
BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION REPORT MAY 2020

Your Executive Committee and Board of Administration met online via Zoom in May. To keep you informed, this article summarizes the Board's activity.

Childcare Initiative: For several years, a planning committee has been working toward a vision of a possible future local ministry for our congregation - that of providing high-quality, affordable, all-day childcare for ages ranging from infants (6-months) through elementary school. The Board of Administration's primary agenda item was to hear presentations from planning committee leaders Leanne Kreps, Don Fecher and Jan Flora. Leanne provided information demonstrating a great need for childcare in Rockingham County, along with detailed information on how the program would be housed in the children's wing of our building along with numbers of children that could be accommodated in each room and required physical modifications. Don Fecher provided a detailed proforma showing start-up costs, budget and balance sheet for the program. Jan Flora described efforts to seek funding to supplement the program's budget.

The Board of Administration will have further discussions on the Childcare Initiative in its June meeting. If the Board decides the program should move forward, the next step will be to provide opportunities for information sharing with the congregation. Exactly how we will do that in this wilderness time remains to be planned, but we would provide the congregation with ample opportunities to learn more about this significant new ministry possibility. A final decision on whether to move forward with the Childcare Initiative would ultimately come to future congregational council meetings.

The Board extends its sincere gratitude to the Childcare Initiative planning committee and especially Leanne, Don, and Jan for their devotion to this project and for the time spent preparing and sharing with us during our meeting.

Treasurer's Report: We received the April 30 treasurer's report showing the good news that our members are continuing to give generously to our congregation's ministries. Through April 30, total income toward budget was \$222,267.58; total budgeted expenses were \$188,829.04, leaving a positive operating balance of \$33,438.54.

Other Reports: The Board heard good reports from our pastors and from the Transition Team on their continuing work.

Audio/Video System Upgrade: As we reported last month, a significant upgrade of the video and audio systems in our sanctuary is in progress. The video upgrade is complete; equipment for the audio upgrade is on order and expected to be installed in the next few weeks.

Denominational Workcamp Deposits: All denominational workcamps have been cancelled. To date our congregation has paid a total of \$2,700 in workcamp deposits. This amount represents 18 workcamp registration deposits, out of a total line-item budget of \$9,725.00 for youth and young adult event registrations for 2020. Upon recommendation from the Executive Committee, the Board of Administration approved that the deposit money already paid (\$2,700.00) be donated to support the Church of the Brethren Ministries.

Reopening our church building: At its meeting on June 2, the Executive Committee will discuss how and when we should reopen our church building for public services, meetings, and activities. There are many things to be considered. Stay tuned...

The board expresses its sincere appreciation and gratitude to our pastors and to all of you for keeping us engaged with each other in this wilderness time. Please stay safe and well.

~ *Ted Flory*, Chair, Board of Administration

CHURCH GARDEN NEWS

By Tim Kreps

Over the past couple of months we've heard stories throughout the news of people creating new ways to live life despite the storm of confusion and fear and the isolation that the pandemic has brought. Every week it becomes clear that Bridgewater Church of the Brethren has brought its own light within the storm as it is re-envisioning how to continue our faith, service, and love within our own church community, as well as the greater community around us.

While we miss sitting beside our friends and family in the pews for church, every Sunday we sit together in a new way, bringing new music, new people, and incredible technology skills to our weekly service. "Zoom" has become a verb and adjective that has helped many of us connect. Calls, cards, texts and letters are sent and received to check in. We learn to appreciate attempts to connect in ways we might not have before.



As the church garden has begun growing and producing our spring harvest, we have found that the garden itself has become yet another platform for our community to discover and create connections in new ways. An interwoven community has connected around the garden, creating a beautiful product of service that feeds not only the body, but the soul in many ways. Teachers and students who are now available and in need of a way to escape some of the stress of online classwork have come and offered their hands and feet to help with the garden. Working beside them are parents and children, excited to be outside and moving around.

Those who have been able to come work socially distant from each other have picked and washed our first round of broccoli, lettuce, swiss chard, and our new and intriguingly delicious kohlrabi (see photo). Last year at this time, nothing had been picked in the garden. This year, 900 pounds have already been harvested.

We have found that the garden continues to incorporate anyone who wishes to help. Families have helped start new plants in their own backyards to be planted in the garden. Volunteers transport food to food pantries where it will be shared. Others sit and wash/sort/bag/provide good stories and moral support. We even have two Adirondack chairs if you want to sit and look at what God is growing (feel free to yell at any passing varmints trying to eat our snap peas). Working together to garden outside or within our own homes has created an opportunity to connect. This spring the garden has beautifully evolved from being "Tim's garden" to "our garden."



More ways to connect:

- Come walk the garden...with a tour guide or without.
- Find out how we can adapt garden work to your abilities. Broccoli enthusiastically planted by preschool age church members survived the ordeal and is being harvested right now. Beans and peas growing up fencing can be picked by anyone. The herb bed we are hoping to plant will be raised to waist level.
- Help start plants at home. We constantly are putting in the "next rotation" of each crop. If you leave that up to Tim Kreps, they might die of neglect.
- Transport produce
- Eat some of our harvest. This is "our garden" we want to share. Let us know if you or someone you know would like some produce.
- Help wash, chop, bag, sort our veggies...at the church or at home...by yourself or with a socially distant buddy or two.
- Donate old garden tools that you no longer use: shovels, trowels...an old yard shed that can keep our tools from rusting.
- Get creative. Give us more ideas. Ask questions.

THANK YOU NOTE

To all our BWCOB family, we want to take this opportunity to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the cards, calls, emails, and especially for the prayers from our church family on Ellsworth's behalf. One doesn't realize how important church family is until something untoward happens! We thank God for His healing mercies and for each of you, as you have certainly been a blessing to us!

God bless you all!

Ellsworth & Jeanne Neff



REMEMBERING ... A MEMBER

Josephine S. Wampler, 89, passed away on Friday, May 1, 2020 at Bridgewater Home. She was born on December 26, 1930 in Salem, and was a daughter of the late Horace Charles and Ruth Webster Spangler. She and her husband, Dr. Frederick William Wampler whom she married in 1953, and who passed away in 2013, served as missionaries to India for 10 years. Over the course of her life she was a homemaker, a school teacher, an artist who loved weaving and painting, and a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity and Brethren Disaster Ministries. She was a lifelong member of the Church of the Brethren, joining Bridgewater COB December 15, 2002. Josephine was the mother of are three daughters, Amanda Marie Wampler Smith, Ruth Virginia Wampler, and Rosalie Savita Wampler.

VIRTUAL SUMMER CAMP Check it out!

Josh says: CHECK IT OUT!! Watz' in the Woods will start in June with seven weeks of FREE online programming, including short videos and hands on activities, that can help all of us connected to camp. All ages can check it out, but it will especially be fun for families to try.



Brethren Woods has decided it is in the best interest of Campers, families and churches to not hold traditional in person camp this summer. This will be sad for many of our kids who go to Brethren Woods each summer. However, they are offering a few opportunities to help everyone get their camp fix. Information about these plans are available at the Brethren Woods website (brethrenwoods.org) under the COVID 19 Update tab.

Certainly the camp has been hurt financially with all the cancellations. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. One way to support the camp is with the \$2500 goal: Dunk Pastor Christy! (Have you seen the latest figures?) Check it out on E-Connections.

JOIN THE VIRTUAL CHURCH OF THE BROTHERS CHOIR!

Church of the Brethren Annual Conference moderator Paul Munday has announced plans for a denominational virtual choir. A webpage will be available shortly, with resources that will allow people from across the church to add their voice to a mass Church of the Brethren choir. Three hymns are projected to be a part of the overall project: "Blessed Assurance," "I See a New World Coming," and "Move in Our Midst."

Assisting Munday with this project are moderator-elect David Sollenberger and Enten Eller, who coordinated the recent live streamed love feast that was sponsored by the Office of Ministry.

Commenting on the vision of a denominational virtual choir, Munday said, "As we continue to explore new ways to connect with each other during the ongoing pandemic, the possibility of a denominational virtual choir holds great promise. Throughout history, song has united people of faith during times of crisis. I anticipate that uniting the Church of the Brethren in song virtually will accomplish a similar outcome."

In addition to a denominational choir, plans continue for other virtual events during the week of July 1-5 when the now-canceled 2020 Annual Conference would have been held in Grand Rapids, Mich. Additional details on those events will be released soon. To be included on the mailing list to receive updates about the denominational virtual choir and the link to the project webpage, email your name and contact information to cobvirtualchoir2020@gmail.com.

BWCOB TRANSITION TEAM REPORT: May 18, 2020



We will get through this. This too shall pass. We will survive. In the past few months, much has been said about weathering the storm of COVID-19 and how our country, our world, and our community will make it through this difficult time. Now, thoughts and conversations have turned to getting back to normal. But before rushing back to life as it was, it is important to reflect on the lessons learned during this time of adversity. Recently, the Transition Team dedicated some time to a discussion of what we learned about Bridgewater Church of the Brethren in the midst of the pandemic. Members of the Team learned that despite the lack of physical togetherness, people in the church continued to find ways to be connected. We learned things about people that we did not previously know, such as the amazing talents and gifts of those who shared and continue to share in the online worship experiences. The Team is optimistic that we, as a congregation, have an opportunity to rethink how Bridgewater Church of the Brethren carries out its mission in a post-COVID-19 world.

After much time and deliberation, the Team developed the following purpose statement to capture the scope of the work before us:

To envision a needs-based congregational design that preserves the values of our past, our diversity, and our talents while also perceiving new models of leadership and organizational systems for meeting the challenges of our faith and culture.

We feel that a very important part of our task is to articulate as best we can what the nature and purpose of Jesus' church should be in the present age and to look for projections of how that church can be effective in the future. The team will be working on gathering information from current Bridgewater Church of the Brethren members and attendees through focused small group meetings alongside possible individual conversations. Currently, the Team is developing a list of focus questions as well as planning the logistics of scheduling these meetings in the midst of our current environment. We will share more information about opportunities to participate in these small group meetings in the coming weeks.

The Transition Team is holding frequent virtual meetings and we all continue to be inspired by the contributions of the members of the Team. The Team is truly devoted to ensuring the future success of this amazing community of faith. We welcome comments or suggestions and those can be submitted in a variety of ways. Emails can be sent directly to Christy Dowdy at cdowdy@bwcob.org or sent by mail c/o Christy Dowdy, Bridgewater Church of the Brethren, 420 College View Drive, Bridgewater VA 22812. We also welcome anyone to contact a member of the Transition Team directly. The Transition Team members include Christy Dowdy, Interim Senior Pastor; and Team Leader; Erin Dalrymple, Chair; John Hipps, Fred Swartz; Mike Fike; Terry Houff; Andrew Kreps; Melanie Bair; and Anita Beckman. Please know that any comments or suggestions will be kept confidential among the Transition Team members.

Thank you all for your continued support.





FROM INTERIM PASTOR CHRISTY

Time has begun to be measured by “Before Covid-19” and now. I look at the calendar and ponder: when did we cancel worship on Friday and then begin a whole new plan immediately? Does it feel as though we’ve been physically apart from one another for a long while? Even though we now are aware the coronavirus was with us long before we realized, our “lock down” beginning in March 15 has changed all of our lives. Yet at the “heart of the matter” the church continues its work and lives out its call as each of us call upon God each day and reach out, as we’re able, to neighbors and friends, near and far.

Our worship series during this past month has focused upon “Matters of the Heart.” If you have listened, or watched, you know that I have asked you to consider keeping a journal (or a simple “note”) of daily observations you have made, noting that for which you offer thanksgiving and praise.

Mots times, I fully admit I’m not good at keeping a journal. It often feels like “one more thing to do,” but because I knew that if I asked you to do it, certainly I needed to engage in the practice. And it’s been so good for me! I can read much about the differences of the days as they either slide by, or sometimes slowly pass. I have found that spending a few moments at the end of each day, just reviewing the day and pushing myself to “record” has encouraged me to pay closer attention to the many gifts of my life, particularly in these COVID days.

I do have to laugh at myself. One of the “top ten” topics of my journal is about food. I note the meals I have prepared that we have enjoyed, and how I have created something because we happened to “have” a certain ingredient on hand. Yet more often than not, a meal plan was adapted because we were “missing” an ingredient. We have delighted in being able to purchase food from the Harrisonburg Farmer’s market, and my eyes fill with tears every Saturday, as I watch the incredible organization that pulls this off share the bounty of home grown food. One day I was treated to an amazing “drop off” meal shared by a wonderful BWCOB cook. It has been fun to feel good about being able to support local business and purchase some meals at our local restaurants. The food being grown in the church garden has already amazed me. Yes, food does often unite us. Though we are not physically eating together at the table, we eat together because we are created to be fed for our own well being. We weep when there is not enough nutritious food for everyone.

A few years back, Psalm 63 became a touch stone of my life when I soaked in the words at an over night silent retreat. I had a “feast” of alone God time, away from my young family, and ran across these words which continue to feed me.

O God, you are my God, I seek you,, my soul thirsts for you;

my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.

Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast

Yes. My life is a rich feast, filled with meaningful relationships, with amazing food, with an opportunity to serve alongside this congregation so that together we might share the feast of God with others. *God will continue to share the feast of love. May we all taste and see the wonders of God’s way ...*

Pastor Christy



Congratulations to our 2019-2020 Graduates!

High School

Gena Day-Miller, *Turner Ashby High School*

Planning to attend Old Dominion University,
majoring in Elementary Education and minoring in Psychology

College / Graduate School

Justin Carpenter, *Bridgewater College*

BS in Computer Science with a minor in Information Systems
Working as a 3D Modeler/Software Developer
Plans to continue being a youth leader and dopes to expand his Fit4Christ ministry

Rebecca Duncan, *Bridgewater College*

BS in Political Science & Public Policy
Hoping to start work as a social worker in the Roanoke Valley.
Plans to one day run for political office.

Alton Hipps, *College of William and Mary, magna cum laude*

BS in Geology and Environmental Science
Will begin a year in Brethren Volunteer Service in August as Workcamp Coordinator

Riley Metzler, *Bridgewater College*

BS in Health and Exercise Science
Anticipates working in the health care system

Taylor Metzler, *Bridgewater College*

BS in Biology and minor in Psychology
Planning to continue her studies as a Physician's Assistant

Ella Kasten, *College of William and Mary*

BS in Biology and Environmental Design
Will be working as a Fellow in the Center for Geospatial Analysis in Williamsburg

Eli Quay, *Bridgewater College, summa cum laude*

BS in Communication, Technology, and Culture with a minor in Philosophy and Religion
Planning to work for a year and then pursue a Master's degree in Communication

Congratulations to the following graduates who have been active in our campus ministry (BSM) and/or worshipped or fellowshiped with us often during their time at Bridgewater College:

Kasey Carns, *Bridgewater College, cum laude*

**BS in Family & Consumer Sciences with a concentration in Child Development
and a minor in Social Work**

Amelia Gunn, *Bridgewater College, summa cum laude*

**BA in Liberal Studies (Elementary Education)
Planning to enter Brethren Volunteer Service this Fall**

John Harding, *Bridgewater College* (December)

Christen King, *Bridgewater College*

BA in Liberal Studies (Elementary Education)

Josh Layton, *Bridgewater College*

BA in Music

**Will be working as an elementary music and choir teacher
at Greenwood Mennonite School in Delaware**

Ben McCrickard, *Bridgewater College, magna cum laude*

BA in Global Studies and a German Studies concentration and a German Language minor

**Will be pursuing a Master's degree in National Security Policy Studies with a concentration in
US National Security at George Washington University**

Daniel Naff, *Bridgewater College, cum laude*

BS in Environmental Sciences with a Wildlife Biology emphasis

Will be looking for employment in the conservation field

Sarah Wampler, *Bridgewater College, summa cum laude*

BS in Biology and Psychology

**Will be working as a graduate research assistant while working on her Ph.D in Behavioral
Neuroscience at West Virginia University**

Congratulations also to the following graduates who are part of our extended families:

Ryan Noelle McDaniel-Neff, *Fauquier High School*

(Granddaughter of Ellsworth and Jeanne Neff)

Plans to attend Virginia Tech in the fall, majoring in Natural Resources and Environment

Nicki Wilson, *James Madison University*

(Sister of Jon Wilson)

For Our Prayers during the Month of JUNE 2020

Each month a prayer list with opportunities for directed prayer is included with our newsletter. In addition to highlighting specific prayer requests, we are invited to pray with particular mindfulness of the persons connected with our congregation and community.

There are many decisions which will continue to be in our prayers as we live into the realities of the Coronavirus alongside the "permission" given by the Commonwealth of Virginia for the process of reopening church buildings. I offer this prayer as the executive committee continues to discern and invite you to pray with us. (If you have comments, questions, feel free to contact Board Chair Ted Flory, as well as Pastors Christy or Chris.)

Gracious and loving God,

We are not people of fear: we are people of courage. We are not people who protect our own safety: we are people who protect our neighbors' safety. We are not people of greed: we are people of generosity. We are your people God, giving and loving, wherever we are, whatever it costs For as long as it takes wherever you call us. We pray, God, for the decisions we face and the abilities you have given us. Give to us wisdom, patience with one another, and the strength of your love and conviction. Grant us your Spirit, help us in our deliberations and stir us to faithful action. In Christ's loving name we pray, AMEN.

We lift up in prayer and mindfulness specifically...

... the many who face tremendous challenges in these days of isolation and separation

...the Transition Team of Bridgewater Church of the Brethren

...those who have lost employment through this Pandemic

...those who grieve, not often in isolation

... those under the care of Hospice, Palliative Care and Comfort Care...Doris & Harold Good, Ginny Whitten

...those who recently have had surgery, been hospitalized, are receiving treatments, are recovering from illness or are in rehabilitation, specifically...

Naoma Clague, Michael Figgs, Jr. Mandi Glendye, Ellsworth Neff, Sandy Shomo, sister of Vickie Slaubaugh, Delores Simmons, Jackie Towers, Dale Ulrich

... those receiving treatments for cancer...Kay Bowman, Lynne Brumbaugh, Jeremy Driver, Betty Wayman (mother of Claire Wayman), Karen Wyrick and Amy Everhart, cousin of Dave Lineweaver, Sue Hutchinson & Peggy Lineweaver

... for Rosetta Harris, recently moved to retirement home in Penn Laird for care

... those housed in correctional centers... Mary Cline Detrick is requesting prayer for her neighbor, Ben Saunders, now residing at Coffeewood Correctional Center, who has been exposed to COVID-19 through two aides at the prison. He has heightened concerns due to his diabetes. Please pray for him, his family, and all those in the center.

... for Dominique & Rebecca Duncan, who have learned that they are expecting! They also request our prayers as they navigate this new development as they settle into their new home in Roanoke, look for jobs, etc.

...those requiring long-term healthcare, specifically those at...

Curis of Harrisonburg, Bridgewater Home, Harrisonburg Health & Rehab, & Sunnyside

...those taking classes from Bothany Theological Seminary, specifically...Sharon Flaten (Jos, Nigeria), Clarke & Hope Staton

...graduates of high schools and colleges who are not able to be part of a "Live" graduation ceremony

...those in Military Service, specifically...Tyler Hopkins, Kent Hutchinson

...those who are requesting prayer specifically or have been on the prayer chain recently

Hauwa Abdu, 1 of over 200 girls & young women kidnapped in Nigeria in April 2014

...for those who wait at borders and are treated in inhumane ways

...our Nation and World ... we are reminded of how connected we are ...

For these and all God's children we pray...