

*Connect to God.**Connect to each other.**Connect to the community.***Nugget of Truth****3/13/22 Sermon by Pastor Tamie****Scripture: Psalm 27**

Is anyone else completely befuddled by the weather lately? Early spring has always been marked with teaser, warm and sunny days. This year we seem to have the strangest of patterns. This week, we could wear shorts and t-shirts and bundle in hats and gloves, from sunny walks to sledding down the same mountain! I looked at the weather report one morning to decide what to wear - warm and sunny today with rain tomorrow. When I arrived at work, Janet asked me about the potential snow for tomorrow. As I explained that my weather app had said rain, I opened to discover that it had turned to snow within the past thirty minutes. 100% chance of snow. In Iowa, another tornado devastated a community. Without rhyme or reason, it's difficult to even predict weather within a day let alone a week.

And it made me think of *The Old Farmer's Almanac* that predicts weather for a whole year! It's a published book written way in advance with no chance of revising or editing its predictions. They claim that it's 80% accurate. One year they dropped the weather forecasts and received such an outcry that they reinstated it. First published in 1792 and thirteen editors later, *The Old Farmer's Almanac* has a perfect record of continuous publication, for over 250 years! Though weather appears seemingly unpredictable, there are enough nuggets of truth to give us vision to face whatever confronts us. It's what makes something timeless - not that they get it all right and not that it perfectly fits in today's context - but the very truth out of which it speaks remains today and tomorrow. This is true of life too. This is the voice of the psalmist in our reading today.

The psalmist writes like our current-day weather pattern, dancing back and forth between fear and trust. In other words, the psalm reflects the reality of everyday life. How one day you see beauty in the snow drops and green tips of daffodils, and the next day your father is battling for his life in the hospital. How one day your family is vacationing on the ski slopes in Colorado, and the next day a parent loses her job and the family's healthcare. How one day your children are attending school, and the next day a person invades the hallways and classrooms with guns. How one night you're sleeping in your house, and the next day you are fleeing your country with only a suitcase because of an invasion. ~ cont'd on pg.4

1 W. Wyomissing Ave., Mohnnton, PA 19540

[www.calvaryumcmohnton.org](http://www.calvaryumcmohnton.org)

Sunday, March 20th, 2022  
Preaching: Pastor Tamie Scalise

9:00 AM

Sunday school for all ages

Adults – Chapel &amp; Zoom

Children &amp; Youth – Lower Level

**10:30 AM IN-PERSON & LIVESTREAM**

Lay Worship Leader: Bill Ruth

Worship is also available via livestream  
through Calvary's website homepage.

Go to: [calvaryumcmohnton.org](http://calvaryumcmohnton.org) or  
click on the link below.

**SUNDAY LIVESTREAM  
CLICK HERE**

*The altar flowers for Sunday,  
March 20<sup>th</sup>, are sponsored by  
Dave Svetz in joyful  
celebration and thanks to God  
for his birthday (3/26) and his  
wife, Joan Etchberger's  
birthday (3/25).*



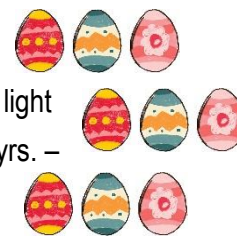
# HAPPY Birthday FROM YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

- 20 – Bob Steffey, Jr.  
4851 Perkiomen Ave., Lot 71  
Reading, PA 19606
- 20 – Julie Burkhard  
1 Sylvan Lane  
Mohnton, PA 19540
- 21 – Jill Koestel  
255 Pennwyn Pl.  
Reading, PA 19607
- 21 – Doris Metz  
Berks Heim, Rm B213  
1011 Berks Rd.  
Leesport, PA 19533
- 21 – Michelle Tomczak  
323 Summit St.  
West Reading, PA 19611
- 21 – Jay Owen  
1563 Cedar Top Rd.  
Shillington, PA 19607
- 22 – Joyce Baumgartle  
42 Steffy Lane  
Mohnton, PA 19540
- 23 – Korissa Turner  
1527 Meade St.  
Reading, PA 19607
- 25 – Sam Varano  
17 Woodland Manor Dr.  
Mohnton, PA 19540
- 25 - Joan Etchberger  
305 Crest Circle  
Mohnton, PA 19540
- 26 – Dave Svez  
305 Crest Cir.  
Mohnton, PA 19540
- 26 – Michael Werner  
205 Slichter Dr.  
Mohnton, PA 19540



## Palm Sunday

A joyful celebration of Christ's arrival into Jerusalem. A light lunch and **Easter Egg Hunt** (for children ages 2 yrs. – 5<sup>th</sup> grade) will follow the 10:30AM worship service.



## Good Friday

An evening service in Calvary's sanctuary recalling and reflecting on the passion and death of Christ. The service will also be livestreamed & available through Calvary's website homepage.



A service of quiet reflection, remembering the time Jesus spent in the tomb as he awaited the fulfillment of God's will through Christ's glorious resurrection on Easter morning.



### CUMC FINANCIAL NEEDS Through 3/13/22

2022 Operating Budget	\$348,300
YTD Giving Needed	\$73,679
YTD Actual Giving	\$78,418
	106.4%

### AN ADULT LENTEN STUDY

*Peaceful Practices: A Guide to Healthy Communication in Conflict* is a curriculum developed by the Mennonite Central Committee to prepare hearts and minds to be more Christ-like when dealing with difficult issues, as well as learn useful skills to become better overall communicators.

*"If we can learn to embody healthy dialogue habitually in interpersonal interaction, it will ripple out and affect our communities and society."*  
~Jes Stolzhus Buller (curriculum author)

This 6-week Lenten series will be facilitated by Pastor Tamie and offered in-person

and via Zoom from 5:45-6:45PM on the following  
Wednesday evenings in Lent:  
March 23 & 30 and April 6 & 13.

**PARTICIPANTS:** It's most helpful if you read the discussion materials PRIOR to the class sessions. The readings will be made available on our website: [calvaryumcmohnton.org](http://calvaryumcmohnton.org). You may also click on this link: [Peaceful Practices Reading Materials](#)

All are welcome to participate.



## KINGDOM KIDS RESTART!

**When?** Wednesdays: March 23, April 6 & 20, and May 4 & 18 (5:45-6:45PM)

**Where?** In the Music Room at Calvary

**What?** Singing, Bible Stories, Crafts, Dancing, Activities, and LOADS OF FUN!

**BRING YOUR FRIENDS!**



## THURSDAY AM LENTEN STUDY

**Topic:** Lent: What is it? What's its purpose? How do other denominations celebrate Lent? And other special days within Lent.

**When:** Thursday mornings from 9:30-10:30AM, beginning March 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Where:** Via Zoom only at 9:30AM using the worship link. Click here: [Thurs. AM Lenten Study](#)

Discussion facilitated by Dr. Frank Scalise.



**IN CELEBRATION OF EASTER A VARIETY OF GIFTS** may be given in honor of or in memory of loved ones. Please indicate your choice(s) below. Checks may be made payable to: "Calvary UMC" with the gift designation & your Env. # in the memo section.

I / We would like to contribute the following as an Easter gift(s): (Indicate the number in the blank/\$10 ea.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Easter Lily (\$10 ea.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Community Benevolence Fund (\$10 ea.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Good Shepherd Mission, General Support (\$10 ea.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Ukrainian Refugee Support (UMCOR's International Disaster Relief), Advance #982450

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Env. # \_\_\_\_\_

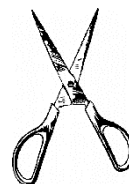
(Please print clearly.)

IN HONOR OF: \_\_\_\_\_

IN MEMORY OF: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PLACE YOUR COMPLETED FORM & DONATION IN JANET DEARSTYNE'S CHURCH MAILBOX (A10), OR MAIL IT TO HER ATTENTION AT: CUMC, 1 W. Wyomissing Ave., Mohnton, PA 19540.  
DEADLINE: ON OR BEFORE PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2022.

**Please allow PLENTY of time for snail mail to reach the church. It often takes more than 2 weeks!**



How even the little struggles of a day add up, like caring for an infant with little sleep or handling difficult relationships with a boss or sibling or child. It's real. Life is unpredictable, with so much uncertainty over which we have no control. We experience it in our own lives, and we watch it unfold in the lives of our friends and neighbors.

The uniqueness of Psalm 27 is how this composition so clearly shifts between an affirmation of faith and an individual lament. Normally, we begin with our laments and doubts and then discover the profound hope in the God that seemed to get lost along the way. Psalm 27 reverses itself, beginning with profound confidence and faith in an ever-present, protective God, and then unpredictably flips to a hiding God. It reflects a very real aspect of faith, that faith in God is not a protective shield from the harsh forces of evil in our lives, and that even the deepest faith can be shaken with fears and doubts. There's no straight line in faith. I remember Janet comparing faith to the game of *Chutes and Ladders*. Some days you're ascending the longest ladder to the top, only to find yourself soon sliding back to the bottom. That journey of up and down can seem relentless and endless. Faith is an ever-growing, ever-transforming force which requires our constant attention and devotion. The psalmist insists on beginning with a heartfelt trust of God that comes from apparent personal experience. As a result, the psalmist offers us a profound antidote to fear - hope.

## HOPE

The psalmist begins with a vigorous faith in a God of protection, comfort, and mercy. Hear the proclamation of his confidence in God:

*The Lord is my light and salvation (v 1)*  
*The Lord is the stronghold of my life (v 1)*  
*The Lord will hide me in God's shelter in the day of trouble (v 5)*  
*The Lord will set me on a high rock (v 5)*

And with this confidence, the psalmist celebrates the joy and hope this offers:

*My heart shall not fear (v 3)*  
*I will be confident (v 3)*  
*I will sing and make melody to the Lord (v 6)*



The confidence expressed comes from a deep, personal experience of God. Like the psalmist, hope comes from the experience of God in my life. It can be little things along the way, even the constancies we experience in the turning of the seasons, in infant cries and happy gurgles, in the healing of a heart, a new friend, or a morning devotional that speaks into your life.

Hope in the Lord! There are a few times in my life when I handed everything over, surrendered, you might you say, everything to God. Never more so than when I quit my career as a public school teacher, attended seminary, and entered the field of ministry at a time when church vitality is at its greatest decline. In my final year of seminary, there came a point when I had to determine what my next steps were. So I went to the Board of Ordained Ministry for my annual check-in where we decided I should become a licensed local pastor for that year and then pursue commissioning the next. In order to do so, I had to prepare all of the requirements in thirty days. This was no small task, because it required written responses to a dozen deep theological questions, a written curriculum for a Bible study, a videotaped sermon and two other sermons, various documents and recommendations, and so forth. Just as I delved into the process, the district superintendent called to inform me that she didn't think she'd even have a job for me.

I remember very clearly this feeling of having climbed a steep mountainside to reach the pinnacle, only to feel as if God was going to leave me hanging or throw me over the cliff. Anger and frustration rose from some place deep within me at God who had called me out of a secure career and now was seemingly leaving me stranded. Fear quickly eroded any sense of faith I had. How do I pay for school loans and continue to carry healthcare costs? It didn't take long for God to declare a cease-and-desist message. I heard very clearly... *Just shut up and do it. I am making a way.* God put me in my place, though I grumbled along the way as I prepared an immense amount of work.



Hope in the Lord, that was all I had at this point. Turns out, it was all I needed. As part of the process, my paperwork landed in the hands of a clergy person who knew of a potential full-time assistant pastor position opening. The job hadn't been officially designed or posted. He spent a week at spring training with the senior pastor of that church. One person had the job opportunity; the other person knew everything about me because of all this work I had submitted. God made the connection, and he recommended I contact the pastor to inquire about the job. God had made the way.

You'd think that such a huge, obvious presence of God's grace and providence would remain always. You'd think there would be no more questions or doubts or anger. Just endless trust and hope. If only it were so. The psalmist alerts us; fear is a powerful force that challenges our faith, a wind that tosses our confidence about and sweeps away our hope.

---

*When we can sleep undisturbed at night in our own bed, then we find comfort in God's grace. As soon as reality shifts, and like the flick of a light switch, chaos and uncertainty rattle our experience. Fear is the fiercest of storms against faith.*

## FEAR

Just as the psalmist heightens the praise to proclaim, "I will sing and make melody to the Lord," all confidence is swept away. Like a hurricane has blown through, the psalmist shifts to animated doubt. God's presence has disappeared, and the psalmist longs for God's protection and wisdom and mercy. "'Come,' my heart says, 'seek his face!' Your face, Lord, do I seek. Do not hide your face from me" (Psalm 27:8-9).

Our experience of God often feels like this. When we're seeing the snow drops and daffodils, then we know the beauty of God. When we're skiing the slopes of beautiful mountainsides, then we cherish the providence of God. When our children are flourishing and learning, then we see new life. When we can sleep undisturbed at night in our own bed, then we find comfort in God's grace. As soon as reality shifts, and like the flick of a light switch, chaos and uncertainty rattle our experience. Fear is the fiercest of storms against faith.

*I remember this moment like a painting, like something I saw from a distance, on the outside, instead of having lived it. It's because I still couldn't fathom that this moment was actually happening to my family. Strangely, it was the day after Frank had his heart attack. Though I had spent twenty-four hours in the hospital, all night by his bedside, the reality of just how fragile his life was had yet to settle in. Somehow I had to go home and explain to my children, then one and four years old, that their dad was very, very sick.*

*As I stepped out of the hospital, my breath was taken away by the brilliant, sunny June day. My body was repelled by the warmth of the air. I lifted my hand to cover my eyes ever so slightly as I peered up at this cloudless blue sky. There, hovering over the parking garage, was a party balloon. It was gently floating along in celebration. That's when I noticed some kind of party being held at the community pool.*

*It was so opposite what I had just stepped away from, so opposite of what I had to face and could not turn away from, so opposite from the near death I had just encountered. Yesterday, that had been my life - blue skies, sunshine, and balloons. Today, my life didn't have a face I could identify with. And my tomorrow was even more uncertain. Nothing about today felt real yet. The only thing that resonated with me was a chilly cold fear unlike anything I had ever felt before.*

Such moments shift our life perspective so radically that even the foundations of our faith are challenged. Our understanding of who God is reevaluated. The psalmist struggles despite the profound affirmation of God's grace with which he begins the psalm. He cries desperately for the presence of God, to restore his faith and hope.

~cont'd on pg. 6

So we discover a basic truth about faith, about how human limitations, frailty, and fear work side-by-side, in cooperation with hope. Without one you cannot experience the other. Fear may hide the face of God, and fear makes us go looking for God. Our faith is drawn into a deeper, more profound level of faith. It's won over and over again in such a way that eventually you can move from hope to fear and back again to hope more confidently.

## HOPE

The radical message of hope as the antidote to fear comes at an opportune time. It would be a mistake if we were not to name and face the fear that is invading our lives today. We are witnesses to an unprecedented global shutdown due to a pandemic for two years. A million people have died in the United States alone, and it's impossible to measure how such loss of life and the grief that it entails has impacted our lives. We are witnesses to a horrific invasion of Ukraine and the violence and devastation that entails to a peaceful people. We listen to conversations about potential nuclear, chemical, and biological warfare. Fear. The psalmist, expressing his own living faith, begins and ends with hope, concluding confidently, "I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!" (Psalm 27:13-14). Hope is an outpouring of faith that allows us to face fears. I want to conclude with these words of Frederick Evans, a Quaker, who takes heart with the message of Psalm 27. He says, "So here is my little nugget of gospel truth for you to take home. The truth is not that it is going to be alright, the truth is, it already is" (Plain Living: A Quaker Path to Simplicity, ed. Catherine Whitmire, 2001, 98). As we wait upon the Lord, have HOPE!

## MESSAGE FROM BISHOP SCHOL

Dear United Methodist Laity and Clergy in Eastern Pennsylvania,

In this season, we are encountering what Methodism has faced several times since its inception in 1784, churches disaffiliating from the denomination. In the past it has been because of slavery, women in ministry, integration of the church, and today it is because of different beliefs about ministry with and by LGBTQ persons. Let me be clear, LGBTQ persons are not the reason for our differences, our differences are because of our own beliefs, traditions, understandings, and attitudes.

Recently General Conference, the legislative body of The United Methodist Church, was postponed a third time because of the COVID-19 pandemic. General Conference will not meet until 2024. The delegates to General Conference who serve on the General Commission and made this decision stated that as many as 30% of the delegates would not be able to attend because they could not receive visas. Attempting to conduct a virtual General Conference was not realistic across 12 time zones, multiple languages, all on Zoom with different internet stability.

These are anxious times, but in Eastern Pennsylvania, we are united in a belief to move forward as the body of Christ. In EPA, there are a few congregations and/or pastors who have communicated an interest in leaving The United Methodist Church. We will work with all United Methodists to help all persons arrive at the place they need to be in order to lead and thrive throughout the mission field.

A group of EPA leaders are working and will move deliberately to ensure there is clarity about the process and materials so that congregations who wish to disaffiliate can transition smoothly. Due to the approval processes required, and the need to do this well, it may take up to a year for a congregation and the leadership of EPA to work through the process and approvals.

God has a future for us, not for our destruction, but for hope and a bold mission (Jeremiah 29:11). Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, reaching new, more diverse, and younger generations; grow healthy vital congregations that are centers of hope and are missional servants of the community; and to transform the world through the grace, salvation and justice of God. I see this bold future every day in the hearts and lives of the people in EPA. You and we together are difference makers! ~cont's on pg. 7

The leadership of EPA and I hope all congregations and clergy will continue to be a part of our mission and church. Each of you are important to God and the mission of EPA.

### **The Heart of the Matter**

I am not at my best when I am weary. I have noticed this in others as well. I find amid difference and conflict or when someone is pushing or threatening me, I sometimes become defensive and reactive. I have noticed this in others as well.

Jesus said, *if you are weary, come to me*, and Jesus said *I leave with you a heart of peace*. Today and every day, we have a choice, a heart of peace or a heart of war. To be fully outward and honor God, we will need the heart of Christ, the ultimate heart of peace. I invite all of us in all our conversations and deliberations to begin in the right way, that the person I am talking with is a child of God and matters just like I matter, that is the heart of Christ. We are not in a contest for churches and people, but honoring God, a heart of Christ.

This is not a time to try to change other's hearts, but a time to seek the peace, hope and mission of Christ in your own heart.

### **Who EPA Will Be**

At our 2019 Annual Conference Session, EPA affirmed that it would be a *One Church*, a conference racially, ethnically, linguistically, geographically, theologically and in beliefs. In essence we affirmed that we are bound together through our common calling to love God and to love our neighbor, and that we have a common mission.

Being *One Church*, we in essence recognized that there will be differences in the way congregations live out the calling and mission. We believe that all congregations are called to show hospitality to whoever comes to our churches and that we would have congregations in which LGBTQ persons would lead side by side with heterosexual leaders and that there would be congregations that would not have leaders or appointments of LGBTQ persons. We understood that there would not be one way of doing and being in ministry, but that we would all love God and our neighbor. EPA has affirmed this, and this is how we continue to form, lead and serve.

### **EPA's Focus**

Serving God by advancing the mission is our focus. If anything deters us from serving God and fulfilling the mission, we are no longer the church of Jesus Christ. We can do things that are necessary in addition to the mission, but we can never let any task rise above serving God and fulfilling the mission. The urgency or the anxiety of some cannot put serving God and fulfilling the mission on hold. Throughout these challenging times, EPA's focus will be:

- Call, equip, send and support transformational leaders.
- Make disciples by sharing God's salvation through the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- Resource healthy vital missional congregations.
- Transform lives, communities and even the world through the grace of God.
- Work to end the sin of racism and sexism.
- Welcome immigrants.
- Start new congregations and faith communities.
- Provide food and other basic necessities of the people in our communities.
- Provide relief and recovery for those who experience disasters.
- Have a global mission through schools, hospitals and clinics and starting new churches.
- Serve the poor in our communities and work for justice for all.
- Seek peace.

This is who we are and what we do as United Methodists.

The leadership of EPA and I hope all congregations and clergy will continue to be a part of our mission and church. Each of you are important to God and the mission of EPA.

Keep the faith!

*John*