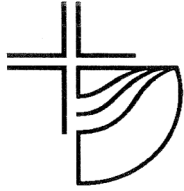


The Growing Edge



HARRISBURG FIRST
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
219 HUMMEL STREET

HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17104-3399



April

2021



Inside this Issue

Father God, we thank you for the spring rain and the wonderful new life that comes with it. We thank you for the chance to be together again for a love feast and Easter as we fellowship around Your hope and promise. We thank you for family, for friends and for all of those who make our lives what they are. We yearn for your grace to fall on us like rain so that we may bloom like the flowers and fill spaces with hope and light. We pray this in Your name. Amen.

Daniel Wright and Alyssa Parker

Associate Pastor's Page	2
BVSer Page	3
Community Ministry Page	4
Faith And Justice Corner	5
Youth Corner	6
Congregational News	7
Announcements	8-9
Celebrations and Prayer Calendar	10
Calendar	11

PHONE: 717.234.0415

E-MAIL: OFFICE@HBGFIRSTCOB.ORG

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY 10:00AM

VIRTUAL WORSHIP ON HARRISBURG FIRST
CHURCH YouTube CHANNEL 11:00AM

Associate Pastor's Page

God Will Make A Way

This month has been quite eventful in my personal life as my two right hand people in my two main spheres, work and family, were largely out of commission. First, Alyssa left us for a time to visit her second home and second family in Ghana. Not long after, Christine ruptured her Achilles tendon. What has ensued is a challenging time which has required relying on God and others to help, because I just can't do everything.

In the end, God made a way where there didn't seem to be a way. My father-in-law came, friends brought meals and Christine is a super hero, so the home front has worked itself out. I want to also thank the congregation for all the wonderful cards, calls and meals that have helped things remain steady at the house. On the office front, our BVSers rose to the occasion and we largely kept the ship afloat while Alyssa was away.

In the end, we at Harrisburg First had a very nice month full of special guests and moving worship and learning experiences. We welcomed Gimbiya Kettering and Mikayla Alphonse on different weeks, who brought a needed voice to motivate our justice work toward Education Inequity. These visits were made possible by the Healing Racism Grant we received from the denomination's Intercultural Ministries Office. First Church also made a good showing at the Community Responder's Network Interfaith Prayer Vigil decrying Anti-Asian Violence. It was a wonderful event, and **bcmPEACE**'s Agape grads provided the livestream for the event via Facebook Live.

In addition, we also were able to be together for Love Feast and Resurrection Sunday. It was so nice to be in person and to worship in the same space. Love Feast was very cold and very windy, but we had a nice group to celebrate and remember our Lord's Last Supper with His disciples. Resurrection Sunday was beautiful and we had a wonderful time celebrating the pivotal moment in our faith and being challenged to be about living out our faith today.

Looking ahead, we welcome LaDonna Sanders Nkosi and Hank Johnson as guests for our virtual services and will hold our final session in our series on Education Inequity with Chloe Oustrich and Sunada Roberts the first Sunday of May. The search committee has completed the job posting for our new team member, as well as the congregational profile. Both documents have been dispersed to their respective destinations.

Lastly, I want to ask for your continued prayers. Please be in prayer that the Lord would even now be preparing our next team member to come and be a part of what He is doing here at Harrisburg First. Pray that we will be faithful to the calling set before us. Pray that we will make wise decisions as we near the perceived end to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pray that we will remain His hands and feet, that we will remain one body even as we have needed to be physically apart. Pray that God will make a way, even if we don't see it at the moment.



Pastor Josiah Ludwick

Associate Pastor/Program Director bcmPEACE

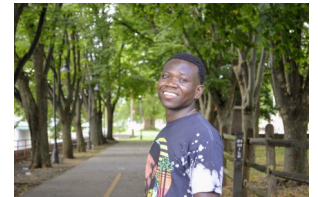
Continuing in Growth...

I'm getting more comfortable with my role as a BVSer, working in the church and helping out in the community. It's been really fun and challenging at the same time. For instance, the fun and interesting aspect I enjoy is working with the Agape group on Wednesday nights. When we gather for Agape, we talk about ways to end confrontations and instead build relationships. One of those interesting topics we've been discussing recently is the topic surrounding Black Lives Matter. For this particular topic, we talked about proactive ways to combat racism and end racial injustice in this country. Having these conversations with the Agape group is meaningful because it brings awareness and enlightenment to the fact that racism is very real. One of the main ways we would combat and try to end racism is that we need to treat each other with respect and dignity. We are all created equal and made in the image of God. Jesus said, "Do unto others as you will want them to do unto you" (Luke 6:31).

Another thing I grew to enjoy more as a BVSer is volunteering and helping out at the Journey Church for Community Classroom. This experience has humbled me and taught me how to be very patient with young kids. Over time, I grew to listen to the kids more and understand their concerns, especially if they had issues with friends in the classroom or on their homework. A couple of weeks back, there was a student in the community classroom who needed help with her 6th-grade math homework. At one point as I was helping this student, I realized the 6th-grade math assignment was a little difficult. However, we eventually figured it out, and she was eventually able to finish it.

Friday morning food distribution has been challenging, too. Over time I have grown to love it, mainly due to the people I work with and meet there. Although some of the hard labor has caused some back pains, I still feel like it's what God wants me to do, and the fruits of labor are showing because I'm serving His people (1 Samuel 12:24).

Overall, the tasks I'm doing for the church and in the community are helping me to understand my purpose and the ways I'm growing. I've been very grateful for this opportunity to help in the Harrisburg community because it's where the Lord wanted me to be to grow with people in the church and in the community. I look forward to being challenged and growing more here in Harrisburg.—*Eric Joloka*



Through the Storm

In the month of March, I preached my first sermon for the church here in Harrisburg. I have never done so before, so I was a bit apprehensive. I decided to record my testimony of my fight with cancer and my volunteer experiences afterwards. I also spoke briefly about my experiences in India. It is an emotional and personal experience to record them for public consumption. It is a reminder of how close I came to losing the ability to walk or even my life.

Writing the sermon reminded me of things left unfulfilled, as well as the loss of my sister's restaurant which I was insulated from by being on the other side of the country. I put a great deal of time, money and hard work into that place only to watch it fail. February was also a hard month emotionally due to it being the year long anniversary of the loss of my mother. We did not always get along, but I miss her. I am soon able to return to college and get my Master's degree. I have one more adventure in me first. I have started the process of booking a trip to work at an orphanage in Mexico. I recently had to give up my car as a result of the restaurant bankruptcy. Now I am free to travel and go fulfill my promise to myself. Things like a vehicle are replaceable, while time is not. We can see rain as a metaphor for pain and struggle, rain is dark and dreary, but is there anything better than the light breaking through the clouds after a storm? - *Daniel Wright*



Our Community Ministries



Program Accomplishments this past month!

- We are giving out a computer to a graduate who completed our Computer Course prior to the pandemic
- We have been blessed with a growing number of young adults in our Agape Graduate program and are beginning to work on new projects including a podcast with On Earth Peace and art projects with Tri-County Community Action
- We are working alongside the Community Responders Network to highlight the influx of hate against Asian Americans through livestreaming a vigil on our Facebook Page.



ZOOM Trivia Night

April 5 at 5:00pm

Join us as we kick off the 2021 virtual Highmark Walk for A Healthy Community with a fun game of trivia! We will be testing your knowledge on Bible and Sports led by BVSer, Eric Joloka!

sign up on our website www.bcmpeace.org under the "2021 Virtual Highmark" tab!

this is a free event, but it is a part of our Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community fundraiser, so please consider donating.

HIGHMARK.
WALK FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

bcmPEACE

COOKING UP A HEALTHY COMMUNITY: BUILDING UP OUR YOUNG LEADERS

April 16, 2021 | 6 PM | ZOOM

Join us in hearing from our young leaders in the community about the work they do, their passions, and discuss how we can support them and their work as they build our foundations for the future to come.

This event is free, but we welcome donations for our Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community Fundraiser.

Register Now on www.bcmpeace.org

- We are pleased to thank those who have already donated to our Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community and are eager to receive more donations to help continue and elevate our programs! Check out our website to donate now and find out more about the fundraiser such as activities and events!
- Our Wellness Hub has continued to serve the Allison Hill area distributing food to an average of 150 families each week! We are blessed to be supported by our faithful volunteers!
- We look forward to reopening our Computer Classes soon maintaining social distancing and regular cleanings, thanks to the leadership of Daniel Wright!

"Be the Peace"

bcmPEACE.org and [bcmPEACE](#) on social media



Alyssa Parker,
bcmPEACE
Operations
Manager

Faith and Justice Corner



“Recently I visited the Susquehanna Art museum. On display there was a striking work by an artist named Charles Edward Williams. In the painting a young black man sits on the shoulders of a classical Greek statue. The face and features of the statue are faded. The statue represents Freedom and Democracy the boys rallying cry calls attention to the loss of what should be the rights of all men. Another older black teenager stands vigilant at the statue's base. The painting is part of a series called Sun + Light which is a collection of works from the series Everyone Loves the Sunshine. The artworks featured in **Sun + Light** juxtapose Williams’ own personal encounters, past and present, with the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Here, Williams attempts to strike a balance between both the peaceful and violent protests of the movement and of varied expressions of power. He recounts stories told to him by his grandmother about this specific period in U.S. history and about the belief she passed down to him and that would guide his work: “stay in the light, stay positive.”” - Daniel Wright

A Reflection on the Church and it's implications in slavery

As I was in Ghana, West Africa, I visited the Slave Castles of Cape Coast and Elmina. I walked where many Africans suffered waiting to cross the Atlantic. But what really stunned me was the implications of the Church. Visiting two different castles, both had a church in the center. Cape Coast castle even had a hole right outside the church atop the male dungeon where they could “check up” on them during service. Myself as well as our Church have been on a journey to understand the Church’s complacency in slavery, and this just showed the historical oppression that the Church has participated in especially against our black brothers and sisters. Now where the church used to stand there is a children’s library devoted to expanding knowledge of young minds. How do we sit with this as a church?

What can our Social Justice Library be a reminder of? What more should we be doing as the Body of Christ?

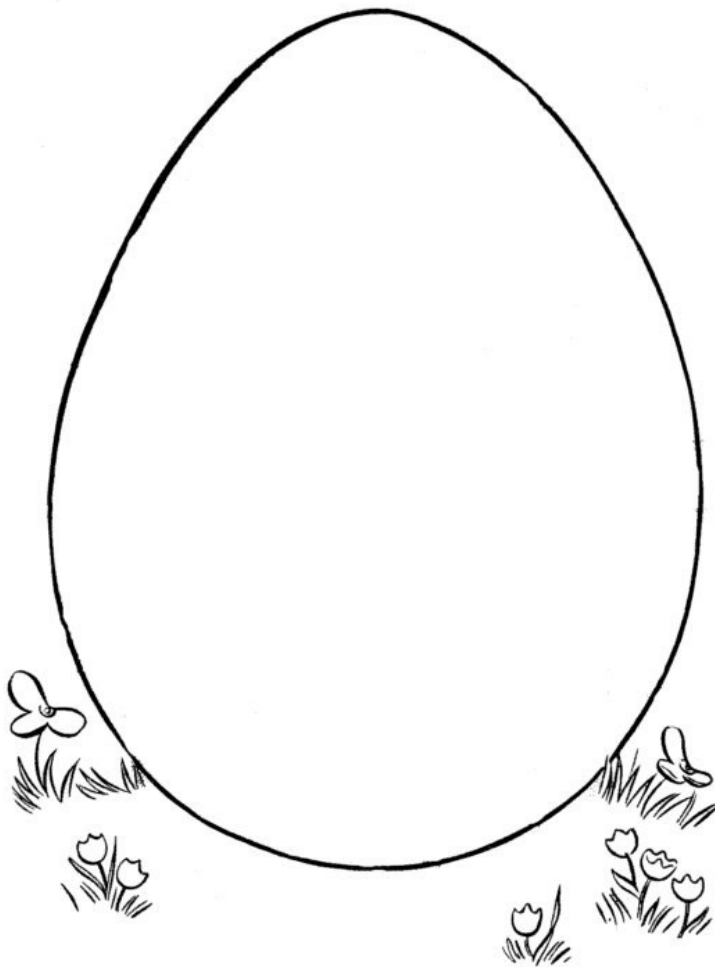
-Alyssa Parker



Stand against the rise in Asian hate crimes due to the COVID -19 pandemic and misinformation! Find out more at www.stopaapihate.org

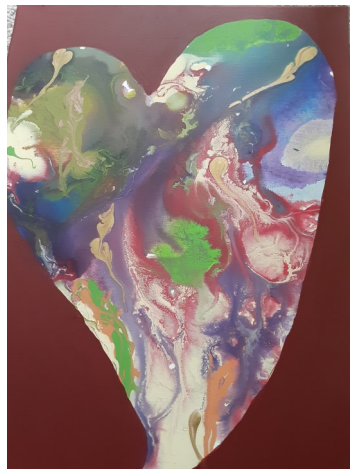


Youth and Young Adult Corner



You Color This Egg

Ms. Ann VanDyke shared her representation of the season of Lent through Easter with this art piece. What do you think about this? How would YOU represent this season through art?



How the World Celebrates Easter!

Daniel Wright

In France Easter is called *Paques*. The predominant religion in France is Roman-Catholic and no city, village or town is without a church. To mourn the crucifixion of Christ, on the Thursday before Good Friday, all church bells in France are silenced in acknowledgement and mourning of Jesus' death. Children are told that the bell's chimes have flown to Rome to see the Pope. The 'flying bells' are called *Les cloches volantes*. To say 'Happy Easter' you can either say *Joyeuses Pâques* or *Bonnes Pâques*. Finally, on Easter morning, the bells ring out in celebration of the Resurrection, declaring that Jesus is alive once again. In many villages, they embrace one another when they hear the bells ring.

In Germany just like many other countries in Europe, Easter is recognized as the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and it also coincides with the coming of spring. In Germany, trees are decorated with embellished Easter eggs called *Ostereierbaum* or Easter Egg Trees. It's also a custom in Austria, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, Moravia and the Czech Republic.

In Bermuda, on Good Friday, the shores and skies of Horseshoe Bay Beach are filled with kaleidoscopic colors because of the Bermuda Kite Festival. It is said that the kites are a celebration of the ascent of Christ. Bermudians also feast on fish cakes when it's Easter.



Congregational News

From Building Resources Team

- New carpeting was installed in January in the sanctuary and the pastor's office. The new carpet brightens the areas considerably.
- We are putting a new roof on the sanctuary in April. The existing roof is leaking and is generally worn out.
- The Building Resources team is slowly switching out the fluorescent lights in the hallways and is replacing them with LEDs to provide better light and to reduce energy costs. LED light generally consume only about 25% of the energy used by more conventional lighting.
- The Coffee Room has a mural the youth/young adults painted around the social justice library shelves. In fact, all the walls have been painted a bright gray so the room is much brighter than it was before.
- An All-Church cleaning day is badly needed but not yet scheduled. The pews need to be oiled; the wood is dry and scratched up in many places. Cushions should be washed. We need to do this work before the sanctuary is reopened for services. So please keep an eye out for a cleaning day to be scheduled. Remember that many hands make light work so please come out, even if only for an hour or two, if you feel comfortable indoors. But there probably will be some outside work to do too.

Submitted by Louise Knight



Education Equity: Continuing the Discussion

This month we had two major events on the Social Justice front. First we welcomed guests on two occasions to speak with us about Education Inequity. This is a topic we, as a congregation, have named as especially important to the work God is calling us to be about. We have held several discussions on the topic in the past, and received a grant to have a three part series of workshop discussions on it. The first was in the end of February when Michaela Alphonse discussed some concrete ways to get involved locally. Some of her recommendations included meeting with local school leadership to see about partnership ideas. When these opportunities present themselves, it is important to show up and be dependable. Her third recommendation was to partner with people already doing the policy work at the district, city, and state levels. We also welcomed Gimbiya Kettering for a more in depth look at the issue from its inception to how it manifests itself today. This 90 minute session was very challenging and insightful and cemented our desire to make a difference in this area. If you missed it, a recording is available on our YouTube channel. We look forward to welcoming two regular attendees who are also involved locally with FREE Together to lead our last session in the series on May 2nd.

- Pastor Josiah Ludwick



Resurrection Sunday

April 4, 2021

Live worship service took place in the back parking lot and we were blessed to have 71 attendees, hand out 10 Easter baskets to families, and hear a great word from Pastor Josiah about being "women of Resurrection faith"!



A special thank you to all who participated in Lenten Bible Study, Palm Sunday Virtual Service, Love Feast and all other Lent and holy Week activities.

Announcements

21 DAY RACIAL EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE CHALLENGE & The 17th Annual Race Against Racism

21-Day Racial Equity & Social Justice Challenge

Starting April 5

The challenge is designed to create dedicated time and space to build more effective social justice habits, particularly those dealing with issues of race, power, privilege, and leadership.

You will be presented with challenges such as reading an article, listening to a podcast, watching a video, reflecting on personal experience and more. Participation in an activity like this helps us to discover how racial injustice and social injustice impact our community, to connect with one another, and to identify ways to dismantle racism and other forms of discrimination.

Race Against Racism 2021

April 5-April 25.

The race supports the YWCA's mission to eliminate racism, empower women and girls, and promote peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. The funds we raise are crucial to sustaining our racial justice programs throughout the year ahead. Runners will participate by running or walking a distance of 5K or 3.1 miles. Though this can be done any time between April 5 and April 24, we encourage runners to participate in the race on the 24th so that even though we won't be together, we'll be united! This can be done wherever you are—on a treadmill, on a rails to trails path, around a track, or even the race course!

Then, participants will connect their experiences and offer encouragement to others by posting on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter and tagging us and utilizing the hashtags #RARHBG #VirtualRace. In addition, the Kids Fun Run - 100 yard dash for children 12 and under will take place virtually too.

\$30 for individuals / \$20 for teams – use code TEAM

Registration includes access to the 21 Day Challenge content, race participation, T-shirt, and a certificate of completion. Registration must be completed by April 1 to guarantee a T-shirt.

Register today at <http://www.ywcahbg.org/>

Upcoming Speakers!

We are blessed to have these special Sundays where we all come together as one body in Christ



April 11—Hank Johnson, Pastor at Harrisburg Brethren in Christ Church close by and a friend of our congregation!



April 18—LaDonna Nkosi Sanders, we have been blessed by her presence before and are excited to welcome her back for another powerful word.

Announcements Cont.

Don't Forget to Register for the 2021 Virtual Annual Conference!

June 30 – July 4

Registration allows you to participate in Business, Insight Sessions, Networking Groups, Concerts and more. Worship Services are free and will be available to everyone, registered or not. Non-Delegates fees: Full Conference: \$99, daily \$33 Delegate fees: Full Conference: \$305 **Registration opens March 2 at www.brethren.org/ac**



Compelling Vision Bible Study

Our District Nurture Commission is sponsoring a 13-week Bible study of the denomination's Compelling Vision Statement, beginning on April 5. Jamie Nace, a pastor in the Lancaster congregation and member of the Commission, will coordinate a team of teachers who will help us explore the vision statement, which will be acted upon at Annual Conference this summer. The statement says simply: ***"Together, as the Church of the Brethren, we will passionately live and share the radical transformation and holistic peace of Jesus Christ through relationship-based neighborhood engagement. To move us forward, we will develop a culture of calling and equipping disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless."***

Brethren Press has created a 13-week Bible study lesson series focused on the Compelling Vision. This series is designed to call us into a time of prayer and focused study of Scripture as we seek the mind of Christ in community with others.

The class will meet via Zoom on Monday evenings, beginning April 5, at 6:30 p.m. This is the perfect opportunity to join with brothers and sisters from the churches of our district without having to leave the comfort of your home.

Lesson materials can be found on <https://www.brethren.org/ac/compelling-vision/bible-studies/>

April 19-22, 2021

A Virtual Leadership Summit on Wellbeing for clergy and other church leaders is being planned by Church of the Brethren staff for April 19-22, 2021. The summit will open Monday evening with a keynote presentation by clinical psychologist and professor Dr. Jessica Young-Brown of Virginia Union University's Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology.



Pre-recorded sessions by presenters on five aspects of wellbeing will be available for viewing in preparation for participating in Q&A sessions with the presenters during the week. Speakers will address themes including family/relational, physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial wellbeing.

CEUs will be available through the Brethren Academy upon registration for the event. Contact Stan Dueck at sdueck@brethren.org or 847-429-4343 for more information.



*Keynote
Speaker*

Dr. Jessica
Young Brown

Celebrations and Prayer Calendar

Reminder:

Submissions for the May Growing Edge are due by

April 20!

Make sure to submit them to
office@hbgfirstcob.org

Remember to continue to reach out to your friends, family and loved ones through this time. You never know how much a simple conversation or a letter can mean to someone missing their friends and family.



2	Tiffany Carter	15	Sharon Lee Smith
5	Roger Cooley		Lisa Rhodes
6	Mary Lytle		Tavina Barchue
7	Linda Fontanez	19	Crystal Joseph
8	Deitrich Hart	20	Diana Rhodes
13	Sharon Hunn	22	Nye'Erin Bullock
14	Christopher Bullock	26	Kiersten Reeser
		27	Angela Ramirez
		28	Courtney Fontanez

2 Jim & Betty Ann Funk
 5 Jennifer & Roger Dixon, Jr.

2021 ANE District Prayer Calendar

Encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

		Pray for this church	Praying for First Church
April	4	Mohrsville (Mohrsville, PA)	Richland (Richland, PA)
	11	Brooklyn First (Brooklyn, NY)	Providence (Royersford, PA)
	18	Heidelberg (Myerstown, PA)	Ridgeway Community (Harrisburg, PA)
	25	Spring Creek (Hershey, PA)	Mt Wilson (Lebanon, PA)

April 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Love Feast	2 Good Friday	3
4 <i>Easter Sunday!</i>	5 bcmPEACE Trivia Night	6 MCT Meeting	7	8	9	10
11	12 bcmPEACE Board Meeting	13	14	15	16 bcmPEACE Zoom event	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Weekly Activities

10:00am Sunday Bible School for all ages	1:00pm Staff Meeting	5:00p Agape-Satyagraha	Pastor Josiah's Day Off 6:00pm Weekly Bible Study	11:00a Food Distribution	12:00pm Praise Band
11:00am Virtual Worship Service					
6:00p Youth/Young Adult Group					

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2021 *The Growing Edge*



OUR CHURCH STAFF

Josiah Ludwick,
Associate Pastor, BCM Program Director

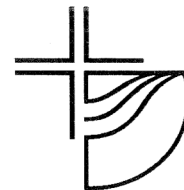
Waneta Benson,
Organist

Alyssa Parker,
Operations Manager, bcmPEACE

Eric Joloka,
Brethren Volunteer Service

Daniel Wright,
Brethren Volunteer Service

**We are called to be a
Christ-centered multi-cultural
Community in the inner city,
Sharing the love, healing, peace
and justice of Christ.**



**Anointed to share transformation
in Christ Jesus.**

The Growing Edge is a publication of
Harrisburg First Church of The Brethren
for our members, friends, and neighbors, .