



TOWER TIDINGS NEWSLETTER

September 2021



September is traditionally “Back to School” month. The children in our neighborhood are already back in class or will be shortly. As adults we too can and should continue our learning, particularly about God. This year First Church is offering an opportunity for everyone to form or join a study group to deepen our understanding of the God we worship.

Palmyra First Church will be using materials from the Grab, Gather, Grow series of studies put together by several United Methodist pastors. The format is simple: the teaching is presented via a DVD with a study book available, all you really need to do is **Grab** a DVD and book, **Gather** some people for study, and **Grow** spiritually and in your relationship with God.

The book is vital for the facilitator but is not necessary for the rest of the group. The teaching is done by the speakers on the DVD. The beauty of the Grab, Gather, Grow series is the ease in starting a small group. Your group can be neighbors, friends, coworkers, neighbors, just about any group of people who are willing to grow closer to God.

Our first Grab, Gather, Grow study will be on the Apostles’ Creed. This is a wonderful opportunity to invite people exploring the faith and nominal Christians to join in a study. Because the study can be done anywhere there is access to a DVD player, it can be done in homes, the workplace lunchroom, or even a diner that will give you a bit of quiet space and a place for a DVD player and screen to play the sessions on. The possibilities are endless.

I invite you to begin planning now to host a small study group. Think about your circle of friends. The study might be more interesting if you include people from various faith backgrounds. Imagine a group with a few Catholics, a Presbyterian, some Brethren and a few “none’s” (people affiliated with no church). There could be some discussions with each group contributing to group to enhance everyone’s understanding of God.

Begin thinking now about who you might invite to join in our study of the Apostles’ Creed. Then lay the groundwork. Decide on a meeting where you have an opportunity to watch a DVD and discuss the material. Then **Grab** a DVD and book, **Gather** a few friends, and **Grow** spiritually.

Grace & Peace,

Worship Themes for the Month of August at Palmyra First Church

For the first two weeks of September, we will conclude our series “Remembered in the Windows” which has been looking at all the non-biblical characters portrayed in our sanctuary whom our spiritual forebearers thought were important enough to memorialize in the stained and painted glass.

For the third Sunday Mike Poltonavage will again fill the pulpit as Pastor Jim joins his confirmation class in Quakertown, where most of the kids will be confirmed. For the final Sunday, we will begin our study of the Apostles’ Creed which will tie to our Grab, Gather, Grow study series on the creed. Our focus for Sundays in September is as follows:

September 5th: Labor Day Weekend, we turn our attention to a window that is unique to Palmyra First Church. The image in the window is of Samuel F. Engle. Samuel and his wife Agnes worked tirelessly for Christ at First Church. We have much to learn from this couple. Our scriptures will be taken from Acts 18:24-28 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13.

September 12th: We arrive at the final window in the sermon series. This time there are two men shaking hands, they are Bishops Arthur R. Cleppinger and John S. Stamm. These two bishops were influential in the development of the Evangelical United Brethren Church which only operated under that name for 22 years (from 1946 until 1968). Do these men still have a message for us today? Our scriptures will be taken from 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 and John 17:9-23.

September 19th: Mike Poltonavage will be our “guest” preacher. The message is titled “You ARE Valuable” and will be based on Ephesians 2:8-10. As you prepare for this service contemplate this riddle: “What does a cracked pot, a lightyear, and a \$1 bill have to do with our value?” What does our Creator say?

September 26th: We begin our series on the Apostles’ Creed with a message “I Believe?” We will focus on the importance of being able to summarize the important beliefs that shape our faith. Our scriptures will be taken from Romans 10:5-17 and Matthew 16:13-20. As you think about this series, consider starting or joining a Grab, Gather, Grow study group.

October 3rd: We continue looking at the Apostles’ Creed and the first statement of faith, “I believe in God”. Our scriptures will be taken from Isaiah 64:1-8 and Romans 8:12-17.

Building Upgrades at Palmyra First

By the time you read this we will hopefully have completed two major building upgrades. Both were necessary for the successful continuation of our ministries.

The first project was to replace the aging and malfunctioning fire alarm system. The old system was a hybrid system cobbled together using parts from two different vendors. While the system served our needs for years, age had taken its toll. Parts were no longer available and the company having responsibility for its maintenance gave us notice they would no longer be able to maintain the system.

After careful consideration of four competitive bids, the Board of Trustees selected Johnson Controls as the contractor for installation of a new system. Johnson is a state-of-the-art alarm company whose best-known alarm systems are the Simplex Brand that they own. After several weeks of wiring new horns and strobes, installing new pull stations, smoke detectors, heat sensors and related equipment the system is finally operational. The new system meets the current fire codes and was a vital project to allow us to continue using our building for public gatherings and the operation of Noah's Little Ark.

The biggest difference you might notice is the more abundant horns and strobe lights that will alert us to a fire should one occur. You may also notice the pull stations are now more accessible for a person in a wheelchair but are protected against children's fingers with a sturdy plastic cover.

The second major system to be replaced was the boiler. The trustees noticed the increased number of service calls over the past few years. After a thorough inspection by an outside party, we came to the realization the boiler was on its last legs. Rust had taken a toll which caused the burner unit to occasionally misfire and spew unburned oil from the chimney while simultaneously adding a very unpleasant and unhealthy smell to the building. The new unit should be installed during the last week of August with a completion before the school year for Noah's resumes.

The total cost for these two projects is about \$70,000. Deposits were paid using funds from the monthly "Capital Improvement" envelope. The church also borrowed \$60,000 from the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Loan Fund on a 10-year note. While the loan term is 10 years, we hope to retire the loan much faster than that! As you prayerfully consider your offerings to the work of Christ through Palmyra First, please consider a special donation to the Capital Improvement Fund.

Small Group Studies

The Blessed Misfits, our Wednesday evening study group, is always open to new members who would like to join. For the summer we were using the book "Ask," by the father and son team of Scott and Arthur Jones. This study continues into September but will transition to a study of the Apostles' Creed using the **Grab, Gather, Grow** materials mentioned in the Pastor's cover letter.

The Blessed Misfits is a group open to anyone who is willing to join. It meets each Wednesday in the Church's South Wing at 6:30 PM. A few of the group also gather to share a dinner together before each session, sometimes at a diner, sometimes at the church. Feel free to join us.

If you would like to be a part of a small group, but the current topics or times do not work for you, consider creating a new group. The pastor will be happy to assist in getting the group started.

Extending the Table

Do you like to visit old friends? Do you enjoy the opportunity to bring a bit of joy to someone's life? If so, you might be the perfect candidate to join in the ministry of Extending the Table of Communion to our unwillingly absent members. Each member of the team is provided communion elements that were consecrated at the Sunday service along with a bulletin and a copy of a brief service. They then go to their assigned people (by appointment) and "Extend the Table" of communion with a visit and short service.

Who are the "unwillingly absent?" They are people who, for a variety of reasons are unable to attend in person. They might be limited physically, maybe family obligations keep them away, or it could be that work keeps them from worship. The unwillingly absent are those who would have been here if they could be but are for whatever reason unable to attend. Pastor Jim will be offering a training class in September for those willing to be "Extenders of the Table." To learn more about the program call the church office and Vickie will make the necessary arrangements and register you for a training session convenient for you.

The Search Continues!

As of this writing, the Staff Parish Relations Committee continues its search for an organist. We have had some promising interviews but are not yet ready to announce a new organist. If you have connections to an organist, please let them know we have an opening at Palmyra First.

Knowledge Feast Seminars

Our Vision Team is planning another session of our Learning Feast Seminars. September's topic is Long Term Care Insurance, and our guest speaker will be Jim Gill of Thrivent Financial. He will be live and in person in our sanctuary on September 19th at 3:00 PM. You can attend either in person, or via the online stream on Facebook Live.

Please register for your seat by contacting Vickie in the church office at either 717-838-2551 or via email at admin@palmyrafirst.org. She will be happy to reserve your place for this learning opportunity.

Registration Knowledge Feast Education Series

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

9-19-201	Long-Term Care Insurance, Pros. Vs Cons. By Jim Gill – Thrivent Financial	
10-17-2021	Nutrition as You Age	
11-21-2021	Beating the Holiday Blues	

Vision Team Report

Our Vision Team continues to meet monthly. They are working on a variety of ways we can increase the vitality of our ministry. One of the projects being worked on is a musical series. The group is working on securing musicians for a series of concerts to be held outdoors or in the sanctuary depending on the weather.

If you have connections to a musical group or individual that would be appropriate for the series, please pass their contact information to the team. You can do that by emailing Vickie (admin@palmyrafirst.org) or Pastor Jim (pastorjim@palmyrafirst.org), or by calling the office with the contact information.

Watch the bulletins and newsletters for more information.



Respond to Haiti Earthquake through UMCOR

The news coming out of Haiti is devastating, and aid is direly needed. You can also donate on the UMCOR website through Palmyra First Church.

On August 14, 2021, a magnitude 7.2 earthquake struck southwestern Haiti, approximately 80 miles west of the capital Port-au-Prince, killing and injuring thousands of people. The earthquake also damaged or destroyed hundreds of houses and other buildings, including critical public buildings such as hospitals and churches, across the Grand Anse, Nippes, and Sud departments.

U.S. Response

USAID immediately deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to lead the U.S. government's response efforts. The team of elite USAID disaster experts is on the ground conducting damage assessments and coordinating with government officials to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to communities affected by the earthquake.

UMCOR Haiti Earthquake Support

The United Committee on Relief appeals for prayer and support for Haiti and its people. The agency stands in solidarity and is in communication with partners in Haiti as the full scale of this disaster unfolds. UMCOR is working with partners in Haiti on how to best meet the immediate needs of survivors following Saturday's devastating earthquake.



For families of those who have died or are missing, we extend prayers of comfort. For communities experiencing upheaval and uncertainty, we offer prayers of peace.

Join us by making a gift to the work of international disaster response. You may make checks payable to Palmyra First United Methodist Church, please note Haiti in the memo section of your check. If mailing your donation, send it to Palmyra First Church at 520 E. Birch Street, Palmyra, Pa. 17078. You can also go directly to UMCOR's Website to donate. <https://umcmmission.org/advance-project/982450/>.



Charge Conference Meeting at First Church

Charge Conference will be held at First Church on November 18, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. Pastor Jim has asked for a Church Conference meeting, will include the Palmyra and Annville area church representatives. More information will be published in our church information publications over the next months.

September Discovery Dunes

“Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits.” Psalms 68:19

Summer was busy and enjoyed by all. Our Discovery Dunes children have made butterflies to display on a bulletin board in the narthex. This bulletin board is a reminder from our Lord.



“Finally, brothers, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise think on these things.” Philippians 4:8

Discovery Dunes children sent greeting cards to our church seniors to cheer them up. Just a reminder: You may find the notes to our Senior shut-ins on a shelf in the narthex. They are already addressed, (Thanks to Amy). I am sure our seniors would enjoy receiving a kind touch from our church members.

September’s Theme for our Sunday School lessons is Reconciliation.

Sept. 5	Joseph and His Brothers	Gen. 37
Sept. 12	Joseph in Egypt	Gen. 39:20 - 40:23
Sept. 19	Joseph Saves the Day	Gen. 41:1-57
Sept. 26	Joseph and His Brothers Reunited	Gen. 42:1-46:34

September Guests for Awakenings Coffee Shop

Tuesday, September 7

Karen Groh - Director, Lebanon County Chamber of Commerce

Tuesday, September 14

Kevin Snyder- Chief of Police, North Londonderry Township

Tuesday, September 21

Tina Manoogian - King Recreation Director, Palmyra Area and Recreation & Parks Commission.

Tuesday, September 28

John Eberly - Township Manager, South Londonderry Township

Faith Acts United Methodist Women's (UMW) News

UMW will meet by Zoom on Tuesday, Sept.14, at 7 pm.

Email Sally slsmedley622@gmail.com if you would like to be part of our virtual (Zoom) gathering and are not yet a participant in UMW. All women are welcome! We will be catching up with each other and planning coming events, which may include Secret Angels and Gratitude Month activities.

UMW wishes to thank everyone who contributed to our collection of clothes and school supplies for LCCM. We collected over 200 items. Bryan Smith, director of LCCM, was West District UMW's speaker Aug. 7th at a picnic in our church pavilion. Thanks to everyone who pitched in to make that a successful event.

T.E.A. (Through Eyes of Another) Reading Group

After a summer break, **T.E.A.** will resume book discussions, beginning with The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson in September. Our October selection is the Midnight Library by Matt Haig, and November is The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah.

Our September discussion will be via Zoom on Thursday, Sept. 16th, 7pm, led by Jane Zimmerman, Contact Amy Dellinger amyd@brwnstone.com if you want to know more about **T.E.A.**

Knit Crochet and Pray

It has been a very long time since we have met together in-person, though our participants have kept their crochet hooks and knitting needles busy creating items for others.

Currently we are collecting handmade knitted or crocheted dishcloths to distribute with reminders for women to get their mammogram during October – Breast Cancer Awareness Month. There are baskets to receive donated dishcloths in the church office and entrance hall. Tentatively we are planning to meet Sept. 22nd 3 pm in the Parish Hall to wrap the dishcloths, assuming that can be Covid-safe. (We may need to wear masks by then or meet outside)

New needleworkers are always welcome.

Email Karen Douds douds2@comcast.net if you want to know more about **Knit Crochet and Pray**.

Palmyra Kiwanis Club

The Kiwanis Club of the Palmyra Area collects new or gently used children's books to distribute to children in our 2 Little Free Libraries and at Lebanon Country Christian Ministries. If you have any books, you might be willing to donate, please place them in the white Kiwanis box in the narthex. Thank you!

Lancaster Lebanon Habitat for Humanity

Our church has been given another opportunity to be in mission right here in our own county. Lancaster Lebanon Habitat for Humanity is currently renovating three historic homes on Cumberland Street in Lebanon that were ravaged by fire. Habitat has identified two families to move into these homes and is actively interviewing others for the third home. These future homeowners are working hard to complete their sweet equity hours necessary to purchase a Habitat home. In the meantime, the construction crew is searching for volunteers to work at the construction site to help get the homes ready for their new owners.

We would like to volunteer on the **first Friday of each month**—First Friday with First! We are scheduled to volunteer on

- September 3
- October 1
- November 5
- December 3

At this time, we do not know what work will need to be done, but, typically, the construction foreman is able to find jobs for all skill levels. There are signup sheets at the info desk in the narthex for the first two volunteer dates on September 3 and October 1 where you can indicate your interest. If you have questions, please contact Amy Dellinger at 717-821-0298 or amyd@brwnstone.com.

Amy Balestier, Director for Development and Communications for the Lancaster Lebanon Habitat for Humanity receives a \$10,000 check from Rick McCann, housing ministry coordinator of the First United Methodist Church, Palmyra, during Sunday services on August 22, 2021. Looking on are church leaders and members John Horn, Amy Dellinger, Dave Yascavage and Tom Ryan.



Save The Date for Corinna Joy

On Sunday September 12, 2021. Corinna Joy will offer her electric, piano-driven melodies at our church pavilion between 3 and 5 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. Bring your lawn chairs.

Corinna Joy is a Central PA singer/songwriter whose electric, piano-driven melodies combine folk, jazz, and pop influences. Corinna's live shows are a mix of new takes on old classics, top 40 radio hits with a twist, and her own deeply honest original music.

As a songwriter, Corinna has published three albums of original music. Her song "Time Is Up" was awarded Song of the Year at the first annual Central Pennsylvania Music Awards, and she is currently nominated for Female Solo Artist of the Year at the 2021 CPMAS.

She has been featured on WITF Music, ABC27's Good Day PA, Lancaster Online, and the PennLive Soundcheck.

Celebrating 13 years of dedicated service....



First Church members celebrate Mary's thirteen years of service as Operations Manager with a cake and coffee social between the 9 and 10:30 a.m. services on August 8, 2021. We thank Mary for the many contributions she made through her participation in Mission trips (especially the great meals she prepared), youth events, seasonal decorations, volunteer coordination as well as her day-to-day church operation responsibilities. We wish her well in wherever her spiritual journey takes her next.

First Church in the Mission Field.....

Carol, Mike, Ron, and Herm fill take-out trays for the noon time meal at the Lebanon County Christian Ministries, LCCM, on Saturday July 31, 2021. Over 130 were fed with donated food from vendors at the Lebanon County Fair. First Church will participate again, on August 28, with twelve church folks participating. Look for more opportunities to serve LCCM coming our way soon.

