, teacher, and writer David Fitch observes:

“For a while now in North America we’ve been missing something. Most of us haven’t even noticed. We’ve been rushing back and forth to work, to meetings, to malls, to kids’ sports programs. We’ve been striving to do our jobs, have a respectable career, and pay our bills. All the while we’ve missed that God is present all around us and is at work; all we have to do is take notice... The notion that we can be present to God, and he to us, is not on the horizon of our awareness. We do not imagine that God is present outside of me or between me and the other person.”

Fitch goes on to say:

“Nothing, absolutely nothing, is as life transforming ... than actually being present with each other and to God. When we sit face to face, listening and tending to what’s going on in the other person, and when we do the same together with God, amazing transformation and goodness begins.”

Over the coming months we will address the teaching and observe the spiritual disciplines that help us practice the presence of God. This will happen through sermons, teaching, Life Group, opportunities for dialogue, retreat, Lenten observances.

Being a people whose everyday desire is to welcome and participate in the presence of God is step one to renewal and being a congregation committed to God’s mission.

Let us take this step. Let us take on the spiritual disciplines to practice the presence of God and discern together how God would make a difference in our lives, our congregation, and our good work in Eastern Lebanon County.

Your pastor and friend,

Robert Wallace





Food Collection

On Sunday, January 1, 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, reusable plastic containers.



A great big Thank You to the volunteers for their time to help put up the Christmas trees and decorating the Church on Saturday morning.

Bernadette, Jim Biever, Keith & Jan Dubois, Beth Kaylor, Barb & Gene Lessig, Sylvia Pohronezny, and Chris Riegel.

Plus a big "Thank You" to Barb & Amie Hehnlly for the beautiful Christmas swags decorating the outside of the church again this year and Stracks Tree Farm for the Christmas trees beautifying our altar area.

We will be looking for volunteers to help take the decorations down on January 8, 2017 at 2 P.M.



DISASTER RELIEF

Lutheran Disaster Relief

The next Lutheran Disaster Response trip will take place April 30-May 6. We will be going to wild and wonderful West Virginia! There will be a planning meeting on Sunday, January 29th, beginning at 2:00 p.m., in the Community Room at Luther Acres, 600 E. Main Street, Lititz. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Pastor Glenn Beard at (717) 471-1067 or gbeard@luthercare.org.



Congregational Meeting

Friedens Lutheran Church will hold a congregational meeting on Sunday, January 15, at 10:05 am for the purpose of electing persons to the congregational council. The meeting will take place in the sanctuary.

OUR TITHES & OFFERINGS

November 2016

				% of Budget
Current Budget	Goal	\$30,450.00	Goal to Date	79%
\$365,409.00	Rec'd	\$22,885.00	Rec'd to Date	
Spang Crest	Rec'd	24.00	Rec'd to date	513.00
Hunger	Rec'd	205.00	Rec'd to Date	2,660.00

JANUARY 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1</p> <p>9 AM— Contemporary Service 10:45 AM— Traditional Service</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>7 PM—Worship Committee</p>	<p>4</p> <p>9:45 AM—Pastor’s Pericope Study 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band</p>	<p>5</p> <p>7 PM—Chancel Choir</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Winterfest—High School Students/ Young Adults</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8</p> <p>9 AM— Contemporary Service 10:45 AM— Traditional Service</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>7 PM—Property Committee</p>	<p>11</p> <p>9 AM—Women Sew 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band</p>	<p>12</p> <p>7 PM—Chancel Choir</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15</p> <p>9 AM— Contemporary Service 10:45 AM— Traditional Service</p>	<p>16</p> 	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>9:45 AM—Pastor’s Pericope Study 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band</p>	<p>19</p> <p>7 PM—Chancel Choir 7 PM—Church Council</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Quake—Harrisburg for Middle School Students (20-22)</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22</p> <p>9 AM— Contemporary Service 10:45 AM— Traditional Service</p>	<p>23</p> <p>7 AM—Confirmation Dialogue</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>9 AM—Women Sew 6:45 PM—Praise & Worship Band</p>	<p>26</p> <p>7 PM—Chancel Choir</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>9 AM— Contemporary Service 10:45 AM— Traditional Service</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>				

**Friedens Lutheran Church, Myerstown, PA
Church Council Meeting
December 15, 2016**

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

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

1. Valarie Herron 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 6. For next month Council will again read Chapter 6.
3. **Pastor Wallace made a motion to accept the November 17, 2016, Church Council Minutes. Jim Kneasel seconded. Motion carried.**
4. Council persons whose terms expire the end of 2016 are Janice DuBois, Jim Kneasel and Jon Koller. Jim Kneasel is available for serving a second term. Janice DuBois and Chris Heft are serving on the Council Nominating Committee. Date for Council Elections is Sunday, January 15 between services. Chris Heft reported Wendy Gilbert has agreed to a nomination to serve on Council. Additional persons are being contacted. Profiles of nominees will be printed in January issue of Transformer.
5. Pastor Wallace provided a written and verbal report from the Mission Steering Group dated December 15, 2016. Council affirmed the report.
6. **Pastor Wallace made the motion to recommend the following new members to Friedens: Kelly Hemperly, Barbara Kohr, Bernadette Girello and Frank Girello. Scott Stephenson seconded. Motion carried.**
7. **Chris Heft made the motion to approve the recommendation of Global Missions to make a donation of \$100 payable to “Immanuel UM Men” and include “Raimondo Fund” on the memo line, to support the effort to assist a family whose home was destroyed by fire. The donation is to be sent to Mr Jay Tawes, P.O. Box 509, Crisfield, MD 21817. Jim Kneasel seconded. Motion carried.**
8. **Jim Kneasel made the motion to approve the purchase of 90 copies of the Augsburg-Fortress Lenten Devotional at \$2 per copy, and 10 copies of the large print edition at \$5 per copy. Valarie Herron seconded. Motion carried.**
9. **Pastor Wallace made the motion to authorize keys be given to The Fellowship Team consisting of Carol Achenbach, Kathy Hoover and Denise Noll. Jim Kneasel seconded. Motion carried.**

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10. **Chris Heft made the motion to set the Synod Benevolence Allocation for 2017 at \$31,200 (the same as 2016) (10% of current budget) with the understanding it may shift in July 2017 when the new church budget is passed. Jim Kneasel seconded. Motion carried.**
 11. Pastor Wallace provided written or verbal updates on the following: Family and Youth Ministry, high school youth attending Winterfest in Lancaster, middle school youth attending Quake in Harrisburg, FLOURISH and Search for Minister to Families, Children and Youth.
 12. Thank you received from Living Water International for our recent contribution of \$1,000 (check #5390) towards El Salvador.
 13. Thank you received from Keystone Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 for our recent contribution of \$750.
 14. Thank you received from Lutheran Camping Corporation of Central PA for our recent contribution of \$500 designated for unrestricted use.
 15. Thank you received from Jubilee Ministries for our recent contribution of \$450 (check #5412).
 16. **Pastor Wallace gave a verbal & written Pastor's Report. Jim Kneasel made a motion to accept the December 2016 Pastor's Report. Sharon Riegel seconded. Motion carried.**
 17. Jim Kneasel reported the Property Committee held a routine meeting in December 2016.
 18. **Sharon Riegel made a motion to accept the November 2016 Financial Secretary's Report. Pastor Wallace seconded. Motion carried.**
 19. **Chris Heft made a motion to accept the November 2016 Treasurer's Report. Sharon Riegel seconded. Motion carried.**
 20. **Pastor Wallace made the motion to send the following contributions to El Salvador:**
 - **\$1,000 from the endowment fund**
 - **\$613.59 from the envelope contributions**
 - \$390 from the Children's Church fellowship hour effort****Chris Heft seconded. Motion carried.**
 21. Pastor Wallace will be on family vacation December 26, 2016 through January 2, 2017. Pastor Kehrli will provide visitation coverage and cover the January 1, 2017 worship services.
 22. **Next Congregational Meeting will be held Sunday, January 15, 2017 at 10:05 am.**
 23. **Next Council Meeting will be held on Thursday, January 19, 2017 at 7 pm. A person to be determined will be the worship leader. A person to be determined will provide coverage for Secretary.**
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24. **Pastor Wallace made the motion to adjourn. Jim Kneasel seconded.** Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m. Meeting closed with the sharing of joys & concerns and prayer led by Valarie Herron.

Sharon Riegel
Council Secretary

The nominating committee and church council are pleased to report that three persons have agreed to have their names placed in nomination for service on the church council: Lynn Appleby, Wendy Gilbert, and Richard Stoner. Each of these persons have demonstrated love for the Lord and commitment to the mission and ministry of Friedens Congregation.

The congregational meeting to elect members to the church council takes place on Sunday, January 15 at 10:05 in the sanctuary.

As with every aspect of our life together we bring this meeting and our good work before the Lord in prayer.



We express our thanks and gratitude for the poinsettia plant that was delivered to our door. We appreciate the Christmas greeting cards many of you sent to us and especially we are grateful for your prayers for Susan and myself. The message of Christmas—Emanuel, “God with us”, radiates from the people of God at Friedens Lutheran Church.

We wish each one a New Year filled with Hope, Love, enduring Faith and a sense of the Presence of the Prince of Peace who lives in our hearts as well as in the world.

Blessings and peace,
Pr. Jack & Susan



Thank you from the staff for the generosity of the congregation for our Christmas bonuses this year. We greatly appreciate the financial gifts.

Sincerely, The Staff at Friedens Lutheran Church

