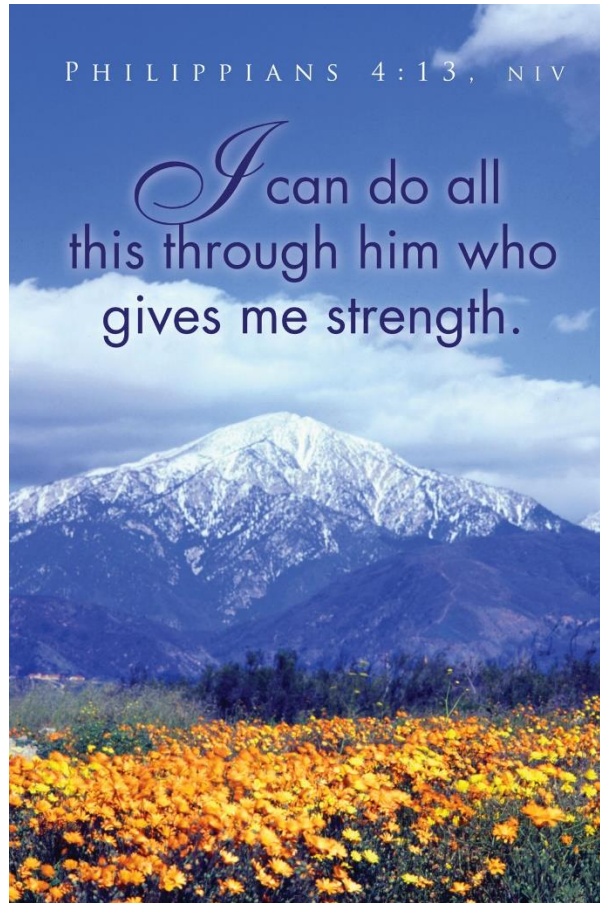


Weekly News from Johnsville United Methodist Church



Johnsville UMC May 4, 2020

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Recently, I was talking to a woman struggling navigating through the unemployment check-in process. We have not seen unemployment like this since the Great Depression. The methods of checking in are through the state website. The long lines waiting to check in are in the hundreds of thousands. It takes hours or days to navigate through the system to place a claim and/or check-in. The state website went down for a period of twenty-four hours with a domino effect that many more the following day attempted to use the website. If unemployment isn't difficult enough for someone, this was a cherry on top.

In another conversation with someone, it was shared the difficulty and fatigue felt from working on the front lines. This person shared the guilt of possibly being a carrier of the disease and not even knowing it. The additional hours of work caused this person to not be physically present with their family.

An older person shared the blessing of having people care enough to help with shopping and errand running, but lamenting the opportunity of “picking out my own stuff.” This person missed going to Bible study and exchanging ideas, joys and concerns with old friends in Christ. This person also expressed the disappointment of missing the celebration of holidays and special occasions in person with family. The preparation of special foods made with love has become a void.

Many of us have moments of lament in this temporary new norm of isolation. It is normal and natural. It is important for us to remember that this **is not** forever. It is predicted that things will change in our world when the restrictions are lifted. Things change every day. Although it is cliché it is true—the one thing that we can count on is change.

There is something else bigger and better that we can count on in this life and in the life to come. That is the power and grace of Jesus Christ! We are not victims! We are victorious in all things in Him who strengthens us! It matters not the challenge before us. We can persevere by faith in Him. We all have days when we are at the end of our rope and we are losing our stuff. After letting a little steam out of our teapots, in healthy ways, we should turn our hearts back to Jesus the source of our strength.

I encourage you to write Philippians 4:13 down on paper and post in many places so that you are forced to read it often. I did and it fell into me just before time to write this to you.

In Christian love,

Pastor Shari

“Yes, I Can!”

“I can do all things through Christ, which strengthens me.”

~Philippians 4:13

Today's Affirmation: I am a victor in and through Christ and yes, I can!

Dear Jesus,

For far too long, I clung to the victim story, I would fuss and complain; brood and ruminate about my circumstances. One day, for reasons I still don't fully understand, Your love broke through my darkness and I surrendered. Now, I live in Love knowing that Your strength and peace are mine. In You, I am a victor. Your grace is sufficient, thank You. Amen

The State of the Church

Churches throughout the Baltimore-Washington Conference will continue to operate under restrictions that mitigate the spread of COVID-19 through May 15, Bishop LaTrelle Easterling announced in a State of the Church webinar.

Conferences rescheduled: The Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference Session has been postponed until Sept. 12. The General Conference session, originally scheduled for this May, has been rescheduled for Aug. 31-Sept. 10, 2021.

Shepherd's Staff Update

Good Morning to All,

Hopefully, this email finds everyone safe and well. We miss seeing each and every one of you, and we wanted to give you a quick update on the current status of The Shepherd's Staff. Please share this information with your congregation or group.

We are still open for business!!

Like so many others, we have temporarily modified our mode of operation.

-As of March 17th, in compliance with social distancing guidelines, and for the safety of everyone involved, we discontinued volunteer service at The Shepherd's Staff, until further notice.

-On March 20th, we began working remotely and serving individuals and families virtually. Since then, still keeping with social-distancing guidelines, we have handled emergency financial assistance requests over the phone and through emails, and have set up appointments for those in need of supplies and/or mail pick-up. We have also set up many appointments for supporters wishing to drop-off donations.

Business hours

-Although we are not physically open, our hours remain the same; M, T, F, 10-2, and Th-3-7. We continue to retrieve phone messages and emails daily, and respond to set up appointments, or offer assistance, as soon as possible.

Our new "normal"

-Mondays-Client calls, emails, staff meeting, regular day-to-day operations.

-Tuesdays-**Appointment Day** Client calls and emails, regular day-to-day operations-2 staff members on site to serve guests and accept donations, **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.**

-Thursdays-Check-issuance day, for clients approved to receive financial assistance, client calls and emails, regular day-to-day operations

-Fridays-Client calls and emails, regular day-to-day operations

How you can help

-Participate in our newest fundraiser, *The Shep Stride Virtual 0.0!* (see attached flyer) <https://runsignup.com/Race/MD/Anywhere/TheShepStrideVirtual00>

-Blessings Closet Donations (Personal care items, household cleaning products, etc)

The need is great now, and will be even greater when we return. Please contact us for a list of needed items, if you are unfamiliar with this program.

-Monetary Donations

COVID-19 has unemployment at an unprecedented low. We expect the need for financial assistance and other programs will soon be like nothing we've experienced. At the same time, this pandemic has left The Shepherd's Staff with no choice but to cancel much needed spring fundraisers. Please give if you are able, and spread the word!

-Prayers!

Now, more than ever, we need your prayers.

We pray that we will be in a position to answer the call to serve those in need.

Thank you for your continued love and support. We look forward to the day we will see your smiling faces again!

God Bless,

The Shepherd's Staff

Report from Joint Mission Committee

Our Mission Committee from St. Paul and Johnsville has been working. We have had requests to support local hospitals, so below you will see the numbers we have so far.

22 Gowns

219 Masks

87 Caps

62 Pocket Prayer Squares (crocheted)

Ways that you can help to continue and be a part of our mission:

- **Sewers** for masks, caps and gowns
- **Crocheters or knitters** for prayer squares (prayer paper will be provided)
- **Material** – 100% cotton for masks, cotton or blends for caps and gowns
- **Bias tape**
- **1/4 " grosgrain ribbon**
- **1/4 " or other elastic**
- **Donations to purchase materials**

All items are made with donated material and are given away wherever needed.

Please contact Jacque Wilhelm with any questions or to volunteer. 443-974-0541

BWC's On-site Summer Camp Canceled

It is with heavy hearts that Baltimore-Washington Conference leaders announce that, in response to the coronavirus pandemic, the onsite summer camping programs and retreats at The West River Center, Manidokan Camp and Retreat Center, and Camp Harmison are canceled for the summer of 2020.

Retreat facilities and programs for individual groups are expected to re-open August 9.

Camping is one of the Conference's most valued ministries. Nearly 15,000 people utilize the BWC's camping and retreat facilities each year, many of them young people, who encounter God in life-transforming ways at nearly 60 residential and day camp programs each summer. Summer camp also draws together more than 340 servant leaders. Along the West River and in the mountains near Harper's Ferry, campfires, arts and crafts, rope courses, sailing, exploring nature, games, Bible study, skits, music, climbing walls, swimming, and so much more serve as the backdrop for personal growth and spiritual formation.

While this was a difficult decision, the safety and wellbeing of every child is a foundational principle of Retreat and Camping Ministries and one that guided our process. Providing a haven where every child is safe, protected, and valued continues to be paramount to every dimension of the summer camp.

While the traditional summer camp experience will not be held this year, Retreat and Camping Ministry staff are preparing several opportunities for fun, friends, and faith that will be announced in late May. Creating connections among people and with God is one of the strengths of summer camp, and the staff will be building upon this strength with creative offerings in the season ahead.

Accepting and addressing change in the midst of this pandemic is challenging. The Council on Finance and Administration has approved a spending plan that will enable the retention of regular, year-round camping staff. The leaders of the Retreat and Camping Ministry express their profound gratitude to the clergy, lay leadership, and all the people of the Baltimore-Washington Conference for their ongoing support.

Your prayers are also sought for the staff, volunteers, those who seek time apart in retreat, and for all the young people who won't be able to gather around a campfire this summer. In the words of an old camp song: "All is well, Safely rest, God is nigh."

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Camping and Retreat Office at 410-867-0991 or admin@bwccampsandretreats.com.

ReOpening, ReNewing, ReStarting webinar: 'Training Tuesday' on a Thursday!



In this season of the coronavirus pandemic, congregations have learned how to be church in new ways. Now, as government leaders begin to consider how to reopen the public landscape, spiritual leaders will take on a new set of skills and responsibilities as the church restarts in-person meetings and renews itself as the body of Christ.

What questions do you and your church need to be asking? What are some of the best strategies to be considering? What does it mean to return to normal, when normal may never be the same again? Now is the time to begin planning.

Join us for a Zoom webinar, hosted by **Bishop LaTrelle Easterling and the Rev. Bill Brown**, this Thursday, May 7, at 7 p.m. [Register online](#) and the Zoom link and password will be sent to you.

Prayer Requests

George Pisacano
Wally Hornbeck, neighbor to Rebecca and Dempsey
Pastor Lyle Lane-Kristy's grandfather
Fay Reese
Patsy Eyler
Louise Graybill
Wade Young
All suffering from the virus COVID-19
Those working on the front lines
Small business and their employees
Farmers
Those working in law enforcement, state and federal governments
Leaders; political, religious, teachers, etc.
Those suffering from food insecurity
Those who have lost their jobs
Johnsville United Methodist Church
St. Paul United Methodist Church
Carolene Will- healing
Faith Richards in hospice care
Chuck Coles- healing
Valerie Bennett- Co-oworker of Paul McCourt

