



News from the Hill...

St. John-Hill U.C.C. 620 Hill Church Road, Boyertown, PA 19512 February 2017



Church Contact Information

Re. Mary Lake-Dillensnyder - Interim Pastor

Mr. Charles Anhalt - Sexton

Rev. Jim Rogers – Pastor Emeritus

Mrs. Wendy Shane - Church Treasurer

Mr. Elmer Miller – Musical Director/
Organist

Church Telephone: 610-367-8114

Mrs. Nikki Weller – Church Secretary

Church Website: www.stjohnhillucc.org

PASTORAL PONDERERS

Greetings to all! Once again, I wish to begin with a word of thanksgiving. The ongoing support and graciousness of you all here at St. John-Hill Church is just wonderful. I feel so welcomed and appreciated, and you have all done an excellent job in this time of transition. Our Christmas celebrations in worship were very well attended. Each Sunday it is so fantastic to see you all and have time to meet you in one-to-one conversations. I am slowly but consistently learning names and placing names with faces. It is such a beautiful and rich time as we get to know each other. I am very impressed by the faithfulness and endurance I see within our church family. You are all a delightful people!

And, while we are thinking of delightful people, my mind shifts to some other people as well. Each year, in February, we celebrate President's Day. We remember our first president, George Washington, and our sixteenth president, Abraham Lincoln. These leaders of our nation were so integral in uniting our country following times of long-suffered war. For that alone, we are certainly grateful. Still, I look beyond all their attributes and accomplishments to one who lived in the shadow of that Lincoln presidency. I look to Mary Todd Lincoln, Abraham's wife.

Mrs. Lincoln has been the subject of many historians and authors. One can find a trove of information about her and her life both preceding and following her time in the White House. Unfortunately, it has often been the case that history tends to be more interested in sensationalism rather than the actual story. Mary Todd was the one who stood by her husband in his happiest days and his most challenging days. She lived and breathed the same air, experiencing all the ups-and-downs, all the great moments and all the tragic ones. She alone knew the deepest thoughts and feelings of her husband. She alone carried the joys and the burdens within her heart of hearts. And, as sad as it was, there was assuredly more darkness than light.

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She is regrettably remembered as one who was lacking sanity and reason. Her own son had her committed to an insane asylum, thinking it was the best thing for his troubled mother. How wrong he was. How unfair of him and history to have colored her in this fashion.

Mary Todd was a strong woman. So strong, in fact, that while others thought her to be crazy, she kept her life and faith together. Even in the worst of times, she grieved honestly. She made decisions that were suited to her needs and her welfare. She was willing to show her pain, to be transparent, to be authentic, to be real, to a person of integrity.

The result of her openness and honesty was an unfair criticism and an unjust punishment. She not only lost her dear husband but her sons—the one who died in illness and the one who wrote her off as an insane person.

It causes me to wonder. What happens when, in those fleeting moments, we lower the veil and reveal our true selves? Do we find that others respect us for who we are? Do we find affirmation in the communities of which we are a part? Do we find acceptance in those who disagree and are different from us?

Jesus came to show us the true character of God. He taught us about a God who loves us, no matter what. He told stories about a God who welcomed the prodigal home, without exception. He commanded his followers to love God and one another.

Our nation stands at the threshold of challenging times. A division has been wrought deeper and wider than it has been in the recent past. Violence is on the rise and continues to erupt in places unexpectedly. Hatred would seem to be the survival tactic of today's disagreements and differences. It is not about being Republican or Democrat. It is not a politics of being conservative or liberal. It runs much deeper than being of this religion, that religion, or no religion. It is the kind of context where Jesus had found himself.

As the Messiah ("the anointed one") he was one among many. You see, all the rulers of Israel and even Rome were "anointed". Anointing the ruler was the pomp and circumstance of coronation in the ancient world. So it was that in calling Jesus the Messiah he was placed in contrast to Herod, to Caesar, and even to the institutional church of the day (priests in Israel were also anointed!).

The only difference was that Jesus lived love...Jesus spoke about love...Jesus asked for love...Jesus died for love...Jesus rose to love.

They will know we are Christians by our love...by our love. Yes, they will know we are Christians by our love!

A blessed month be yours and to those who you love.

Pastor Mary

Consistory News

The Consistory met on Monday, January 16th, 2016 and discussed, reported and voted on the following items:

Secretary's Report: Minutes from the December Consistory meeting were reviewed and approved.

Treasurer's Report: General Operating Fund Income and Expense Summary for November 2016. (December reports were not available at the time of printing)

| Operating Fund | November 2016 | 2016 YTD | November 2015 | 2015 YTD |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Income | \$12,449.34 | \$111,827.32 | \$17,184.07 | \$121,199.34 |
| Expenses | \$4,221.09 | \$116,466.65 | \$16,557.52 | \$149,283.74 |
| Income vs. Expenses | \$8,228.25 | (\$4,639.33) | \$626.55 | (\$28,084.40) |

• Benevolence received for November was \$237.00 and will be sent to PSEC. Year to date total is \$3722.00

Pastor's Report: The next communion will be celebrated February 5th. Pastor Mary has also indicated that she would like to begin a Bible Study based on the book of Matthew. A starting date and time has not been finalized yet, we will keep you posted as the details are worked out.

Reports from the various committees were reviewed. Their activities can be seen elsewhere in this newsletter.

Annual Congregational Meeting: We will be holding our Annual Congregational Meeting on February 26th. Please mark your calendars and plan on attending. 2016 was both a busy and challenging year, and we would like to take a moment to look back through the year, and pray for God's guidance as we look forward to 2017.

Annual Report: In an effort to reduce paper usage, we will be sending out our annual report by e-mail this year. We will still have some paper copies available in the Narthex. We will try to maintain a supply of the paper copy, but if you would like one and don't see any in the Narthex please let us know.

Spring Cleaning: April 1 will be our annual Spring Cleaning. Please plan on coming out to help keep our beautiful church clean. Many hands will make light work! We will begin cleaning around 8:00 am. Supplies will be available, but please feel free to bring your own.

Special Congregational Meeting: We have called a special congregational meeting to be held on February 5th after our worship service. During the process of calling Pastor Mary as our interim minister we have encountered a few challenges, and we would like to discuss these challenges as well as our options moving forward. We will be taking a vote to determine how to proceed, so we encourage all members to attend.

Consistory Pre-Service set up for February will be provided by Terry Shane and Bonnie Helmick. The next monthly Consistory Meeting will be held on Monday, February 13th at 7:00 pm.

In Christ, Your Consistory: Anita Brady, Dottie Fronheiser, Rick Furches, Bonnie Helmick, Mark Hile, Ray Kochey, Arlan Schaeffer, Terry Shane, Matt Weller, and Pastor Mary Lake-Dillensnyder.

News from the Women's Guild

On Tuesday January 3rd 2017 at our Women's Guild meeting we wrote out some get well cards for church members who need get well wishes. We also found out that our compassion girl Ashlee has been removed from our sponsor, so we are looking into sponsoring another child or 2. Nancy Weller had the program on Friends.

The next women's guild meeting will be on February 7th at 7 pm.



Choir Notes

The Choir will present the Lenten Cantata "In Calvary's Shadow" [A Tenebrae Service] on Maunday Thursday April 13 at 7:00 PM. Volunteers are needed and appreciated. [Singers & narrators/actors] Please contact me if interested in helping.

Wednesday, February 1 - Sr. Choir 7:00 PM, Cantata 8:00 PM
Wednesday, February 8 - Sr. Choir 7:00 PM, Cantata 8:00 PM
Wednesday, February 15- Sr. Choir 7:00 PM, Cantata 8:00 PM
Wednesday, February 22 - Sr. Choir 7:00 PM, Cantata 8:00 PM



Elmer Miller
Organist/Music Director
610-367-5613 or e-mail elmerhm@dejazzd.com



Sunday School News

Join us February 5th for a Souper Bowl Sunday soup fellowship after the worship service. If you would like to bring a crock-pot of soup, just bring it to the kitchen before church so it will be ready for the congregation to enjoy after church. Please bring your recipe too, we will be collecting the recipes and making a mini soup cookbook! There will be a basket available if you wish to make a donation to The Boyertown Salvation Army.

Join us for Sunday School at 8:30 am...We have a class for you!

Our next leadership meeting will be on January 2nd at 7:00 pm.



NEWS FROM THE PARK COMMITTEE



Thanks to all who helped out on work days throughout 2016...we will be taking a break with no scheduled work days over the winter.



February



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--|--|----------|--------|----------|
| | | | 1 7 pm Sr. Choir 8 pm Cantata | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 8:30 am Sunday School 9:30 am Worship Service w/ Holy Communion Congregational Meeting after worship | 6 9 am Prayer Group 9:30 am Upper Room Bible Study 7 pm Sunday School Meeting | 7 7 pm Women's Guild Meeting | 8 7 pm Sr. Choir 8 pm Cantata | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 8:30 am Sunday School 9:30 am Worship Service | 13 7 pm Consistory Meeting | 14 <i>Happy Valentine's Day</i> | 15 7 pm Sr. Choir 8 pm Cantata | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 8:30 am Sunday School 9:30 am Worship Service NEWSLETTER DEADLINE | 20 | 21 | 22 7 pm Sr. Choir 8 pm Cantata | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 8:30 am Sunday School 9:30 am Worship Service w/ Annual Congregational Meeting during service | 27 | 28 | Upcoming Dates March 1 - 7 pm Ash Wednesday Service March 8 - 7 pm Lenten Service at St. John-Hill (St. Joe's will be joining us) March 15 - 7 pm Lenten Service at St. Joseph's Hill March 22 & 29, April 5 - 7 pm Lenten Service April 1 - Spring Cleaning April 13 - Maundy Thursday Cantata | | | |