

**Belated Happy Birthday to:**

Bob Strough—June 14
Ed Haag—June 14
Dawn Witycyak—June 14

July Birthdays:

Elsie Evans—July 4
Jan Westendorf—July 7
Robin Werner—July 11
Louise Wilson—July 12

August Birthdays:

Janet Haney—August 15
Bill Wilson—August 15
Evelyn Hoffert—August 24

September Birthdays:

Hazel Griffith—September 2
Bill Haney—September 14
Betty Zellner—September 25

PARISH REGISTER:**Marriages:**

6/20/20—Nicholas William Y. Gustafson and Olivia Claire Gehman. Congratulations Nick and Olivia!

We are sad to report that since Covid19 closed our country, we have lost some of our very dear members including:

Deaths:

3/21/20—Russell McVaugh Sr.
4/4/20—Arthur T. Gordon
4/11/20—Marion Kachel
7/1/20—Steve Moyer

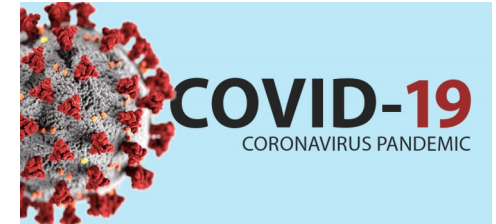
And past members and dear friends:

4/12/20—Rodney Ebbert
6/17/20—Barry Fredericks

The Parish Digest

To the family and friends of Robeson Lutheran Church & Preschool,

Hope you are doing well during this pandemic. I know a few of you have suffered through the illness and other illnesses and injuries as well. Though our church facility remains closed, we are trying our best to stay in touch with our church family and to offer any assistance that is needed during this time. We continue to have a small crew of staff members and volunteers who will help maintain our basic operations regarding finances and future event planning. We continue to offer at-home” Sunday worship opportunities and hope that you are sharing in these services. If you are not receiving the emails or the mailings through the post office, please call the church office and let us know. It is important that we reach all of our members who are interested in these services and the weekly announcements. Since we are part of the Zoom worship service shared by the four other congregations, we will be forming a Discernment Team, to determine how and when we will reopen. (Please see page 5-6 for information about this team.)



As part of being the “Light on the Hill” we continue to ask that:

1. All church members seek to be intentional about reaching out to offer care and support to one another. A telephone call or email is a very safe way to let someone know you care.
2. If anyone has, or becomes aware of, an emergency pastoral care need, please contact Pastor Michael at the parsonage. (610-875-0015).
3. If anyone is struggling with a lack of food, water, or other variety of life necessities, please contact the church office. Together we have an abundance to share with those in need. (continued on page 4)

During Covid19 please call or email staff members.
A mailbox is located outside the church office for anyone who has written information for staff, chairpersons, preschool, or other leaders.

Rev. Michael Ware, Pastor

Home: 610-875-0015 Office: 610-856-7242

Office hours: Wednesday 9-12 and 1:30-3:00; Thurs. 9-12;
Day off: Monday;

Email address: revmikeware@gmail.com

Louise Wilson, Minister of Music—Phone: 610-273-3911

Email address: weeziecow2@yahoo.com

Becka Malanios, DCE

Office hours M-Th, 9-1

Phone- 610- 507- 3657 Email: becka.malanios@gmail.com

Debbie DeMarco, Parish Secretary

Home: 610-856-7386 Office: 610-856-7242

Office Hours: M-TH 9-4; Friday 9-12:00

Email address: ddemarco@dejazzd.com

Linell McCormick, Office Assistant, T & Th, 12-4

Home: 610-775-2571 Email: lmr52@aol.com

Robin Werner, Sexton—Phone: 610-698-0688

Email: robinbaskets@aol.com

Barbara Strough, Sexton—Phone: 610-856-7784

Email: barbstrough@icloud.com

Dale Creed, Maintenance Man—Phone: 610-779-0179

Julia Bond, Preschool Manager— Phone: 610-856-7613;

Email: preschool610@dejazzd.com

Council Officers:

Mike Wisniewski, President

Wayne Kercher, Vice President

Jessica Shepherd, Secretary

*Dorothy Martin, Treasurer

*Kay Good, Treasurer Special Funds

*Lori Sifford, Financial Secretary

*do not actually serve on council

Other Council Members:

Bill Beam

Ed Haag

Julia Bond

Walt Hamilton

Mary Karpa

Rex Miller

Back to School Give-Away! at Grace Lutheran Church 33 South 11th Street, Reading

Due to the Covid-19 virus and social distancing, the look of the annual Back to School Give-Away is changing this year. Stuffed Backpacks will be delivered directly to the schools within the Reading School District. But we could still use your help. Read on to find out how.

Last year through the generous support of donors we:

- ◆ Provided 350 students with school supplies and backpacks.
- ◆ Provided 68 school age children with socks and underwear.
- ◆ Provided 135 community neighbors with a hot meal and a bag stuffed with clothing.

This year we are again seeking donations. But instead of purchasing items and dropping them off at church, we ask that you please consider sponsoring a student backpack by donating \$15.00 for a middle school appropriate backpack or \$10.00 for an elementary school appropriate backpack.

With the above donations the following will be purchased:

Pens (black and blue), pencils, erasers, crayons, primer tablets, rulers, glue sticks, construction paper, safety scissors, pencil boxes or bags, small packs of tissues, 3 or 5 subject notebooks, notebook paper, colored pencils, highlighters, calculators, backpacks / book bags. **Checks can be made payable to Grace Lutheran Church. Mail checks to Barb Seidel, 3523 Magnolia Avenue, Reading, PA 19605. (or if you prefer make them out to Robeson Lutheran Church and send to our church office.)**

Deadline for donations is August 1. Thank you!

Wednesday Evening Bible Study during July

LIVING IN THE COVENANT

If someone were to ask me what the most important word in both the Old and New Testaments was, I would say it is COVENANT. Living in covenant with God is the essence of discipleship, providing us with the guidelines for faithful actions and resting on the promise of God's presence.

In earlier times the Bible was divided into two sections called Old and New Covenant, not Testament. Promise and fulfillment is found in both as the stories and legacy of God are played out in a living history featuring many followers/ believers acting faithfully and un-faithfully.

A covenant is defined as an agreement between two partners of unequal status – God and us. The covenant comes into play in different circumstances with different people. During our Wednesday evening Bible study in July, we will look at four instances where the covenant tells a story of God's love and mercy. They are:

- ◆ Covenant and creation – Genesis 1:1-2:4a
- ◆ Covenant and justice – Micah 6:8
- ◆ Living in the covenant – Romans 8:31-39 and 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
- ◆ Covenant and grace – Ephesians 2:8-10

In these days of uncertainty, the covenant renews our faith in the one who keeps his promises and walks with his people through the shadow of death and discontent. Join us for our Wednesday evening sessions on July 8, 15, 22, and 29 beginning at 7:30 pm on Zoom. See page 3 for instructions on how to connect.

-Pastor Burl



Connect with Us in July via Zoom

Sunday Worship, 10:30 am

Wednesday Evening Bible Study, 7:30 pm

By Phone (Landline or Cell), please dial:

1. +1 (929)-436-2866 This is a long distance call to New York
U.S. Toll-free: (877) 853-5247 or (888) 788-0099 reserved for people who do not have a phone plan that covers the cost of long distance calls
2. When prompted, dial Meeting ID[➤]: 593 216 546#
3. When prompted, enter meeting password[➤]: 1224#
4. You now have joined the meeting.
5. You will be automatically muted. *Please remain muted, unless you want to speak.*
To unmute, dial *6. To mute again, dial *6.
6. To leave the call, simply hang up.

Video Conference:

Download Zoom App
Join Zoom Meeting: Meeting ID[➤]: 593 216 546
Password[➤]: 1224

- *If our Zoom session were to be compromised, we will abort and resume under a backup ID and Password. You would then need to join again with this information:*

Backup Meeting ID: 273 659 803 Password: 1031

Please keep in mind, that although our church facility is closed, we will still need to keep up with our day to day maintenance and operational costs.

On May 15th we began to use our monies received from the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) to pay staff members and church expenses. Using this money wisely, we look to turn the loan into a grant, as per the CARES Act requirements, and this will certainly help us greatly over the next several weeks ahead of us. We wait to see if there will be a second disbursement of funds for small businesses, and if so, we will immediately apply for it to help keep our ministry going. This, along with all of your generous financial support, keeps our ministry going strong!

And once again, a reminder that for those of you who shop on Amazon Smile (which makes a donation to your favorite charity for every purchase that you make), you can make Robeson Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mohnton PA your charity of choice and have an extra opportunity to support the ministry of our church as you do your online shopping.

Please continue to pray for each other as we face the uncertainty of this illness and deal with the daily inconveniences that we all share. Pray for our first responders, healthcare workers, employees of necessary businesses, business owners, those who are unemployed, and all those who continue to work. Please try to stay safe. God bless you all.

Your brother in Christ,
PASTOR MICHAEL



**Robeson Evangelical Lutheran
Church
1770-2020
Celebrating 250 Years!**



**“Keep the Light Shining”
Capital Campaign & Anniversary Celebration
Update**

The church council, at its Zoom meeting on June 25, has decided to postpone our 250th Anniversary Celebrations until next year. Due to the uncertainty of fall activities, the financial strain on members and area businesses, and the inability of members to see the anniversary book first hand, it was felt that we should provide more time to allow our members to participate in the anniversary book.

With this in mind, we are also extending the opportunity to support our “Keep the Light Shining” Endowment Anniversary Campaign through October 2021. It is with great gratitude that we celebrate all that has been given in support of this campaign up to this point. Because of you we are able to strengthen the congregational endowment that supports the future needs of our church. Each generous and loving gift will sustain the wonderful ministry that this congregation does in the local community, and indeed to the world. All gifts are important and will be greatly appreciated and received with thanksgiving to the glory of God.

Clarification regarding our 250th Anniversary Book

As our anniversary book is coming together, please be aware that Linell McCormick and Lucille Freeman are working on different projects and collecting separate things:

Linell’s project is nearing completion, but work continues on our 250th Anniversary Book and the deadline has been extended until sometime in 2021. Lucille Freeman, who works with Reick’s printing, is in charge of this project. She is still working with members who would like to purchase and create their own page / advertisement with pictures or a caption for the anniversary book. Please contact Lucille if interested: **610-856-7349 or 484-219-0596;**

Email: lfreeman@rieckspainting.com

BEWARE!!! More Scams - apparently someone has been posing as me again (Rev. Michael Ware – I guess I’m popular?) and contacting some of you by text or email. Apparently, the person claims they are in a meeting but needs to ask you for something. The latest scammer uses the email account revmikeware1@gmail.com (which is not my email) Anyway, if you receive a text from someone claiming to be me please be wary and never send any money, gift cards, or information – I don’t operate like that!

Again, if you get a text like some of these below:
 "Hi (insert your name), I need a favor from you please text me back as soon as possible - Rev. Michael Ware, Pastor"

or

"I would have loved to call you but as It is right now, I am in the E.R, Went for an outreach. I need to get an eBay gift card today for some women battling cancer in the hospital but I cannot do that right now because of my busy schedule, can you possibly get it from any store around you now? and I will reimburse you later. Please let me know if you can help me with It - Rev. Michael Ware, Pastor"

Please be aware that I would never contact you via text for gifts cards or money of any nature. This is a scam and should immediately be reported / and the sender blocked.

A FEW NOTES:

Just a reminder that while our building is closed we will not be able to schedule any events for building use by church groups, community groups, or individuals. Thanks for your understanding.

We are continuing to collect Redners receipts; you can mail them to the church or drop them safely in a container outdoors next to the church office. Thank you!

THE LITTLE LIBRARY located next to the church and parsonage, continues to provide books for young and old. We are happy to provide reading material during the pandemic but want to remind everyone to sanitize your hands before and after using the little library. Stay safe!

Discernment Team

¹⁴Where there is no guidance, a nation falls, but in an abundance of counsellors there is safety.
 Proverbs 11:14

With Berks County having moved into the Green Phase, there have been a variety of questions raised regarding if and when our various congregations might “re-open” for in-person worship services.

To be sure, the five pastors and their respective congregational councils have been considering and discussing this issue frequently since the middle of March. However, a significant part of the challenge for future planning is related to the very nature of the pandemic we are currently faced with – that is to say, we are still learning about the nature of this particular virus through the research of medical doctors, epidemiologists, and the personal testimonies of those who have been afflicted by it.

Now, on the positive side, there has been a lot of solid research which has led to the creation of various documents offering recommendations and guidelines for the purposes of protecting ourselves and our neighbors from Covid-19. This is a good thing!

However, with so many guidelines and advisements from differing bodies of experts, it takes time to sift through all the various materials, to discern the risks vs the rewards of related activities, and to consider and acknowledge the various complications that arise and require creative solutions.

To that end, the team of pastors representing all five of our congregations, after prayerful deliberation, is recommending the creation of a **Discernment Team**, made up of the five pastors and two leaders from each congregational body, committed to discussing and examining the various guidelines and issues dealing with in-person worship at our congregations.

To offer time for the creation of and activity of this commit-

tee, the pastors have also committed to one another to not introduce either indoor or outdoor worship services through the end of July, so that we have ample opportunity to thoroughly review the various documents and guidance offered from the C.D.C., ELCA, and other important church / government agencies.

As always, our first consideration is the health and well-being of our membership; recognizing that it is a significant part of our calling and responsibility as Christians to protect all God's people.

Blessings and Peace,
Pastors Bill, Burl, Michael, Rob, and Sonja <><

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT:

The council met via Zoom on June 25th and discussed a variety of topics. As part of the meeting we discussed the postponement of our 250th anniversary celebration to Reformation Sunday 2021. This decision to postpone will provide us with more time to prep our anniversary book, fundraise, and plan (hopefully in-person) events in the months leading up to October 2021. Council also discussed and presented two volunteers (Mike Wisniewski and Jessica Shepherd) for the proposed discernment team, which will work with the leadership of all 5 churches that are currently worshipping together online, to examine and evaluate the pros and cons and various expectations, health requirements, and legal considerations involved with the possibility of returning to worship in our buildings. Next meetings: Council – 8/13; Discernment – 8/20.

Pastor Sonja and I will be on vacation from July 6th to the 20th (the Discernment Team meeting on the 20th will be an exception) and pastoral coverage will be handled by our colleagues, Pastors Rob, Burl, and Bill. Though you will not see Sonja or I on Zoom worship on the 12th and 19th please note that I will still be providing home worship services for our congregation for the Sundays we are away (on our side porch!).

ROCKY RAILWAY—VBS 2020

It's summer and we don't want to miss Vacation Bible School!

Although our VBS will look different this year due to Covid19, we won't let a pandemic keep us from sharing the Word of God with our children through Bible Stories, crafts, and music. Climb aboard for mountains of fun at Rocky Railway! On



this faith-filled adventure, kids will discover that trusting Jesus pulls them through life's ups and downs. Everyone is invited to sign up to receive a box containing the VBS kit which you can enjoy at home; it comes with:

- 1 Plain white folding box to hold everything (for the kids to decorate)
 - 5 Try this at home crafts (there is one for each day and all are very simple to put together - there is also an online instructional video for each)
 - 1 Bracelet (says "Watch for God!") 1 Carabiner
 - 5 Plastic punch-out Bible buddies (to attach to the carabiner)
 - 1 Name badge 1 Large sticker sheet
 - 1 Rocky railway paper box (with activities and interesting facts)
 - 1 Student book that contain the 5 Bible stories and some easy questions and activities
- AS an added bonus, we are also going to provide the music CD for each kit as well!

We will also supply a link where you can connect each day. You will be able to tune in at your convenience to the Bible story, craft etc. professionally presented to your children in a fun and exciting way.

Please register by July 16th so that we can order the kits for your children. Pick up days will be July 28th and 29th and by arrangement if you are on vacation that week. There is no charge for VBS but donations to cover the cost are always welcome. To register please email Relcvbs2020@gmail.com and be sure to include your child/ren's name/s and age/s and their grade/s completed, as well as your name and phone number. We look forward to providing you with a VBS program to remember!