



September 2021

A Monthly Update in the Life of our Church

Contact



By Pastor Christina

Can you be a “bad” Christian?

August’s Wired Word¹ group tackled a complex subject – “what does it mean to be a Christian.” The study started with a sketch of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who “...was baptized in the Catholic church, but he was confirmed an Anglican as a youth at Eton College.” His first two marriages were civil ceremonies, his most recent marriage was a Catholic service at Westminster Cathedral, and his son was baptized Catholic. Johnson has been accused of being a pagan. In describing his faith, he says, “Christianity is a superb ethical system, and I would count myself as a kind of very, very bad Christian.”

What would make a person believe they are a “bad” Christian? In an interview, Johnson describes his faith as “...it’s a bit like trying to get Virgin Radio when you’re driving through the Chilterns [a hilly area northwest of London]. It sort of comes and goes. I mean sometimes the signal is strong, and then sometimes I’m afraid it just vanishes. And then it comes back again.”

What does it mean to be a “bad” Christian? There is no shortage of people in the world who are only too happy to label others a bad Christian. What are the criteria for that label?

Using Boris Johnson’s answer, it seems that not getting a clear signal from God defines a bad Christian. But if something is blocking God’s signal from reaching you, does that make you somehow “bad”? I don’t think so, even if the block is a barrier of your own construction.

As I’ve thought about this, I realize that my idea of what makes a person a Christian, good or not, has changed over the years. Do you believe you are a Christian? Good enough for me. Getting older has taught me that rigid definitions, and the need to separate into good/bad, have no meaning. But, if I’m honest, I’m just like everyone else, and I do categorize people.

I suppose that I believe that a “bad” Christian is one who perverts the Gospel. For example, slave holders edited the Scriptures and the sermons presented to enslaved Black people to preach that slavery was acceptable, because it was in the Bible. One of my classmates, the Rev. David Mateo, realized that his original training had taught him to be an instrument of white supremacy as his preaching actively oppressed his own Latinx people. He decided to leave the denomination that ordained him and go back to seminary for a different kind

of education – one where questions were expected, and diversity of opinion was valued.

The Gospel has been manipulated for evil throughout the ages. It has been used to justify the Crusades, the Inquisition, Colonialism, the oppression of women, the silencing of the abused, the marginalization of the disabled, persecution of the LGBTQ* community, prosperity preaching, and so much more. My Verse and Voice devotional from Sojourners used this passage today: Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2) If we approach our Christianity from that perspective, we are unlikely to do harm in the name of our faith.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

- Pope Francis, “A prayer for our earth”

¹ Unless otherwise noted, quotes are from **The Wired Word for the Week of July 25, 2021, Copyright 2021 Communication Resources**



Redeemer Church to be Featured on Derry Township Historical Society Fall Tour September 25th

The Historical Society is planning their Fall Tour for Saturday, September 25. The organization reached out to Redeemer last week to invite us to be a stop along the way! Evidently, we've been included in tours of the past, but typically just a drive-by. This time, tours will enter the sanctuary and hear the history of the building from our own Dick and Shirley Conrad and other Hershey historians.

The church was built in 1920 by Italian stone masons and was the original home of St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church. St. Joan constructed its new church on West Areba in the 1950's, then sold this building to the Evangelical Reformed Church of Union Deposit in 1958. Early photos of the original church will be included in a slide show that will run during tours of the sanctuary.

A Mystery Still Unsolved! Historians tell us that there was a cornerstone imbedded in the northeast corner of the building when it was constructed. They are attempting to talk with someone who may know the early history of the building and the cornerstone. Is it still imbedded in the wall, was it removed and when St. Joan sold the building, or was it covered by the addition that was added much later? We're looking for suggestions from Redeemer members and friends who might know more about this history. Please contact Jorja at info@redeemerchurchucc.org or by calling the church M-F 9-12 if you have any suggestions on sources to investigate. **Help us to solve the mystery in time for the tour!**

More details will be shared regarding the tour as available from the Historical Society. **Mark your calendars and plan to join the tour!**

HUMMELSTOWN ARTS FEST SEPT EMBER 18

Calling All Redeemer Volunteers!

This year's Arts Fest is coming up quickly and we need volunteers to help with our world-famous ice cream stand. This is a great fundraiser for us, typically raising anywhere from \$800 - \$1,000 each year.

Volunteer jobs include set-up, scooping shifts throughout the day, and tear down.

A sign-up sheet is located in the sanctuary or reach out to Super Scooper Dave Stong for more information on tasks, times, and tutorials!

August 2021 Worship Attendance

August	08/01/21	23
	08/08/21	19
Average	08/15/21	19
21	08/22/21	20
	08/29/21	22

August 2020 Avg Attendance was 17

\$ Offering: August 2021 \$10,081.50

\$ Offering: August 2020 \$12,592.50 (including organ fund donations)

Redeemers and Building Partners continue to support the mission of the church! **THANK YOU!**

September Special Celebrations

Birthdays... Have a happy one!

- Mike Wojdylak
- Terry Thomas

Anniversaries... Congratulations!

- Mr. & Mrs. Wes Bickelman
- Mr. & Mrs. Terry Thomas
- Mr. & Mrs. Richard Conrad, Jr.



Leadership Team Update

By Kira Merkert, Chair

The Leadership Team met on August 12, 2021, for its regular monthly meeting. After our opening activities, Jonathan Bell presented the Treasurer's report and continued our working discussion of the 2022 budget. While we are financially stable, our expenses have been running slightly higher than our income for the first half of the year. This often happens, and things tend to even up toward the end of the year when we have more donations. At some point soon, we would like to have more focused discussions on fundraising and stewardship ideas.

We revisited our current building cleaning routines. A representative from Enviro-Master, our bathroom cleaning service, visited with us to share some product updates. We had some follow up questions and will decide if any changes will be made to our current routine. We also decided that due to the CDC upgrading our area to the highest covid risk category, we will temporarily re-institute our mask policy for the building. We respectfully ask all who enter the building to wear a mask until further notice.

We are forming a committee to create a plan to upgrade the building for both security concerns and greater handicap accessibility. This discussion was started a few years ago with Derry Township police, who walked through the building with us to discuss security issues. We will prepare a plan that can be implemented in stages to provide the greatest impact within our financial means. Some of the ideas we discussed were installing a chair lift, reinforcing the sanctuary doors, and allowing them to lock from the inside, installing push bars on exit doors, etc. The committee will research the costs of various improvements and create a plan to present to the Leadership Team. In addition to funding through our yearly budget and extra fundraising, this may also be an area that we can receive grant funding.

The Life Gospel Church has been experiencing Wi-Fi interruptions as they try to livestream their services. We also discovered that some of the support groups are having similar issues in Fellowship Hall. Our technology expert, Tom Bell, is currently researching solutions to help alleviate this problem. The first step has been to contact Verizon for ideas to improve the connection. More information will be shared as it is known.

We have been fortunate to have congregation and building partner support for weeding and shrub maintenance. Sometimes, though, the weeds outnumber us! A community member pointed out that some areas needed attention. A congregation member graciously stepped in to clean up the weeds. We are working on creating a more regular schedule for weeding and will be seeking congregation members to sign up to help with weeding to keep our grounds looking tidy. Thank you for considering being a part of this effort. We will also contact our lawn mowing service, Creekside, about the cost to have the bushes trimmed twice a year.

Pastor Christina presented her Pastor's Report. She has enjoyed meeting with many of our members and the wider building partner community. She has also participated in some pertinent continuing education opportunities. She will take vacation time from Sept 23 – 27 and will coordinate a guest pastor for worship that week.

The Conrad's will be part of a Historical Society Tour that will take place on September 25. The Historical Society asked if Redeemer could be a stop on the tour since it used to be the Catholic Church. Two trolleys will tour the sanctuary. Shirley and Dick, along with other folks from the Society and St. Joan of Arc, will share the building's history and old photos. This will be an exciting event for Redeemer.

Our next Leadership Team meeting will be held on September 9, 2021, at 7pm. As always, please reach out to the Leadership Team if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,
Kira Merkert
Leadership Team Chair

Becoming a Church of Contemplatives in Action – Resolution Summary

By Sterling Fritz & Charlotte Pinette

This Resolution of Witness (a resolution affirming the UCC's position on moral, ethical, and religious matters) was overwhelmingly passed by General Synod 33. Biblically based on Jesus' life, examples, and teachings as found in Matthew 4:1-11 Mark 1:12-13, and Luke 4:1-21, 13 among other verses. Jesus could often be found teaching, praying, supporting the marginalized, and seeking solitude to commune with God. As Colossians 1:15 says "Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God made visible in the world". The church's vocation is to incarnate Christ in order that God's love, justice, and peace be made manifest.

The resolution recognizes that "the UCC has not historically emphasized to the greatest extent possible the fostering of spiritual, contemplative practices to love God and ourselves and to see God in all things, all people, and creation." That contemplation is a holistic commitment to a spiritual awakening. As Joan Chittister says "Contemplation brings us to see the big picture. It brings us to see beyond our own boundaries, beyond our own denominations, beyond our own doctrines, and dogma, and institutional self-interests... We become connected to everything, to everyone...Then action and prayer are one."

With the General Synod's approval of this resolution, it is resolved that future clergy and lay leaders be trained in contemplative ways. That local churches commit to spending time communing with God in various ways. That all settings of the UCC invest in curriculum and resources to support contemplative behavior. Finally, all settings of the UCC seek to live out the foundations of contemplative practices in God's ministry.

Now that contemplative ministry is to be emphasized in each UCC church, how can that be done? It all starts with you. You, the clergy and you, the laity. As Rev. Traci Blackmon says "Jesus is not just asking us to be courageous, Jesus has a bigger ask. Jesus is asking us to be transformed...and be changed from the inside out." Meditation can aid us to better access the Divine. The goal of meditation is to remove the world and tap into the Spirit within. Looking toward that stillness and silence can help us to be more reflective of who God wants us to be. Communing with God can clarify our path and lead us to our more authentic selves. Encountering Christ in different ways can aid in contemplative behaviors. Remembering the sacrament of communion's meaning and

displaying it to others is being contemplative. Creating spiritual groups for individual and conventional relationships is being contemplative. Creating a "mood" in worship services using all the senses to praise God is contemplative. What other ways can you be contemplative? Pray about it, and you will be led! A contemplative seeks a life primarily devoted to prayer. Putting that prayer in to action offers a way to mimic Jesus' life and ways. To place prayer into action helps us to be "changed from the inside out."

(The complete text of this resolution can be found here:

<https://www.generalsynod.org/wpcointent/uploads/2021>





This month's recipe is submitted by Redeemer Member Jan Stong. Jan shared: "Here's a picture of one of our family's favorite foods. It's Yorkshire Pudding. I make this every Christmas time. My son-in-law enjoys the beef and Yorkshire Pudding so much that he thought we needed to enjoy it twice a year, thus he created "Christmaugust". We just had our "Christmaugust" dinner on Friday, August 20th. I have attached the picture that we always take the moment it comes out of the oven. I have also attached the recipe that I quadruple for them!"

Yorkshire Pudding

This is a must with the New Year's roast beef. Make the pudding in the roasting pan after the roast has been removed to rest before carving. Don't drain the pan; cook it right in the drippings.

Ingredients:

1 cup unbleached flour ¼ tsp salt
1 cup milk 2 farm-fresh eggs

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F. In a bowl, mix the flour and salt, then gradually add the milk to make a smooth paste. Stir in the eggs and beat 2 minutes with an eggbeater. Pour the batter into the pan that the roast beef was cooked in and bake for 20 to 30 minutes. Cut the pudding into squares and serve immediately!

Serves 8-10.

Jan shared that she seasons her roast with salt, pepper, onion powder, and garlic. She roasts it in the oven in a large roasting pan then, as directed above, places the pudding into the roaster to bake while the roast rests before carving. **Bon Appetit!**



Prayers of Joy for Margie Crocker's new grand puppy

- **The Merkert Family** and their new fur baby puppies, *Shadow and Puddles*, and for Kira's official name change!
- **Pastor Christina** who adopted a 15-year-old cat this week

Prayers of Healing and Comfort for

- **Mike Wojdylak** for continued healing following his successful cardiac surgery.
- **Randy Rupert**, a friend of the Baker's, whose throat cancer has returned.
- **Terry Thomas** recuperating from a medical procedure
- **Ethan Stevie**, cousin of Virginia Fleck, who was injured in a 4-wheeler accident
- **Michael Luchenbach**, cousin of Mike Wojdylak, who is gravely ill with an unknown illness

Prayers of Support and Strength for

- **Family of Debra Inteiri**, cousin of Dave Stong, who passed away recently
- **Family of Dr. Robert Zelis**, former Chief of Surgery at Penn State Health, who passed way recently. Dr. Zelis hired Dr. Dwight Davis 40 years ago!
- **Kemmy Himmelberger**: Country Meadows, 451 Sand Hill Rd, Hershey, PA 17033.
- **Lois Wood**: Kindred Place Harrisburg, 4700 Oakhurst Blvd, Room 328, Harrisburg, PA 17110.
- **Victims of the fires in the Western US, Victims of the Earthquake in Haiti, Victims of flooding in Tennessee, and Victims of Hurricane Ida as it passes through the South and Eastern US**
- **The Families of the victims and those tragically lost in the bombing in Afghanistan and for those desperately attempting to flee the country.**
- **The thousands of individuals** both diagnosed and/or hospitalized with Covid-19 and the dedicated health care community that is caring for them.



Surprise Kidney Donation Breaks Down Barriers, Builds Bridges

The Wired Word for the Week of August 22, 2021

For her 50th birthday, Israeli Idit Harel Segal didn't want any presents. Instead, she wanted to give a gift to someone else. Five years ago, her beloved grandfather, a Holocaust survivor, died. She wondered what he would say to her to help her cope with her grief: "Don't give up! Keep going! Live life with meaning!" she imagined him saying. What could give her life the greatest meaning? Giving life! she concluded. She finally decided to donate a kidney to give someone another chance at life.

Most of her family vehemently opposed the idea at first. Her father had a relative who had died of kidney failure, and he worried the same thing would happen to her. He told Segal's husband to divorce her over her decision. Tensions in the family rose.

Initially, Segal thought her kidney would go to a 54-year-old Jewish father of two, but it didn't work out. It turned out that she was a match for a 3-year-old child, which pleased her, because she is a preschool teacher. She was not deterred when she learned that the boy was from Gaza. "A kid is a kid is a kid," she said.

But her husband called the donation "a waste," considering the frequent violence in Gaza he thought would probably kill the boy. "Then what have you accomplished?" he asked.

One of Segal's first preschool students, Oz, had become a soldier; he was killed seven years ago in battles in Gaza. Before she proceeded with the donation, she talked it over with Oz's father, Ofer, out of concern that her decision to

donate a kidney to a Palestinian boy might cause him distress. "[Oz is] your son," Segal said tearfully, "but I call him my child. I lost a child in [Gaza] ... , but on the other hand I'm giving life to a child [in Gaza]." Ofer cradled her in his arms and kissed her on the head. "Just because my son was killed in Gaza doesn't mean I now hate the Palestinians and the Gazans," he whispered gently.

A day before the operation was scheduled, Segal's father called to wish her luck. Only then did she tell him the recipient of her kidney would be a Palestinian toddler from Gaza who had been born with a congenital kidney defect. He had required dialysis his whole short life.

"Well," Segal's father said, "he needs life, also."

It was a stunning admission, considering that her paternal grandparents had been killed by Palestinian terrorists in Jerusalem in 1948, leaving her father orphaned at the age of 1. Then in 2002, her father's adoptive uncle was killed in another terror attack in the capital.

The day of the surgeries, Segal met the boy and his family, whose names were withheld at their request. The boy's father told Segal that Israeli bombs had destroyed their home in May, rendering the family homeless. But he still went ahead with his decision to donate one of his own kidneys to Tal Ferguson, a 25-year-old Israeli mother of two. The operations all took place on June 16. Segal brought gifts to the boy, caressed him, sang Hebrew lullabies to him and told him she loved him.

"You don't know me, but soon we'll be very close because my kidney will be in your body," Segal wrote to the boy, adding that she hoped he would live "a long and healthy and meaningful life."

The boy's condition was touch and go for a while, but eventually his condition stabilized. Segal's heart pounded the next time she visited him.

"In a way, he's like my kid," Segal asserted. "I've even got a mark to prove it. The big opening where they remove the kidney, it's like a C-section, like a birth."

Later, Segal met Ferguson, the woman who had received a kidney from the boy's father. Ferguson was amazed that he had given a part of himself "with no regard to religion, race, gender."

As Segal pondered the unlikely new relationships that were being forged between people who should have been enemies, she commented, "I threw away the anger and frustration and see only one thing. I see hope for peace and love. And if there will be more like us, there won't be anything to fight over."

"Not a day goes by that I'm not happy about saving the life of that sweet child," Segal reflected, happy that she saved a life. "What could be better than that?" she asked, flashing a sunny smile.

If your enemies are hungry, give them bread to eat;

and if they are thirsty, give them water to drink;

for you will heap coals of fire on their heads,

and the LORD will reward you.

Proverbs 25:21-22

(Wired Word is a subscription service used by Redeemer for thought provoking discussions!)

September 2021



This Month at Redeemer

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	2 12pm Nooner AA 12pm Focused Prayer	3 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	4 7:00am Sunrise AA 12pm KISS AA
5 9:15 am Worship Communion 11:30 am LGCCC	6 12pm Nooner AA 7:30pm OA	7 8:30 am Hershey Ministerium Mtg 12pm Nooner AA	8 SCRIP Orders Due 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	9 12pm Nooner AA 12pm Focused Prayer 7pm Leadership Team Mtg	10 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	11 7:00am Sunrise AA 12pm KISS AA
12 9:15 am Worship 11:30 am LGCCC	13 12pm Nooner AA 6:30 pm Music & Worship Committee Mtg. 7:30pm OA	14 12pm Nooner AA	15 SCRIP Order Delv 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	16 12pm Nooner AA 12pm Focused Prayer	17 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	18 7:00am Sunrise AA 12pm KISS AA Hummelstown Arts Fest Redeemer Ice Cream Stand
19 9:15 am Worship 11:30 am LGCCC	20 12pm Nooner AA 7:00 pm Wired Word 7:30pm OA	21 12pm Nooner AA	22 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	23 12pm Nooner AA 12pm Focused Prayer	24 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	25 7:00am Sunrise AA 10am & 12 pm Derry Twp Historical Tours 12pm KISS AA 2-7pm LGCCC Revival
Pastor Christina is on vacation 9/20 – 9/27						
26 9:15 am Worship Guest Preacher 11:30 am LGCCC	27 12pm Nooner AA 7:30pm OA	28 12pm Nooner AA	29 12pm Nooner AA 6:30pm KISS AA	30 12pm Nooner AA 12pm Focused Prayer		

Wanted: Worship Helpers for September! Please check dates and sign up on the list in the sanctuary for those that suit you. *Thank you!*

Community Resource Corner

The Hershey Food Bank



The Hershey Food Bank believes in helping its neighbors in need. With the support of local churches, organizations, individuals, and businesses they make a difference in Derry Township.

Their Mission Statement

Our purpose is to serve the Derry Township community by providing food and assistance with the temporary needs of families and individuals in financial distress.

What They Do

The Hershey Food Bank and Community Outreach is an all-volunteer 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Their board oversees the operations and maintenance of the Hershey Food Bank located at 120 East Derry Road.

The Food Bank distributes food twice monthly and provides traditional holiday food at Thanksgiving and Christmas to families identified as being in need. In addition, Christmas presents and gift certificates for children's clothing are included with the Christmas food distributions.

In some emergency situations the Food Bank, on a one-time basis, may even assist registered clients who regularly attend monthly food distributions with financial assistance for utility bills and rent payments provided funds are available. Many cases may also be referred to Social Service agencies for further assistance. Budget and nutrition counseling are available and provided free of charge.

Hershey Food Bank and Community Outreach, through coordination with the Derry Township police, provides limited assistance to transients on a case-by-case basis as needed.

It is not the HFB's policy to donate either food or money to any other charity or organization. As an all-volunteer charity, no one receives a salary and volunteers are not compensated for personal expenses. 100% of all contributions beyond food and facility expenses go directly to help those they serve.

For more information on the Hershey Food Bank, please visit their website at <http://hersheyfoodbank.com>.



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*This month's CONTACT is
Sponsored by
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In memory of
Dr. Thom Houser*

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