

May
2022

The Growing Edge

Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren | 219 Hummel St. Harrisburg, PA 17104
national mental health awareness month



A PRAYER FOR MAY

Written by Devin Dixon-Rosario

Dear God,

This month we ask you to touch the hearts and minds of those suffering from mental illnesses. Feelings of anxiety, depression or despair can so easily discourage our spirits, often causing us to lose sight of our purpose on this earth. We ask that you remain constant in our minds in times of exhaustion and panic.

Psalm 40: 1-31 "I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the LORD and put their trust in him."

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Thriving At First Church

Ephesians 4: 1-4 “I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

May is looking to be yet another busy month full of activities, events, and programs here at First Church. During this month we will be celebrating the graduates in our faith community who have completed their high school and college educations. bcmPEACE Agape–Satyagraha graduates along with the local organization, Please Live, will be hosting a Youth Mental Health fair and other Agape–Satyagraha graduates will be participating in the annual Highmark Walk. There are even district events that are taking place this month that First Church is a part of. On May 14th, Harrisburg First will be represented at the ANE District event, “The Church: Alive to Thrive.” Members of our praise team have recorded worship songs, we have testimonies from people within our congregation that will be shared via video, and I even have the privilege of giving the closing address for the event.

As I have been preparing for this event and have been spending time thinking about the theme, “The Church: Alive to Thrive,” it is apparent that in so many ways our congregation truly is a thriving church. In just listing off the different activities and programs that are happening this month it is clear that there is always something going on at First Church. Yet, just because we may have a calendar full of programs, I don’t necessarily believe that this is the hallmark of a thriving church. As I think more about what it means to be a thriving church, I am left with more questions. The one that I find myself continuously coming back to is the question of how can we continue to cultivate a faith community that is thriving for all of God’s people? More so, what does it look like to do this as a Brethren community? Part of this question has been addressed in our Sermon Series, “Peacefully. Simply. Together.” As a congregation that has members with all different kinds of backgrounds and from various walks of life, it is a difficult task to try to understand how we can be a thriving church together.



Lexi Aligarbes
Co-Pastor

Yet, I believe that it was not an accident that our denomination has expressed the importance of togetherness through the tagline “Peacefully. Simply. Together.” And as important as it may be that we remain open to change so that we can truly be a thriving church for all people, I pray that the journey we embark on is one that we can all be a part of together. With our next World Cafe discussion approaching on May 22nd, it is my hope that we continue to show up to all the different activities going on in our community together so that we can learn from one another. And in doing so, we live out the words Paul wrote to the Ephesians when he encouraged them to “maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Where We Have Been, Where We Are Headed...

I can't say enough just how exciting it is to be a part of this faith community. When I think about the way things were when I first came through the doors of 219 Hummel Street and all the potential that was here, and to see now where God has us, it is truly overwhelming. We have come from a faith community who desired to be multicultural, desired to welcome our neighbors and desired to be about the work of Jesus to being a faith community that truly embodies these ideals. I love coming to church and seeing all the many different kinds of people that call Harrisburg First their church home. I love the variety of music we use, the variety of activities we are involved in and the variety of ways we embody the love of Jesus here on Hummel Street. We are well on our way to becoming "a Christ-Centered Multicultural Community In The Inner-City Sharing the Love, Healing, Peace and Justice of Christ!"

But if we are well on our way toward embodying this mission or vision, does this phrase still work as an aspirational statement? Does it still propel us into the future God has in store for us? I'm only asking these questions. I'm not here to answer them. I am well aware that we still have work to do to be able to say we have arrived at the statement as it presently expresses itself. I want to invite all of us to prayerfully consider our statement and honestly ask ourselves if there are pieces that should be tweaked. Honestly ask ourselves if any of it needs to change. Please join me in taking some time for introspection around this.



Josiah Ludwick

Co-Pastor

We will be coming together this month for a second World Cafe Discussion and our Mission Statement will be the topic. We will look at where we are presently as relates to where we have stated that God wants us to be. You may recall that World Cafe is an opportunity to share our different perspectives as a means for coming around the consensus of the group. It allows us each to have our voices be heard without having to speak in front of all who are gathered. It's a time to speak, a time to listen and a time to discern, all while being led by he Spirit. I hope you will make plans to join us on Sunday May 22 after church as we look at where we are and where we are headed as a faith community.

Again, I love who we have become and I'm excited for where we are headed. I trust in what we often say around First Church,

THE BEST IS YET TO COME!!!

Our Community Ministries

bcmPEACE

"Serving Allison Hill in becoming a safer, healthier community empowered by God's peace."

Get Connected!

- Make sure you are receiving our monthly Newsletter
- Donate your unwanted clothes to Community Aid using our partner number #10018
- Come take a tour of the space and community
- Become a Board Member
- Become a Mentor
- So many more opportunities!

Add it to the Calendar

May 15th – Mental Health Fair at 12pm

- May 21st – Highmark Walk for A Healthy Community
- June 4th – Agape trip to Philadelphia!
- June 19th – 23rd – Vacation Bible School
- July 10th – 14th – bcmPEACE represented at Annual Conference
- July 24
- August 19th – Back to School BINGO Fundraiser
- October 5th – Be The Peace Banquet
- November 6th – Bowl-a-thon

What's Happening?

Agape Satyagraha participants are continuing to go through the program while graduates continue in conversations around Mental Health and it's intersections (race, gender, sexuality, etc). Both have been participating in community artwork! They will be instrumental in planning and participating in our Mental Health Fair!



We have a new **Computer Class** attendee as well as loyal other participants who are constantly showing appreciation for the skills the lab has given them. We are still in need of a volunteer who can lead these classes!

Pathway to Prosperity is getting a new look! We will be creating a "free store" that gives out hygienic products, and clothes to those who come through our Pathway to Prosperity program. There will also be space for children and a welcoming meeting/office space for our Pathway Guide to mentor and direct participants.



Our **Wellness Hub** is impacting the lives of an average 150 households each week! We have enjoyed increased connections and relationships as we enter back into the sanctuary for fellowship prior to distribution.

2022 **BCMPEACE X**
HIGHMARK
WALK

CREATING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

MAY 21, 2022



Want to be a part of creating a safer, healthier community empowered by God's Peace?

WALK WITH US.

Register, Join or Create a Team, Access Resources, and Donate at www.bcmpeace.org

Make sure you are keeping up with all things bcmPEACE by checking out our website www.bcmpeace.org! Also if you are not already receiving our Monthly newsletter, we would love for you to sign up for our mailing list. Thank you for your continued support as we continue to serve Allison Hill in becoming a safer, healthier, community empowered by God's Peace!



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/www.bcmpeace.org

Faith and Justice Corner

"Thriving Together" Josiah Ludwick

David P. Leong
Foreword by Soong-Chan Rah

RACE &

PLACE

How Urban Geography Shapes
the Journey to Reconciliation

Some of you are aware that Alyssa Parker, Donna Benson and myself have been a part of something called Thriving Together over the course of the past several months. This is a cohort of churches that are specifically looking at Racial Justice in the context of their own faith community's history, their present and looking into the future. Each gathering has included some reading, workshops, conversation and group work aimed at helping us get a full picture of what it would look like if we are effectively standing for racial justice where God has placed us. Our gathering this past weekend focused on the idea of Race and Place. We rehearsed the history of the Capital Region as relates to race and have been asked to do some work around researching our own congregation's role in how things have gotten to be the way they are today. During Abolition when Harrisburg was a stop on the Underground Railroad, what did Harrisburg First have to say about it? Did we participate in the Civil Rights Movement? When White Flight was sweeping over our community, how did we respond? These are just some of the questions we will be investigating in the coming months. While the three of us do this work, I want to encourage you to do likewise. Find out what indigenous peoples inhabited the land where you now reside. Some of our home addresses have the identities of Sun-Down Towns in their recent histories. Some continue to have Restrictive Deeds on the books. The way things are today didn't just happen coincidentally. Join us in investigating these histories so that we might gain a clearer picture of our present and plan for a brighter more inclusive future!

How can we define justice within our mission statement?

"We are called to be a Christ-centered multi-cultural community in the inner city, sharing the love, healing, peace, and justice of Christ."

As a church on south Allison Hill, many of us have witnessed injustices first hand. On this very block, violence toward minorities and police brutality have taken the lives of so many of our brothers and sisters in Christ. We honor our diverse congregation and pride ourselves on being a multicultural body. Here at First Church we are committed to sharing the love, healing, peace and JUSTICE of Christ. Now we must ask ourselves: What community does our justice stand for? Who is our community made of?

We must equally advocate for all of our neighbors, as all of God's children have been given the birthright to know Him. God's love extends to minorities; to various genders; to every race; to the queer community; to the disabled community, to the Asian community; to the Hispanic community; even to those who feel undeserving of it. The power of a verbal affirmation is the first step in embracing a faith based community fighting for justice. In everything that we do as a congregation, we must hold fast in dedication to sharing the love of Christ.

Devin Dixon-Rosario



The Youth Corner

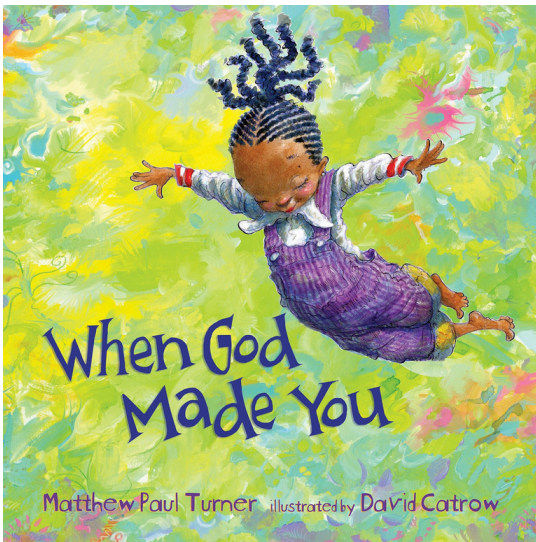
Social Justice Library Book of the Month!

"When God Made You" by M. Turner

Originally published: 2017

This book serves as a reminder to children that we were all made in *HIS* image; beautifully and without flaw. On page 2, the author reminds readers that we are all one of a kind from head to toe. God has fashioned our talents and our passions, he placed each and every one of us here for a divine purpose.

To our youth, if you ever feel lost or doubtful, remember that God makes no mistakes.



Youth Group



Make sure you come out and join us every other Sunday for Youth Group (grades 6-12)!



Want to go to camp?!

Registration is beginning for summer camps of all ages in June and July!

If you need help with registration or costs, please email Alyssa Parker at brethren.com.min@gmail.com.

Congregational News and Announcements

Mid-week Meditations

Join Pastor Lexi for a morning meditation every Wednesday at 9am! We will be highlighting different forms of spiritual practices, prayer, and meditation. Look forward to seeing you all there!



Talkin' back

Sunday Bible Study has returned in the form of a "talk back" immediately following service. This will include going deeper into scripture and discussing the sermon. There will be a primary class available for that age range as well as the Young Disciples continuing past its normal time to accommodate childcare.

Want to Help?

We appreciate the help we have received from you all with making each Sunday service run smooth and efficient. To sign up for a role this month, please see our signup sheet on the welcome table or confirm via email at hbgfirstcob@yahoo.com

1 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
___ Time for Young Disciples

8 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
___ Time for Young Disciples

15 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
___ Time for Young Disciples

22 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
___ Time for Young Disciples

29 ___ Welcome Table ___ Zoom and Video
___ Scripture Reading ___ Announcements
___ Time for Young Disciples

Praise Reports

The birth of baby **Elisha**, in the Tokyo family. We thank God for each child born in our congregation.

Congratulations to **Lydia Pebly** who, as a first-year teacher, was awarded Teacher of the Year at Hamilton. We thank God for the gifts given to those among us.

We praise God for our hardworking staff and congregants who made our Love Feast possible.


Prayer Requests

The family of Susanne Funk, as Susanna has gone to be with God.


For all affected by illnesses or disabilities

More Announcements





It's Up to You in 2022



*May
Friendship
Day*

“A Call to Serve”

You're Invited All are Welcome!

Location Name: Camp Hill Presbyterian Church

Location Address: 101 N. 23rd Street, Camp Hill, PA 17011
Women - Join us for Tea, Discussion and a brief Worship Service. It has been over two years since we've been able to gather together !!

Date & Time: Thursday, May 26, 2022 @ 10 AM

Point of Contact: Lois Griffiths { 717-545-0076
 alcgrif@yahoo.com
Offerings will go to the local unit and to Least Coin.
CWU - Church Women United of Greater Harrisburg

First Church Graduates!

- Adesewa Ajitotutu- High School
- Justine Eckert- Messiah University
- Hope Hammond- Messiah University
- Nathan Hurley- Messiah University

JANUARY 2022 • VOLUME 1

LOVE ME, TOO

*Stories from the LGBTQ+ community
By Devin Dixon-Rosario*



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "COME OUT"

DEVIN DIXON-ROSARIO

Coming out requires strength, love, and self-acceptance. In a world divided by race, ethnicity, socioeconomics, and much more; we as people struggle with division among sexual orientations. There is a myriad of things to consider when making the decision to come out such as taking safety precautions, being prepared for potential consequences, allowing time for your parent or guardian to adjust, and more. In this edition of *Love me, too*, we will read first-hand accounts of the stories of beauty, heartbreak, and endurance in the LGBTQ+ community.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE:

- PERSONAL ACCOUNTS
- ADVICE
- RESOURCES

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others. It is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Hello friends! I have finally finished my first newsletter with OEP. Please check your emails and fill out the google form attached to be a part of our mailing list. Thank you to those who have already shown support! Please see me if you'd like a hard copy of this newsletter.

Devin Dixon-Rosario

LGBTQ+ Justice Organizer OEP

Upcoming Conferences

- National Young Adult Conference – May 27–30
 - "I Am Because We Are" (Romans 12:5)
 - Register NOW at www.brethren.org/yya/yac/
- Annual Conference – July 10–14
 - "Embracing One Another As Christ Embraces Us" (Romans 15:7)
 - Registration Opens March 1st at www.brethren.org/ac2022/
- National Youth Conference – July 23–28
 - "Foundational" (Colossians 2:5–7)
 - Register NOW at www.brethren.org/nyc/registration/



Even More Announcements

Mark Your Calendars!

On May 14th, 2022 the ANE District Urban Initiative team will be hosting the event, The Church: Alive to Thrive. This will be a time of worship, testimonial, and fellowship with other urban congregations in the ANE District.

Mental Health Fair for Youth will be on Sunday, May 15th from noon-3pm. This event is being held in partnership with bcmPeace Agape-Satyagraha graduates and the local organization PleaseLive. Representatives from throughout Central PA will be present to provide information, handouts, and presentations about Mental Health. This event is free and both youth and parents are encouraged to attend.

World Café! On May 22nd, following service, First Church will be holding another World Café discussion as we talk about the mission statement of the church. With all of the changes our church has had to make since the pandemic and as things change throughout our denomination, we want to make time to discern as a faith community where God is calling us. All are encouraged to attend and lunch will be provided. This will be in-person with a Zoom option for those who can only attend virtually.

ANE 55+ Older Adult Spring Luncheon
May 11, 2022
12:00pm
Yoder's Restaurant, New Holland, PA
\$22.00/person

Menu: Chicken OR Hamloaf
Green Beans, MASHed Potatos, Salad
VEGETARIAN LASAGNA is also available

Deacons of the Month for the month of May are Mark Pickens and Rick Mehaffie. They function to meet prayer and other needs as they arise. In the event you can't get ahold of pastoral leadership or your own Deacon, they fill the gap.

We praise God for our active Deacon ministry!

May

Birthdays & Anniversaries!



Happy Anniversary!

May 1st.. Chuck & Helen Fuge

May 3rd.. Jane Krause & Roger Cooley

May 18th.. Woody & Doris Ziegler

May 3	Christine Rhoades
May 4th	Rita Rhoades
May 15th	Romayne Reeser
May 20th	Andy Brode
May 21st	Howard Kramer
May 24th	Mary Etta Herrington
May 25th	Robyn Carter
	Jonathan Saft
May 27th	Woody Ziegler
May 29th	Richard Brode

If you have something you want included in the Growing Edge, please send the material in to the office by May 18th.

May ANE District Prayer Calendar

Pray for this Church

This Church is Praying for Us

1 May 22	<u>Amwell (Stockton, NJ)</u>	<u>Lampeter (Lancaster, PA)</u>
8 May 22	<u>Spring Creek (Hershey, PA)</u>	<u>Wilmington (Wilmington, PA)</u>
15 May 22	<u>Coventry (Pottstown, PA)</u>	<u>Lititz (Lititz, PA)</u>
22 May 22	<u>Iglesia Berith, Oasis De Esperanza (Lebanon, PA)</u>	<u>Ridgeway Community (Harrisburg, PA)</u>
29 May 22	<u>Schuylkill (Pine Grove, PA)</u>	<u>Mechanic Grove (Quarryville, PA)</u>



MAY 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 GRADUATION SUNDAY	2 DISCERNMENT TEAM @ 6PM	3 MCT @ 5:30 BCM PROPERTY COMM @ 4:30PM	4	5	6	7
8 MOTHER'S DAY	9 BCM BOARD MEETING @ 5	10 STEWARDSHIP TEAM @ 4PM CHRISTIAN ED TEAM @ 6PM	11 TEAM REPORTS FOR COUNCIL DUE	12	13	14 ALIVE TO THRIVE EVENT THRIVING TOGETHER
15 MENTAL HEALTH FAIR @ 12PM	16 BUILDING RESOURCES @ 4PM	17 SPIRITUAL LIFE TEAM @ 6PM	18	19	20	21 HIGHMARK WALK!
22 WORLD CAFE @ 12 PM	23	24	25	26	27 YOUNG ADULT CONFERENCE	28 YOUNG ADULT CONFERENCE
29 YOUNG ADULT CONFERENCE	30 MEMORIAL DAY YOUNG ADULT CONFERENCE	31				

AGAPE SATYAGRAHA @ 5PM

COMPUTER CLASS @ 10:30AM & 2:30PM

MIDWEEK MEDITATIONS @ 9AM

INDOOR AND ZOOM WORSHIP AT 10AM

PASTORS DAY OFF

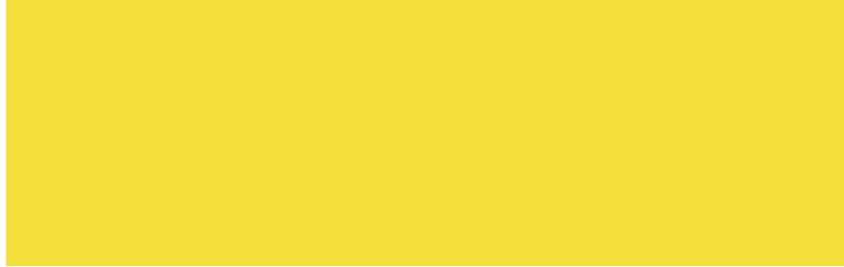
WELLNESS HUB @ 10AM

STAFF MEETING @ 12:30PM

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Website: www.hbgfirstcob.org

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The monthly newsletter of the Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren

Josiah Ludwick, HFCoB Co-Pastor

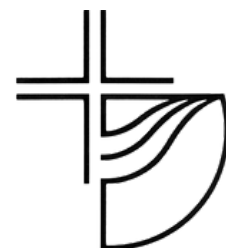
Lexi Aligarbes, HFCoB Co-Pastor

Alyssa Parker, bcmPEACE
Operations Manager

Devin Dixon-Rosario, HFCoB
Administrative Assistant

Our Staff

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