



The Slackwood Grapevine

Slackwood Presbyterian Church
2020 Brunswick Avenue
Lawrenceville, New Jersey 08648-4606
Office: (609) 392-3258

Rev. David Bowman, Interim Pastor
Shelley Zuckerman, Director of Music

Website: www.slackwoodchurch.org

May 2024

INTERIM PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Community is grounded in God, who calls us together, and not in the attractiveness of people to each other. . . . The mystery of community is precisely that it embraces all people, whatever their individual differences may be, and allows them to live together as brothers and sisters of Christ and sons and daughters of his heavenly Father. -Henri Nouwen

The past several months have reminded me, again, of the importance of community, especially the community of the faithful, the church. A tragedy strikes a family – the community gathers around to hold space for them to grieve and find support. Youth make the commitment to publicly profess their faith – the community welcomes and celebrates their journey.

Work becomes a challenge, transitions become more difficult to navigate, the news of the world becomes overwhelming, living faithfully day by day can be exhausting. Where do you turn?

We have been blessed with a community, the Slackwood Presbyterian Church, that *embraces all people, whatever their individual differences may be, and allows them to live together as brothers and sisters of Christ...WHAT A GIFT?* But as with any gift, we must receive it, accept it, allow it to be part of us. And in receiving it, we need to acknowledge it gratefully.

I pray that you value the gift of the Slackwood Presbyterian community as much as I do...and that in valuing it you will continue to actively participate in and support it with your resources...and share it. God has gifted us with a special place – a place where people are accepted and welcomed, where the word of God is proclaimed, where the power of prayer is relied upon, where the spirit is pushing doors open to do new things.

This summer I encourage you to make time to celebrate and be part of the community with which God has gifted us at Slackwood Church!

May it be so,

Pastor David

Contact info: dfbsbv@gmail.com or 732-547-3480



Please check our calendar online for upcoming meetings and events:
<http://www.slackwoodchurch.org/event-calendar.html>

PENTECOST/CONFIRMATION/YOUTH SUNDAY

What a wonderful celebration we had on Pentecost Sunday, May 19. Our youth planned and led the worship, including offering reflections...and four of our youth publicly professed their faith and were welcomed into the church: Miles Buck, Noelle Buck, Emma Moore and Peyton Valentino. We also recognized our Christian Education leadership for all of their hardwork this year!



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COORDINATOR POSITION

In light of Starr's leaving, the Christian Education Committee has prayerfully discerned what our next steps will be in finding someone to provide leadership and resources for our Christian Education Program. Session approved a position description for a part-time (8-10 hours/week, 43 weeks a year) Christian Education Coordinator. The position has been posted at a number of seminaries and presbyteries, and a search committee has been formed to interview prospective candidates: Mark Thomas, chair; Amanda Johansen; Emma Moore; Amy Valentino; and Pastor David. Please pray that God would lead the right person to this ministry with our church family.

BI-MONTHLY BIBLE STUDY



Our bi-monthly Bible Study is meeting again on the first and third Thursdays of the month at 7pm via zoom. We study the Scripture passages which will be used in worship on the following Sunday. No prior Bible knowledge is necessary! All are welcome!

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

On Sunday, May 19th, our youth led the worship service for a packed sanctuary. They ushered, played music, sang, were liturgists, and shared reflections. It was a wonderful sight to see. Thank you to all the youth who participated and to all who helped them prepare for the day. Congratulations too to Peyton, Noelle, Miles, and Emma, who were confirmed.

In just a few weeks, we will be holding our first outdoor worship service of the year. We have a new tent and a few new changes to the layout for the services. We hope you will consider joining us on our lovely grounds for worship. The first two weeks of June, July, and August, we will hold worship inside in the sanctuary. Communion will continue to be celebrated the first week of each month. If the weather cooperates, June 16th, 23rd and 30th, July 21st and 28th, and August 18th and 25th will be outdoor worship services. Help is needed each of those weeks setting up and breaking down for the service. Please see a Worship Committee member or offer your help before or after the service.



The Worship Committee continues to look for two people each week to help with livestreaming. Thank you to Robin, Beth, Andy, and Kate for volunteering. We would really like to add some more names to the volunteer list. The more people we have in the rotation, the better it is for everyone. Please consider helping out. If this non-tech savvy person can learn how to do it... anyone can!

Kate Moore

ALL CHURCH PICNIC
SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 2024, 3:30 PM
PASTOR DAVID'S FARM
NEW EGYPT, NJ

- Hot dogs, Hamburgers, Rolls, condiments and beverages provided
- Sign up on the form in Fellowship Hall to bring a side dish or a dessert
- If you need a ride, contact Shirley Hafford or Beth Clark
- Address will be provided to those who sign up

Come enjoy the food and fellowship!

Hang out with the animals

Take a dip in the swimming pond



SUMMER COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

Just another reminder that the 2024 Community Summer Fair will be held on August 17th. Planning is well in the works and your help would sincerely be appreciated! It takes many jobs and lots of willing people to pull this amazing outreach opportunity off but it is always so rewarding and lots of fun! There will be a sign-up sheet on the Fellowship Hall table to join the committee or you can email Ginger Baker at gingerwells55@hotmail.com.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION GROUP

Our Truth and Reconciliation Group will be holding a dinner and movie event on Thursday, June 13th starting at 6:00pm. All are welcome to attend and you need not be a member of the group to participate. We will serve pizza and dessert and will be viewing the movie “Rustin” about Bayard Rustin’s life. Rustin was an [American civil rights](#) activist who was an adviser to [Martin Luther King, Jr.](#), and who was the main organizer of the [March on Washington](#) in 1963. We hope you will consider joining us.

Our next book study will be [Across That Bridge: A Vision for Change and the Future of America](#) by John Lewis. The T&R Group will be purchasing copies for those interested in reading the book this summer. Information about a discussion of the book will be shared in the upcoming months. All are welcome to participate. You don’t have to be a member of the group to join us in reading the book or to join our discussion.

For both the movie night and book study, please use the sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall or email Kate Moore by June 10th at katmoore76@gmail.com if you wish to participate.

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 8th via Zoom. Please look for the link the Sunday before in the “announcements” email from Carol. All are welcome.

“It is the responsibility, yet the individual choice, of each of us to use the light we have to dispel the work of darkness, because if we do not, then the power of falsehood rises. Through our inaction it becomes stronger, and a more potent force. It can even lead to the dimming of the light of all humanity born on this planet.”

— John Lewis, [Across That Bridge: Life Lessons and a Vision for Change](#)

Kate Moore



NEW TENT

Due to the generosity of Roger Melick, we now have a new 18' x 30' tent. In preparing for outside worship this summer, we will be putting the tent up on the afternoon of June 5, weather permitting.

SALE OF THE BUS

For many years we made good use of the church bus to transport people to church and activities of the church. However, in the past few years the bus has not been used and has a few mechanical issues. The Session approved the sale of the bus and through the dedicated efforts of Tom Clark the sale was finally made. You will see the bus parked in the lot for a couple more months as the final payments are received.



PROPERTY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

The June meeting of the Property and Finance Committee will take place following worship on Sunday June 9, 2024. If you have any concerns for the committee to consider, please let Ginger Baker or Bill Mansmann know.

FROM OUR YOUTH

We are so proud of our awesome youth, and although many of you already heard some of the thoughtful and very inspiring words some of them shared with us on Youth Sunday, we thought everyone would enjoy reading what one of our confirmands prepared and read that morning. We have so much we can learn from these amazing, insightful kids – pay attention!

Reflection on the Holy Spirit By Emma Moore

On Pentecost, we hear a lot about the Holy Spirit. So, I ask you, where do you see the Holy Spirit? Personally, my confirmation experience has really helped me understand where I see God's presence. I see it as my guiding light, a way through the darkness. I mostly find the Holy Spirit in nature, especially in water. When standing on the shore and listening to the waves crashing, I feel close to God. I can feel God's presence and I find it easy to breathe. When we're in Virginia at our house, we usually take our boat on sunset cruises. Watching the sunset fade between colors and the clouds move across the sky, I find peace. The waves lapping against the boat, the slight rock as we drift, the beautiful sky, and the silence always make me feel at home. The feeling of connection to God there is so special.

I have so many memories in Virginia. As a family last summer, we spent my grandparents' anniversary there. We tried out so many new things and went to some of my favorite places. I was able to show them around a place so special to me, and I felt them realize why I love it so much. When we went to Shark's Tooth Island, no one else was there. We were able to have all the experiences to ourselves. We went to my favorite barbeque place and got some really amazing food. But there are other memories there too. Like running away from the tractor with my cousins or dying Easter eggs with my great grandmother. Those are such special memories for me, in such a special place. Watching my dogs' excitement as we hit the rock driveway on our way in and seeing them be free and home again. It's something I wouldn't trade for the world. Spending time in Virginia helps me feel at home, even if my official home is here. There's something special about Virginia for me and where I feel close to God.

I can also find the Holy Spirit in acts of kindness. It encourages us to love and support one another. It doesn't have to be anything too crazy. It can simply be telling someone that you're always there if they need to talk, or offering to help clean up after an event. It's the simple things that really make a difference.

But we are also called to help one another in bigger, deeper ways. We, as Christians, are called into action by the Holy Spirit. We are told to find the good in people and to make the world a better place. I read Dr. Shirley Guthrie's idea of the Holy Spirit, and I wanted to share it with you all this morning. He said, "anywhere you see goodness prevailing over evil, anywhere you see light chasing away the darkness, anywhere you see healing emerging, hope prevailing, anywhere you see love instead of hatred, justice instead of injustice, faith instead of fear, collaboration instead of competition, care instead of callousness – THAT is the Spirit of God at work. The Holy Spirit is everywhere... The Spirit of God is present, always at work, to move us, move the community, move the world, closer to God's justice and joy, healing and wholeness, unity and peace."

Dr. Shirley Guthrie's take on the Holy Spirit really resonates with me. I really see the Holy Spirit at work in situations like these. When we take time to communicate with one another instead of yelling, or express ourselves instead of pretending to be someone we aren't, we are living through the Holy Spirit. By learning from our mistakes and improving, we're able to take time to reflect on what we can do better.

The Holy Spirit is present in our church. At Slackwood, we take time to give back. We just finished our diaper challenge for Homefront, helping mothers in need. We packed 225 bags with snacks in January for our Martin Luther King Jr Day of Service to help feed some in our community through the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen. The Truth and Rec group which addresses matters of injustice was created when the Holy Spirit moved some of our members to confront racism in our country after the death of George Floyd. Every member in our church gives back to our community in little and big ways. Each one of you has the Holy Spirit in you.

Sometimes it can be hard to understand what we are being called to do. Sometimes the Holy Spirit pushes us into action. Sometimes it nudges us. Sometimes it's just a whisper. It was present when we drove past Marilyn's house on her birthday during COVID. It was there when we sent birthday cards to Fred Mitchell. It was there when we picked Pastor David. It was also present when the confirmands packed bags at embrella. There is so much of the Holy Spirit in the choices we make at Slackwood.

So today on Pentecost and every day, I challenge you to listen for the Holy Spirit. Whether it's a whisper, a gentle nudge, or a push, listen for God's presence in your life. Send someone a card you haven't talked to in a while. Say hi to your neighbors when you go home. Catch up with someone at Church during Fellowship. Donate to a charity that is supporting a mission you are passionate about. Stand up to hatred when you see it. Be God's light in the world.