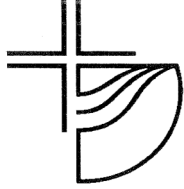


The Growing Edge



HARRISBURG FIRST
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
219 HUMMEL STREET
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17104-3399
WWW.HBGFIRSTCOB.ORG

A Prayer for May

Oh, Merciful Father, we come to you today to understand Your peace and to know Your love. We ask that You give us strength to go out into the world and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). Father God, we ask that You fill us with Your spirit during these turbulent times to seek justice, for You are our Advocate and our peace. Holy Spirit, do a mighty work within us and carry us on this journey. We need Your unconditional love daily for guidance and for strength. Heavenly Father, remind us to not grow weary or afflicted during trying times. Instead, please, remind us to lean unto You and not our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6). Most High King, we know that You are with us every step of the way, and we ask that You continue to protect us from all evil and that no weapon that's formed against us shall prosper. Mighty God, we sing praises and give thanks to You for all that You do. We pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

- Eric Joloka



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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

We Have Not Yet Arrived

Perhaps you are like me and have been totally taken in by the trial of Derek Chauvin, the police officer accused and now convicted for the murder of George Floyd. In my circle, especially from White progressive friends, I've seen and heard much celebrating as "justice has been served". Before going further, let me say that I am happy with the verdict, and hope that it will lead to some sort of accountability with those who are employed "To Protect and To Serve." That being said, this is not a time to celebrate and justice most certainly hasn't been served. A man is dead who shouldn't be. Another family will be without a loved one presumably for a very long time (still waiting on the sentence). A community still mourns the loss of one gone too soon. In the same week this verdict was carried forth, at least 3 more police killings have been reported, two of which were teenagers. This verdict is not to be celebrated, because it doesn't change the fact that so much more needs to be done. We must continue to work toward a world where Black and Brown people are seen with the same humanity as the dominant culture, a world where their lives actually do matter and are valued.

Perhaps this is a flippant analogy, but it comes to mind easily as the Academy Awards are approaching. This reminds me of when Denzel finally won his Oscar. One of the greatest actors of my generation who had made the year's best performance several times before, including roles as Malcolm X and Ruben "The Hurricane" Carter, is finally recognized... for playing a crooked cop... a villain. The Academy pulled their arms out of socket in self-congratulations for finally recognizing this man, and what happened next? The same old line of old white men winning year after year. Nothing changed. It is my fear, based on initial responses from especially white friends, that we will do the same. We, as a society, will self-congratulate too early when there is still so much to be done.

This also has some truth in the work of First Church. We have done much good work over the last several years, including study of Jemar Tisby's *Color of Compromise*, Dr. Hart's teaching on depictions of Jesus, our outspokenness in regards to the War on Black Lives, and our recent study on inequity in education. If we are to be the "Christ-centered Multi-Cultural Community" that we are called to be, we cannot—WE MUST NOT—be satisfied and start congratulating ourselves as having arrived or having done enough. Recent guest of First Church, Daniel Hill, writes in his book, *White Lies* that one of the biggest pitfalls for churches striving to do what God has called us to do is "wokeness". That is, the thought that we are much further along than we really are. The thought that we understand and have nothing further to learn from those with lived experience. The thought that we have arrived at our destination. The idea of having arrived flies directly in the face of Romans 12. Just after the apostle Paul encourages us to give all of ourselves to God and to not conform to what this world says is right and good, he says this in verse 3, "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you."

Church we have not arrived. The Academy has not arrived. The criminal justice system CERTAINLY has not arrived. This is not a time to celebrate, but rather a time to work ever harder in pursuit of the goal set before us. Let us continue to run this race with perseverance and to throw off all that may hinder, including the falsehood that we are further along than we actually are. We Have Not Yet Arrived. This work is a lifelong pursuit. Let us get to work and get after it, empowered by His Holy Spirit!!!



Pastor Josiah Ludwick

Pastor

Program Director bcmPEACE

I Am Kept in His Strength

Harrisburg has been a home for me these last 8 months, and I've enjoyed every bit of it. There have been many challenges, some ups and downs, but through it all God has been there with me and kept me. I'm extremely grateful for the opportunity of working here for the church. I've grown immensely over these months. A lot of people from the church and the community has helped me get acclimated to this environment. For instance, Dr. Hart has been a mentor of mine, and he's been guiding me through several financial and spiritual struggles. I'm extremely grateful for Dr. Hart and others who have supported me along this journey. Furthermore, I've been encouraged to lean on the passage in *Ephesians 6:11* and *Philippians 4*, that says rejoice in the Lord always. These passages have been one of my favorites to meditate on because some the struggles I've been through these last few months. I've been battling a lot of spiritual warfare these last few years of my life. God has reminded me of these passages during some trying times that I've faced recently. These passages have kept me strong and more trusting of God. Because of these passages, I've grown to understand a lot about myself and God's strength. I've grown to know that when I'm having a hard time, to lean on His strength to me through. For example, the past few weeks I had a lot of tasks to do with the church, I



realized I couldn't do it on my own and that I needed God's strength to carry me through. I've improved and grown in many areas of the church thus far. Two areas that I'm extremely proud of in helping the church with is food distribution Friday mornings and Sunday's announcements. I've grown to really like doing these two things because both took me out of my comfort zone. I love every aspect of how I've been growing here in Harrisburg and the people who's been helping me. I am excited to see what God has in store for these final months, —Eric Joloka

Experiencing New Things and Growing the Old

In April we made some progress on the bcmPEACE Apartment Building. The emergency lighting in the front stairwell should be functional by the end of the month. I attended my first Love Feast which was held in Reservoir Park. It was a very short service due to the temperature dropping and a very brisk cold wind. We had an Easter Sunday service outside. The weather was warm and it was a joy to be together again after so long. I saw kids running, laughing and playing outdoors—something I did not realize how much I missed. Community meals at the Ubuntu house are still held every week. I got a free ham from Giant Grocery for a giveaway that they had. I was expecting a pack of deli meat and it ended up being a 20-pound ham. It provided several full meals. It is the simple blessings in life that we should count every day. I had my 43rd birthday in April. I celebrated with a maple bacon donut from pastor Josiah and company. It was delicious! I am going to be five years' cancer free this year. The time has flown by. From Eagle Pass Texas to being the co-owner of a business to coming to Harrisburg. It has been a productive five years and I have done my best to give back as much as I can. This month I will be living simply without a vehicle for the first time in my adult life. Walking from the Ubuntu house to the church has allowed me to see the local neighborhoods in a different light. You truly do not appreciate the details when you are in a car. Some of the houses are well kept while some are not. You can feel the pride in ownership in some neighborhoods. Where there are well tended flower beds and no litter. Others have burned out homes. A neighborhood is like a person in that it needs care and the effort of many to be maintained. Harrisburg is a city on the mend in that regard but it is a slow process. The end only needs to be "Made a difference to that one." - Daniel Wright



Our Community Ministries



Program Accomplishments this past month!



- Agape Graduates met with Veronica Kelly of Tri-County Community Action to discuss partnerships on potential community projects
- Agape Graduates submitted an application to paint one of the planters located along Derry St. as a part of the "Peace Through Art" Graduate Program
- Agape Graduates are currently designing a recipe book cover for the Allison Hill Farmer's Market
- Members of the Graduate program will be connecting with OEP to record for the Dunker Punks Podcast!

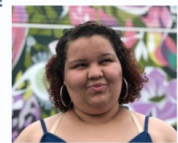
COOKING UP A HEALTHY COMMUNITY: CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

May 13, 2021 | 5 PM | ZOOM



Join us in hearing from our young leaders in the Agape Satyagraha Graduate Program! They will be discussing their current project "Peace Through Art" and how they are working to change the narrative around Allison Hill and broader Harrisburg community!



Mylea Coles and Dinesti Owens
Agape Satyagraha Graduates
Artists and Young Leaders



Briel Slocum
Agape Satyagraha Graduate
bcmPEACE Board Member
Messiah University Student

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

COOKING UP A HEALTHY COMMUNITY: UBUNTU


June 7, 2021 | 5 PM | ZOOM



Christine and Josiah Ludwick
Owners of The Ubuntu House
Josiah is Pastor of Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren
Christine is a Physicians Assistant at Hamilton Health

Ubuntu /doo'bōon(t)ōo/ n. - a quality that includes the essential human virtues: compassion and humanity. Meaning "I am because we are"
Origin: South Africa, Zulu language

We are excited to have The Ludwicks discuss their journey opening up a community house for young people wanting to work/volunteer in the community. We will hear about the process, the impact, and the hopes and dreams for this community house!

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

- Wellness Hub has been giving out food to an average 140 households each week
- Our Safe and Affordable Housing is getting new emergency lights and a more secure back gate!
- We have updated our bylaws to better reflect where we are, and our goals moving forward.
- We have welcomed former Case Manager and active volunteer, Alice Smith onto the Board! If you see her or have her info be sure to let her know we are glad to have her with us!
- A Computer was gifted to a graduate who completed the program in 2020

"Be the Peace"

bcmPEACE.org and bcmPEACE on social media



Alyssa Parker,
bcmPEACE
Operations
Manager

Faith and Justice Corner

The Hate You Give

My favorite movie currently is *The Hate U Give*. The reason why I like this movie is because it depicted events that are still currently happening in America, with the injustices shown towards people of color. In the movie, one scene shows the senseless killing of an unarmed black teenager by a police officer. The portrayal of the scene was depicted very well in my opinion because we still witness crimes like these being committed by the police. - *Eric Joloka*



We also have this book in the Social Justice Library if you are interested in reading the book (Alyssa thinks it's better than the movie)!

A Reflection on Inequity in Education: What can the Church do?

By Linda Wilson

Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren has had several valuable and thought-provoking discussions with special guest speakers. While I am not a member of the church because I live out-of-state, I tune in to many of their events. In March, they hosted Gimbiya Kettering whose topic was "Inequity in Education." Before participants contributed to the discussion, Gimbiya asked them to briefly tell about their educational background. That was actually one of the highlights for me to hear such a wide variety of educational experiences because our lived experiences shape what we bring to the table. Everyone had something valuable to contribute, and it was wonderful to see how everyone listened to one another. Conversation flowed freely and naturally. Some of the topics discussed were the impact of intentional integration, school funding, the inequities of resources for schools in disadvantaged areas, flaws in the system, and implicit biases in our educational institutions. Pastor Josiah Ludwick asked, "How can the church make a difference?" Gimbiya pointed out that the church was complicit in racism and pushed for segregation during the Jim Crow period. She said, "If the church was powerful in creating the system, it can be powerful in deconstructing the system." She added, "Undoing the legacy is part of our faith work." Those comments, along with her challenge to examine our own implicit biases, were another highlight in the discussion. Practical suggestions as to what we, the church, can do are advocating for resources in our schools, loving not only on the kids from disadvantaged spaces, but loving on their moms. Motherhood can be lonely, and moms need our care, encouragement, and support. Harrisburg First Church has raised scholarship money for kids to go to college. Being part of a kid's life, helping him/her navigate the college admissions process, and financing someone's education are other practical ideas. The discussion ended with Scripture. Jesus told us that the poor will always be with us, and there's always an opportunity to show them kindness (Mark 14:7). I highly recommend checking out the discussion on YouTube that Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren posted on March 30.

Check out the **next upcoming discussion May 2**. I'm looking forward to it!

Linda Wilson has been a church planting missionary for 40 years, and holds a Masters degree in Education from McGill University in Canada. Linda and her husband train and coach indigenous church planters in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.

Youth and Young Adult Corner

May marks the end of the school year and the beginning of summer. Will this summer be one where we can do the things we want again? Or will it continue the social distancing we have been doing? Will we be able to hang out with friends again? Or go to camp for the summer? Keeping busy and keeping fit are two important things even in a time of social distancing. Here are some ideas:

- Catch and Frisbee are two games that do not require physical contact
- Shooting hoops is fun and you do not need many kids to play it.
- You can toss the ball around and stay at least six feet from each other
- Dance to your favorite songs or music videos by yourself for with a friend!
- Get some chalk and play some Hopscotch
- Find some fun workout videos on YouTube and try to keep up!
- To add some water, you can try a fun water balloon relay race
- Take some time to yourself and learn some yoga!
- Ride your bike with friends and family or go on a walk around the neighborhood
- Get creative and find so many more fun things to stay active while staying safe!



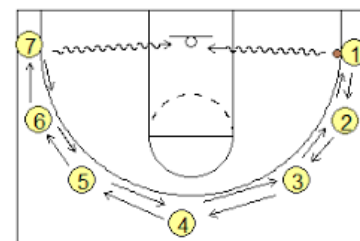
Our **Youth Group** has been pretty active as we have been meeting regularly every other Sunday evening! We have been discussing the Sunday service and challenging our minds with some Escape room style games!

Young Adults have not been meeting as regularly, but have been making up for it by doing a lot of good work in the Agape Satyagraha Graduate program (find out more on Our Community Ministries page! And pastor Josiah has been staying in contact with them and continuing to check in.

We have also been focusing on ways to make sure our **Young Disciples** are staying connected with one another and to the church such as park meetups and our Kid's Day monthly event (see flyer in the announcements)!

How to Play: Around the World

1. Place cones or chalk marks around the perimeter of the area near the hoop. You can make them really easy or some really hard shots.
2. Line players up behind the first cone or chalk mark.
3. The first player shoots from the first spot. If s/he makes the basket, s/he advances and shoots from the next spot. The same player continues around the markers until a basket is missed.
4. After this player misses, s/he rebounds the ball, passes it to the next player in line, and goes to the end of the line.
5. On each player's second, third, etc. turn, that player returns to the last place s/he attempted a basket and continues as before from that spot.
6. A player is finished when s/he has successfully made baskets all the way around the court. This player may begin again from the first spot.



Congregational News

ConGRADulations to our Graduates

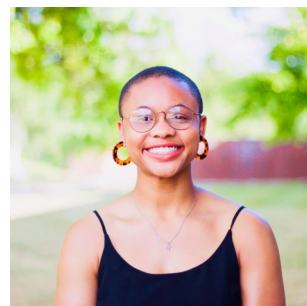
We are excited to congratulate our 2021 college graduates! Below we recognize these young people who have had an impact on our church and our community and celebrate their success! If you would like to personally congratulate them, check in your Church Directory or contact Alyssa or Josiah for their contact information!



Briel Slocum
Messiah University



Sierra Dixon
Harrisburg Penn State



Emoni Taylor
Messiah University



Wilfredo Rohan
Messiah University



Jaylene Ortiz
Harrisburg University



Samson Arnold
Messiah University



Kaite Benson
Pace University



Leanne Tan
Messiah University

Pastoral Search Committee Update

The Search Committee has been diligently working on our position description and church profile. Both were submitted to the District and several other job banks and services this past month and we are already receiving responses. If you know somebody who may be a good fit for our Faith Family, please let us know and we can get the posting to you to pass on to them. The Search Committee will meet regularly to review applications and resumes and will be moving forward with initial interviews in the coming months. Please continue to pray for the Search Committee, as we deliberate and make decisions on who to interview. Also, pray for the new team member God will bring into our midst, that even now He will be preparing them for the work the Lord has called this Faith Community to be about.



What is Happening with Stewardship Team?

Although COVID has caused a slowdown in activities outside the church, the Stewardship Team has still been meeting virtually each month. They have been focusing on making plans for their special quarterly offerings. They also have discussed future plans for outreach programs and will be appointing someone to serve as auditor by the June council meeting. If you are interested in being an auditor, reach out to a member of the Stewardship Team!

- Romayne Reeser

Announcements



Join us!

We will be having fun with one another through crafts, games, and a Bible lesson!

Make sure to wear your mask!

KID'S DAY!

AT FIRST CHURCH



MAY 22
10:00-11:30AM

HARRISBURG FIRST CHURCH

We will meet in the back parking lot for fun in the sun! **Parents and guardians please accompany your children for the duration of the event!**



DUE TO COVID, WE CANNOT HOLD A LARGE GATHERING SO TO SECURE YOUR SPOT AT THE EVENT, CONTACT US AT
HBGFIRSTCOB@YAHOO.COM!



Friday, May 21st

Register Now for BHA's Annual Golf Tournament

Www.Bha-pa.org/events

Deadline to register is April 30th!

Have A Green Thumb?

We are still offering our community garden plots to those who wish to start growing their own fruits, vegetables, and flowers!

Please see Waneta Benson if you are interested in securing a spot.

Also please reach out if you are interested in helping general maintenance of the space!



Upcoming Speakers!

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



May 23 // Dr. Drew Hart—Many of us know Dr. Hart as a member of this congregation and have had the pleasure of hearing him preach a number of times. We are excited to welcome him back into the pulpit!



June 6 // Rev. Jon Brenneman—Another brother of Harrisburg First Church whom we love to hear from! We are excited to have him bring the word once again!

Announcements Cont.

Have You Registered 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

A detailed schedule of events is now available on the website where you can find more information about my favorite part—the “equipping sessions” which include workshops on Kingian Nonviolence, Climate Change, Economic Peacemaking, and so much more!

Register NOW at www.brethren.org/ac



MAY 5 | 7:30 PM EDT | ZOOM

“LISTENING AND LEARNING
FROM BRETHREN LEADERS OF
ASIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE”



Zoom Event: “The Ministry of Jesus, Ubuntu and Cultural Competency for These Times”

Part 1: Tuesday May 4 // 6-8pm CDT

Part 2: Tuesday May 11 // 6-8pm CDT

This course led by Rev. LaDonna Sanders-Nkosi, explores biblical examples, the ministry of Jesus, and current texts to provide helpful skill building in increasing our cultural competency, respectful multicultural engagement practices, and beloved community building. To learn more and to register for the event, go to <https://www.mcpherson.edu/ventures/>.

Compelling Vision Bible Study

Our District Nurture Commission is sponsoring a 13-week Bible study of the denomination's Compelling Vision Statement, which began 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 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/>

Celebrations and Prayer Calendar

Get Ready for 2021 Spring Council Meeting!

Our Spring Council will take place on June 6, 2021! More information will be coming out later, but if you are a team leader or part of a team please make sure to have your reports in by May 9! If you are looking forward to receiving your packets and attending, start checking your mailboxes mid-may!



Reminder:

Submissions for the June Growing Edge are due by

May 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.



3	Christine Rhodes	29	Richard Brode
4	Rita Rhodes		
5	Terrell Selvey		
15	Romayne Reeser		
16	Ke-Shawn Carter		
25	Robyn Carter		
	Jonathan Saft		
26	Diane DeMarco		
27	Woody Ziegler		

1	Chuck and Helen Fuge
5	Rodger Cooley and Jane Krause
18	Woody and Doris Ziegler



2021 ANE District Prayer Calendar

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

I Thessalonians 5:11

		Pray for this church	Praying for First Church
May	2	Blue Ball (Blue Ball, PA)	Lebanon (Lebanon, PA)
	9	Nuevo Amenceer (Bethlehem, PA)	Veritas (Lancaster, PA)
	16	Chiques (Manheim, PA)	Springfield (Coopersberg, PA)
	23	Sanford Fellowship (Sanford, ME)	Ambler (Ambler, PA)
	30	Wyomissing (Wyomissing, PA)	Puerta Del Cielo (Redding, PA)

May 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 Live Outdoor Worship!	3	4 MCT Meeting	5	6	7	8
9 Mother's Day	10 bcmPEACE Meeting	11 Stewardship Meeting	12 Christian Ed Meeting	13 bcmPEACE Zoom Event	14	15
16	17 Building Resources	18 Spiritual Life Meeting	19	20	21	22
23 Live Outdoor Pentecost Worship!	24	25	26 Harrisburg Last Day of School	27	28	29
30	31 Memorial Day					

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					

First Church of the Brethren
219 Hummel Street
Harrisburg, PA 17104-3399
Phone: 717-234-0415
E-mail: office@hbgfirstcob.org
Website: www.hbgfirstcob.org

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OUR CHURCH STAFF

Josiah Ludwick,
Associate Pastor, BCM Program Director

Waneta Benson,
Organist

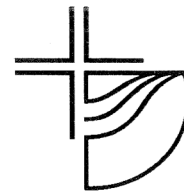
Alyssa Parker,
Operations Manager, bcmPEACE

Eric Joloka,
Brethren Volunteer Service

Daniel Wright,
Brethren Volunteer Service

Don-Valient Mitchell
Custodian

**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, .