



News from the Hill...

St. John-Hill U.C.C. 620 Hill Church Road, Boyertown, PA 19512 July 2019



• FROM THE • Pastor's Desk

BIBLICAL VALUES: PART 2

Last month I shared my notes and reflections on Bible scholar Dr. John Collins' first lecture on Biblical Values. This month I would like to share his second lecture: The Bible and Gender.

Dr. Collins began by reporting that the word *homosexual* first appeared in the English language in 1892. His point was that in earlier times people did not have a concept of "sexual orientation," only sexual actions. This is certainly the case in the Bible.

I was surprised by the first part of that statement. I have served churches on Indian reservations. Among Indian nations on the Plains there have always been some men naturally attracted to men, and not to women, and their culture has a place for them. Perhaps the concept of "sexual orientation" can be found in other cultures as well. However, it is not in the Bible. Consequently, the Bible does not address "orientation."

A few Scriptures do speak of same sex actions. Let's take a look at them.

1. Sodom (Genesis 19:1-11). Sometimes we have heard a Scripture interpreted in a certain way so many times, that it is difficult to read it with fresh eyes. According to Ezekiel (16:49-50) the sin of Sodom was pride and lack of compassion. According to Second Peter (2:6-8) their sin was lawlessness.

To understand the story of Sodom we need to begin with the previous chapter (Genesis 18:1-15). Three strangers approach Abraham, and he offers them elaborate hospitality. To us it may appear excessive. However, the Bible is trying to make clear to us the sacred duty of hospitality to strangers:

"You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt"

-Deuteronomy 10:19

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it."

-Hebrews 13:2

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These same messengers go from Abraham to Sodom. Lot receives them, but the rest of the men of the city show them extreme in-hospitality. Lot, the good host, offers his own daughters to the mob, to protect his guests. Rape is rape, whatever the gender, and it is evil.

We might ask, “How did Lot’s daughters feel about this?” But we are 21st century people. Back then, Lot’s daughters were an extension of himself, whom he would sacrifice to defend his guests.

So the story of Sodom is not about homosexuality; it is about the sacred duty of hospitality.

2. David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:1-5; 20:1-42; 2 Samuel 1:25-26). David and Jonathan loved each other and made a sacred covenant of loyalty with each other. David said that Jonathan’s love was better than the love of a woman. The Scriptures do not describe any physical activity beyond kissing. It doesn’t say there was anything more; it doesn’t say there wasn’t. It is not unusual in most cultures for two men to bond together in friendship and loyalty, and this has nothing to do with physical sexual activity. The story of David and Jonathan does describe a sacred covenant between two men; but the story neither proves nor disproves physical sexual activity.

3. Old Testament Prohibitions (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13). Homosexual relations are part of a long list of sexual abominations. This is part of a “Holiness Code” designed to distinguish the Israelites from the Egyptians and Canaanites around them. Sexual, dietary, moral and religious regulations all set the Israelites off as a distinct and holy people. Their ideas of purity may be different from ours:

“You shall not let your animals breed with a different kind;
you shall not sow your fields with two kinds of seed;
nor shall you put on a garment made of two different materials.”

-Leviticus 19:19

Same-sex relations for men are included in these lists of abominations.

4. New Testament Prohibitions (Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:8-11). Jesus says nothing about same-sex relations. The apostles lived in the Greco-Roman world where same-sex relations were common among men. There was no shame for a Greek to have such relations. But there was a great deal of shame for a man who took the passive role in these relations. As a result, slaves and boys were exploited by those with power. No wonder the apostles found the practice repulsive!

Paul, in Romans, describes same-sex relations, not as a crime, but as the punishment for the lack of faith of the people. He speaks of Anatural@ and Aunnatural@ relations. This is the same word he uses when he says it is “natural” for men to have short hair and women to have long hair (1 Corinthians 11:14-15).

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In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:8-11 we find lists of those who will not inherit the kingdom of God. Scholars have struggled to find the best words to translate these terms. Evidently, 1 Corinthians has one word for the person taking the active role in same-sex relations, and another word for the passive partner. 1 Timothy only lists the active partner.

Summary. Although same-sex relations are not a major issue in the Bible, when the subject comes up, the Bible is against it. It is up to us to discern if this is something we should keep, or, like dietary laws, slavery, and women covering their heads, it can be set aside. In the process of discernment we consider the over-arching themes of the Bible - such as the Great Commandment - and we pray to God for guidance.

Charles Maxfield

CONSISTORY NEWS

The Consistory met on Tuesday, June 18th, 2019 and discussed, reported and voted on the following items:

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

Treasurer's Report: General Operating Fund Income and Expense Summary for May 2019.

Operating Fund	May 2019	2019 YTD	May 2018	2018 YTD
Income	\$8,678.18	\$52,454.77	\$8,791.79	\$47,424.97
Expenses	\$7,086.10	\$51,939.62	\$5,127.16	\$49,925.66
Income vs. Expenses	\$1,592.08	\$515.15	\$3,664.63	(\$2,500.69)

• Benevolence received for May was \$221.00 and will be sent to PSEC. Year to date total is \$1752.00.

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

Pastor Chuck will be on vacation July 1st-15th, but he does intend to be available for pastoral emergencies from July 9th-12th. Due to this upcoming vacation we decided to celebrate Communion on July 21st. We will not have a Communion Service in the month of August.

We have received three quotes for the replacement of the church roof, and are waiting on one more. After we have reviewed the quotes we will share the information with you and discuss how we should move forward.

Last month we reported that the consistory approved a repair to the chimney at the parsonage at a cost of \$1900, however there was a error in that report. The correct estimate to repair the chimney is \$2800. The consistory has approved this repair for \$2800.

Eileen Fisher, Dottie Fronheiser, and Nancy Weller have volunteered to coordinate with members of St. Joseph's to plan a family movie night in the band shell sometime later this summer. We will keep you posted when the details are available.

Consistory Pre-Service set up for July will be provided by Sally Shirk and Rick Furches. The next monthly Consistory Meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 9th at 7:00pm.

In Christ, Your Consistory: Rick Furches, Bonnie Helmick, Ray Kochey, David Mutter, Arlan Schaeffer, Terry Shane, Sally Shirk, Clarence Weller, Matt Weller, and Rev. Charles Maxfield.

Cemetery News

The cemetery board will be meeting on Tuesday, July 30 at 7:30 pm at St. John-Hill UCC.



The season of Summer is almost upon us. The Choir is officially on summer vacation after June 9. Volunteers are requested to help with our summer music for our worship services. If you play an instrument, piano or can sing a song please contact me. Thanks for your consideration.

Elmer Miller
elmerhm@dejazzd.com

Women's Guild News

On Tuesday June 4th we had a wonderful visit with Marie Brumbach. We celebrated her 98th birthday a little late and sang to her and had a small program presented by Eileen on Birthdays. We played a really fun and challenging fast paced left, right game that Eileen had planned with "birthday gifts" as our prize. Thank You Eileen! – that was so much fun!

Thank you to all the all who helped at Marie Schollenberger's funeral luncheon. Marie was our gift from God.

On Tuesday July 2nd we will be having a picnic at Dorothy Wagner's at 6 pm. If you are planning on coming wear something Tropical. Consistory and spouses are also invited. The main dish is provided by Dorothy. Let her know if you are planning to attend.

Search Committee News

The Search Committee has received five ministerial profiles. We rejected two of them, we did a Skype interview with one of them, and we are waiting to hear back from two of them. We will try to continue to keep the congregation informed as we go along in this process.

We still could use a few more people to join the Search Committee, especially some of our younger members. If anyone is interested or would like to have more information, please contact one of the Search Committee members.

Please continue to pray for the Search Committee and the rest of the congregation as we continue through the process of searching and calling a new pastor.

Blessings,

The Search Committee

Rick Furches, Dottie Fronheiser, Elmer Miller, Jan Fisher, Sally Shirk and Mayetta Shane

Announcements from the Hill

Mission Trip Birdsboro

Here is another opportunity to support this ministry July 17-20. Daily lunches are provided for all site workers. Included in these are things like fresh fruit and assorted snacks. The Kitchen Committee is looking for anyone willing to donate either of these items. Fruit choices are things such as: apples, bananas, grapes, oranges or whatever is in season. Snack suggestions are: salty such as chips, etc. or sweet like cookies. Items should be in individual serving size packages. Homemade cookies are always welcome. Please contact Connie Hile at 610-367-6572 to volunteer or with any questions you have. Deadline to respond is July 7. Thank you for your help.

Aluminum Can Collection

The youth group continues to collect and recycle aluminum cans. You can put your bags of cans through the side window of the barn at the church that is facing the road any time you have a full bag. We use the money to support our many activities and also to help sponsor a child in the Philippines.

Pulpit Exchange

Sunday, July 28 we will have a pulpit exchange. Pastor Joe Motz will be here at Hill Church in the pulpit while Pastor Chuck will be at St. Paul's UCC in Birdsboro. We hope you can join us for this unique worship.

VBS THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who donated items, time or money to make VBS a success. We had a wonderful and exhausting week but can't wait till next year!

Summer Worship

Sunday Mornings at 9:30 am
*Children ages 5-12 are dismissed during the worship service for Sunday School
(there is no 8:30 am Sunday School)*

GROCERY CARDS

Don't forget grocery cards for Giant, Redner's and Weis Markets are available for purchase. They may be used towards groceries, gas and pharmacy purchases and make terrific gifts! We receive 5% for every card you purchase which will be used to support our Church Missions program. See Connie Hile to purchase your cards today!



Ringgold Band Picnic

Saturday, August 3rd



We need lots of help. If you have never helped before now is the time to volunteer and have fun! Donations of baked goods are needed and greatly appreciated. Donations of intermission raffle items are also being accepted; please see Elmer Miller. Advertisement posters & signs are available in the Narthex. Please help distribute them throughout the community.

Please note that help IS needed to clean up grounds and set up and serve food the day of this event.. If you are available to help with clean up or the day of the event, please let Elmer, Eileen, Terry, Dennis or Nancy know. Come when you can, leave when you must!

The following dates are the schedule of events for the Ringgold Band Picnic:

Monday, July 29 @ 6:00 p.m.

Clean-Up (clean up dining hall and wash dishes, mow grass and trim weeds.)
Please bring lawn equipment for grounds work.



Wednesday, July 31 @ 6:00 p.m.

Rain date for clean up



Saturday, August 3 @ 1:00 p.m.

Food Preparation

(peel potatoes for french fries, complete grounds work, wiping down serving stand).

Saturday, August 3 @ 3:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Help with picnic and food sales.

Refreshments available at 4:00 p.m. Music from 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.



Monday, August 5 @ 6:00 p.m.

Close up buildings and trash removal.

Hill Church Events

Holy Communion

1st Sunday of the Month

Park Committee Work Days

2nd Saturday of the month at 8 am

Joyful Noise Offering

3rd Sunday of the Month

Children's Message

3rd Sunday of the Month

Newsletter Deadline

3rd Sunday of the Month

Choir Rehearsal

Every Wednesday September thru May

(see newsletter for times)

Here is a list of ongoing committee meetings. These meetings are open for anyone who wishes to attend. Most meetings are held in the Christian Education building.

Christian Education

1st Monday of the month at 7 pm

Women's Guild

2nd Sunday of the month after church

Consistory

2nd Tuesday of the month at 7 pm

Want to get involved? These are our upcoming community events.

Ringgold Band Picnic & Concert

1st Saturday in August

Remington Ryde Summer Concert

September 15, 2019

Buckwheat & Sausage Supper

1st Saturday in October

Turkey Supper

1st Saturday in November

Ham Supper

3rd Saturday in May

Mission Opportunities - Whether you are in need of help or you want to help others, our Hill Church Mission team is here for you.

For more information on any of these items, contact the church office at 610-367-8114

Church Contact Info

Church Phone # 610-367-8114

Church Website: www.stjohnhillucc.org

Church E-mail: office@stjohnhillucc.org

Interim Pastor - Rev. Charles Maxfield

Musical Director/Organist - Mr. Elmer Miller

Church Secretary - Mrs. Nikki Weller

Sexton - Mr. Charles Anhalt

Consistory President - Matt Weller

Consistory Vice President - Arlan Schaeffer

Trustees - Mark Hile, Bill Moyer, Terry Shane

Christian Education Superintendent - Elmer Miller

Cemetery Board President - Elmer Miller

Park Committee President - Mark Hile

Women's Guild President - Megyn Weller

Mission Team - Mark Hile