



Leacock Communicator

Leacock Presbyterian Church

717-687-6619

www.leacockpres.org

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May 2020

Notes from the Manse

Sheltering in place. We have been doing this for over six weeks now, each of us in different ways. There are those we call essential workers, not only the doctors and nurses, but also those we might take for granted, such as grocery and drugstore workers. They must be so weary, for not only is there a work to do, there is the fear always lying just beneath the surface, fear for those they will return to at the end of a shift, fear for themselves. Then there are people alone. For some, this may be something they know. But then there are the nursing home residents, isolated in their room with no possibility of a visit from anyone. For others, there's been the weariness, the tedium of the same place, the same, limited, routine with the same people, day after day. Books may be getting read, television binge watched, gardens planted, walks taken. All that's good. But after a while, it reminds us of family members we cannot see, of jobs we cannot go to, of simple things we never knew we'd miss, like going to the library or a movie theater.

There are many realities to this new pandemic life, but one certainly is the feeling of confinement; some have even likened it to being in prison. Prison. It's strange how many people, important people, in the Bible were imprisoned—Joseph, Jeremiah, Daniel, John the Baptist, Paul, and Jesus, to name only a few. And what seems important in these situations is not the imprisonment itself, but rather the response to it.

Consider Paul, for instance. One of my favorite of his letters is *Philippians*, which has the soaring, humbling Christ-hymn of chapter 2 and the apostle's urging us at the end of the letter not to worry about anything, but rather rejoice always. Now consider the context—he wrote while in a Roman prison. Incredibly, then, the beginning of the letter, which many skip by, speaks of Paul's joy, of his faith that through the prayers of others and the help of Christ's spirit he would be delivered. And it doesn't really seem to matter what form that deliverance will take, for he is sure that the Lord is exalted in his body, in his person, whether by life or death. Being in prison isn't easy; he speaks of his suffering. But he realizes that good has come out of what he faces as it has helped him spread the gospel. Others have seen him hold strong and have thereby gained a confidence to speak the word with increased boldness and without fear. So, yes, even in prison he rejoices. And he asks that his joy be made complete if there is any encouragement to be found in the Lord, any consoling in love or sharing in the Spirit, any compassion or sympathy. How? By those who read his letter being one, humbly regarding others as better than one's self. Then, one and all will be able to proclaim Jesus Christ in love.

So, yes, these days can feel like a prison. But let us find the encouragement we need in our Lord. Let us receive the consolation that is there in love. Let us share the Spirit, even through distance and closed doors. Let us offer and accept compassion and sympathy. Let us be one, humble enough to keep our gaze on others. Let us trust that this time will pass, that our deliverance will come, though in ways we may not expect or wish. If we do all this, we will not fear. Like Paul, we will proclaim Christ in love, not so much in words, but rather in the way we shelter in place.

Rev. Robert W. Birch

May Prayer Families

May 3

Craig, Jenny, Alyssa, Sarah,
Olivia and Emma Keenan

May 10

Angela Killian

May 17

Brit Kilbourne

May 24

Nelson Koshuta

May 31

Helen Kreider



May 20 Birthday

Kitty Shumate
433 S. Kinzer Ave.
Apt. 443 GE
New Holland, PA 17557
717-355-6900

Trustee Notes

The Sextons have been keeping the property in great shape.

The Trustees and helpers did get together and mulched Paradise and Old Leacock. Mark Andrews and his crew really did Old Leacock proud - they trimmed and mulched and the grounds look great.

I am sure we will be back together soon only it may be under some restrictions. Please take care and stay in touch with your neighbors.

Dave Berkheimer
Trustee President

Session Snippets

Your elders are becoming quite technologically talented as they completed their first stated meeting via Zoom. In addition to hearing each other, they also could see one another on the computer screens. Business conducted included the following:

- Rescheduling the Gap Male Chorus for October 12.
- Cancelling the April Community Meal
- Approving an in-kind donation to an area food bank in lieu of the Community Meal.
- Cancelling the May Hymn Sing.
- Establishing a church reopening planning committee

Dianne Yuninger



Millie Young's 90th Birthday Celebration from her daughter, Brenda:

Cousin Cindy and I celebrated at Luther Acres, outside a window with mom. We were there for about an hour. She was so happy. She watched videos and saw pics and greetings family posted on a Facebook Event page Lori created. We started by singing happy birthday to her. At the end, she joined in and sang real loud "Happy Birthday to me!"

Near the end of our visit she said, " This has been a really fun celebration with all of you!"

Please share my thanks to all who participated and let them know that despite the circumstances, she had a wonderful celebration full of love and joy!

From the Worship Committee: A Hymn for This Time

Rev. Carolyn Winfrey Gillette has written words to the familiar tune “Beach Spring” which can speak to our hearts during this time of unknowns and upheavals. Read the words carefully and sing them prayerfully. Perhaps we may sing them together through our on-line worship during the month of May.

When We Face an Unknown Future

BEACH SPRING 8.7.8.7 D (“God Whose Giving Knows No Ending”)

When we face an unknown future that we can't imagine yet,
when the closeness we have treasured turns from blessing into threat —
As we miss our friends and loved ones, as we crave community,
may we look, God, in this season, for a whole new way to be.

Jesus faced the lonely desert as a time to look within.
There he met such trial and conflict; there he knew you were with him.
In this time of separation when we miss the life we've known,
may we hear your voice proclaiming: “I am here! You're not alone.”

May we cherish those around us as we never have before.
May we think much less of profit; may we learn what matters more.
May we hear our neighbors' suffering; may we see our neighbors' pain.
May we learn new ways of offering life and health and hope again.

God, when illness comes to threaten, and when so much here goes wrong,
may we know this thing for certain — that your love is sure and strong.
You're beside us in our suffering — and when times are surely tough,
we may face an unknown future, but it's filled, Lord, with your love.

Caroline Winfrey Gillette

This is a new hymn for singing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Churches have permission to use this hymn for free, including in streaming worship services.

Stewardship

The Stewardship team met April 26. We missed our normal second Monday of the month time, but we still got together. Sort of. Although I am accustomed to phone and video meetings from my work, most folks may not use such tools until recently. We did meet; we did use a video conferencing system via our personal computers, iPads or Phones. It was good to see the team, even if it wasn't in person. We were able to accomplish our business, which was mostly centered around the Church's financial health and the pandemic situation. At this time, we felt there need to be no other special actions taken to adjust for the financial effects of the virus situation on the Church.

We are doing all right. This is in no small part, due to the congregation generously keeping up their offerings, by mailing them into the Church regularly. There has also been an increase in online giving for offering! For all this, we THANK YOU. Thank you for thinking about your Church and thinking about others that Leacock helps with the offerings you provide. You are appreciated.

We also began discussions of what it may look like when we can begin to worship together again. The Session has created a team to address just the issues around that. There is more to consider than may meet the eye initially, since how we go about doing things as innate as going to Church will change for a period of time and we don't know how long. There may need to be changes that are even more long lasting in our behaviors at Church and in public. I so long for a Chili cookoff, and to be in fellowship, so we are going to have to figure this out as time progresses! Any thoughts or ideas are welcomed to help us in this process. Just in case you don't have it, you can always reach me at this email: werboas@frontiernet.net. Skip and I are also listed in the Church directory should you need/want to talk to us.

PEACE BE WITH YOU,

The entire Stewardship team, Skip Brackbill and Steven Boas (team Elders)

Mission Committee

Greetings to all. We hope everyone is well and ready to return to "normal". The next community meal is scheduled for May 28th. We will be serving Lasagna, Salad, Garlic Bread, Applesauce and Dessert. The sign-up sheets should be in the narthex 2 weeks ahead of the meal. The clothing drive for April is postponed. We will gather donations again in September. The Gap Male Chorus scheduled for April 28th has been rescheduled for Oct. 11th. May God's gracious hands protect us all so we may gather together soon.

Peace and Love to all.
Your Mission Committee.



The Connectional Church—and Coronavirus Updates for Leacock

As was the case last month, our denomination has been rightly preoccupied with how to be the church during a pandemic. Things are of course changing. For one, the May Presbytery meeting will only be for an hour and half and will not be onsite, but rather on Zoom. Though no firm decision has been made, it seems increasingly likely there will be no General Assembly this summer.

But all this doesn't mean that your denomination has been inactive. Every week, there are communications with recommendations on how to hold services remotely or sustain church finances. There are teleconferences in which we discuss specific issues churches are addressing and what the coming weeks may look like. For now, the Presbytery continues the closure of all church worship and activities, pending guidance from health and state authorities.

But worship and fellowship continue here at Leacock. If you haven't already, do join us for Sunday worship each week at our website, leacockpres.org. There is music, including the lyrics of the hymns, prayer, Scripture, and a sermon. And if you want, the services of recent weeks remain there on the website. Further, we have been connecting with each other by note or phone call and through an expanded use of the prayer chain. And we have gathered for fellowship via Zoom. I send out notice of those fellowship times, but cannot reach you if we do not have your e-mail or text, so please send those to us, if you haven't. It's good to see and hear from each other. I hope you will join us.

In the coming weeks, we expect that the stay-at-home orders will be changing, with a gradual, step-by-step reopening of society. We are forming a committee to plan for Leacock's reopening, examining how much we can do and when, ensuring that all are safe. Please look for coming notices about all this as our plans unfold.

This congregation has been inspiring in the ways we have been there for each other and continued to support our church, including through the faithful offerings you have been sending in the mail and electronically. These times will change us, but I believe it can be in a good way. We will emerge, stronger in our faith, stronger as a fellowship of sisters and brothers in Christ. In the meantime, let the Lord be our peace.

Rev. Robert W. Birch



Leacock Book and Movie Group

No real news to report for the LBMG, because we haven't had the chance to meet to discuss *Just Mercy*. Once the church is reopened, we will pick up where we left off, discussing that book the first month and watching the movie version the second.

The next book for the book discussion group will be *Little Women*. A new movie version has been released, and we will watch that after we've read the book. I've chosen this book, not only because it's a good one, but also because during these times when libraries and bookstores are closed, it's one I'm thinking many may already own, or can get either free or very cheaply in digital format (because it's in the public domain).

As I said last month and continue to wish for everyone: happy reading, and stay safe and healthy, all!

Emily Birch, Book and Movie Group Coordinator



Gratitude Corner

(Those Who Go Above and Beyond to Care for their Minister and His Wife)

Again, I'm not going to name any names this month, but Bob and I continue to be humbled and touched by those of you who've been thinking of us during these times. Some of you have expressed how you've been praying for Bob, knowing how much he's had to learn and adjust to during this period, and the sadness he feels not being able to connect with you in person. And he's received wonderful, encouraging messages from many about his online services. We've also enjoyed funny and uplifting "thinking of you" texts from one faithful text-er, which always brighten out days.

We've also received some unexpected gifts either in the mail or on our doorstep: a nice bunch of rosemary, a big jar of honey, a fresh-baked loaf of bread, a box of Easter chocolates, and even a check. We like to "pay it forward" as the saying goes, so we're trying to pass this generosity on to others.

Anyway, if you've given us any one of these gifts (or if you've been praying for us, and we don't know it. Prayer is an awesome gift, and I know it's working), please know how grateful we are. Thank you so much! The generosity of this congregation is unmatched.

Rev. Robert and Emily Birch
The Leacock Communicator

MAY SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE (if the Church re-opens)

5/3	9:30 a.m.	Alba Ruhl & Derek Colton
5/10	9:30 a.m.	Alba Ruhl & Derek Colton
5/17	9:30 a.m.	Emily Birch & Elaine Gouba
5/24	9:30 a.m.	Emily Birch & Elainr Gouba

USHERS Ed Margerum, Head Usher

May	Mike and Alba Ruhl
June	Mary Alice High and John Shenk
July	Chuck & Kathy Ankney



God's Masterpiece

~ Herbert Farnham

God took the fragrance of a flower,
 The majesty of a tree,
 The gentleness of morning dew,
 The calm of a quiet sea.
 The beauty of the twilight hour,
 The soul of a starry night,
 The laughter of a rippling brook,
 The grace of a bird in flight.
 Then God fashioned from these things,
 A creation like no other,
 And when his masterpiece was through,
 He called it simply - Mother.

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Articles for the June Newsletter
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THE LEACOCK COMMUNICATOR
Sandy Schoettle, Editor