

July 2022

THE GROWING EDGE

Harrisburg First Church of the Brethren | 219 Hummel St. Harrisburg, PA 17104



A PRAYER FOR JULY

Written by Devin Dixon-Rosario

Dear God,

Thank you for carrying us into yet another month of warmth and sunshine. Please go before us giving us the energy and strength to continue your work in south Allison Hill and beyond. As we approach the holiday that is independence day, let our autonomy come from and be of you. We thank you for your disciples who fought for independence as well as those still fighting. May we find both respite and rejuvenation through you.

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Listening for Life Together

July is a busy month for the Church of the Brethren. For the first time in two years, members of our denomination will be able to gather in person for Annual Conference in Omaha, Nebraska. Many members of First Church will be present, representing the various ministries we are connected to. At the end of the month, we will also have members attending the National Youth Conference in Fort Collins, Colorado to share their giftings with NYC attendees. As we gear up to engage with Brethren from across the country and even across the world, I continue to come back to the question of where Harrisburg First fits into all of this.

At First Church we are continuing to have conversations around race, human sexuality, and the mission of our faith community. By no means have we mastered this and in many ways we are still learning how to create space for people of all experiences and backgrounds to talk about difficult issues. However, I feel that God has called us into this kind of communal practice because we are living in a time where we so desperately need spaces to listen, learn, and understand from one another.

As a young woman, the recent Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe v. Wade was heartbreaking. I know that this topic is personal for many and that opinions on the matter vary across the spectrum. However, I mourn for the communities that will be harmed by this decision. More than just that, I mourn how this decision has solidified the dominance of conversations that do not seek greater understanding of one another but that seek to divide us further. The issue is not black and white. It is complex. It requires putting situations into context and acknowledging the nuances of the conversation. It also asks us to enter into conversations where we may leave without absolute clarity. And yet, something makes me think that those who had conversations with Jesus might have left feeling that same way.

In our Gospel Texts, we have many examples of conversations that Jesus had with people from all different walks of life. Something that strikes me in these conversations is that often, even after Jesus spoke, those who had heard his words still didn't comprehend everything he said. The disciples were constantly around Jesus and being taught by Him and yet, even after Jesus would speak or perform a miracle such as feeding the five thousand, the disciples still did not understand what Jesus was doing. If the disciples were unable to understand Jesus, even as they lived and learned with Jesus constantly, it may be an impossible task for us to understand one another. However, we know that with the Holy Spirit, as told through the story of Pentecost, God can make a way for us to understand one another.

In this moment, it is tempting to feel discouraged and even hopeless. And I want to hold space for the anger and grief that many have. However, in the midst of this I will continue to pray and be led in action by the Holy Spirit. My prayer is not for everyone to have the same opinion as me. My hope is that God will somehow help us to talk and listen for understanding with one another in a way that honors the complexities and nuances of the various issues we are facing. And if we listen for understanding, not only do I have hope that we might create better ways for us to care for one another but we might be able to share with our other Brethren what it looks like to truly pray, discern, and do life together.



Lexi Aligarbes

Co-Pastor

Hamba Nathi Mkhululi Wethu

Hamba Nathi Mkhululi Wethu is a chorus we have sung at First Church for quite some time. It is one that I learned years ago at National Youth Conference. The roots of the song span back to the anti-Apartheid movement in South Africa in the 1970s. Literally translated, the song says, "Go With Us, Our Savior". And don't we need our Savior to go with us, Church? God has us on a wonderful journey of faith, and it is and continues to be a challenging one. This journey has required sacrifice and commitment. It has required vulnerability and relying on our siblings to be strong for us when we are feeling weak. It has required us to stand and be strong for our siblings in their own times of weakness. I wish I could tell you that the journey was almost completed, but we still have quite a ways to go.

The way this chorus was translated when I learned it, and the way we have chosen to sing it in English here at First Church says, "Come walk with us, the Journey is Long" and then reaffirms "The Journey, The Journey, The Journey Is Long". This journey upon which God has us embarked is a long one. And we will continue to need Jesus to Guide our Feet, so that we don't take this long journey, this race in vain.

In the last several years, God has brought us on a path toward Racial Justice, as we have studied "A Color of Compromise", the "whitening" of Jesus, Race and Place among others. We have made statements affirming the value and beauty of Black Life. More recently, God has widened that scope to include justice for our LGBTQ+ siblings, our Immigrant siblings, Women in our communities, really any oppressed people as well as the intersections that lie within these groups. Anti-Oppression is not a stance that we should take lightly. And I want to encourage us to realize that we have come a mighty long way, but we have a mighty long way to go. If we try to go off on our own, doing our own thing by our own power, we will fail. If we allow the world and the Enemy to divide us, we will fail. But if we keep ahold of God's unchanging hand as God leads us along the way, and if we effort together using the gifts with which the Spirit has blessed us, we will run this race well. We will journey together toward becoming that which we are called to be.

Church Family, becoming a faith community that is a safe space for oppressed people; being a family where all people belong and are loved; being a people who stand for those who society views as less than is going to take continued time, effort and commitment. The journey will be long. But the journey will be worth it. Let us continue this wonderful journey together. "Go With Us, Savior!" "Come Walk With Us The Journey Is Long!" Hamba Nathi Mkhululi Wethu!



Josiah Ludwick

Co-Pastor

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!

CLOSINGS AND VACATION

Offices will be closed on the following dates:

- July 4
- July 9-15
- July 23-28
- Oct. 10-17

ADD IT TO THE CALENDAR

- July 10th - 14th - bcmPEACE represented at Annual Conference
- July 23-28 - bcmPEACE represented at National Youth Conference
- 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 have been participating in safe spaces led by Devin Dixon-Rosario! Both have been participating in community artwork, Vacation Bible School assistance, and other leadership opportunities.



Coming Up: bcmPEACE Free Store!

Thanks to some FaithX volunteers, grant funding, and great ideas; we are planning to open our Free Store in the fall offering children's toys, kitchen items, clothes, necessities and more! We are hoping an intern from a local college or university will lead the opening as well as assist with our Pathway to Prosperity Program!

The **Wellness Hub** numbers are increasing! The demand for food, especially fresh produce is great! We have been serving an average of 170 households each week including a recent week of 190 households! We have partnered with Cricket Wireless and Hamilton Health Center nearly each week to provide more information to our neighbors in Allison Hill!



WE NEED YOU!

Are you passionate about the Allison Hill Community and bcmPEACE mission and programs? We would love to invite you to join the bcmPEACE Board of Directors! If you are interested, please contact Alyssa at 717-234-0415 x20 or brethren.com.min@gmail.com!

Back to School BINGO Fundraiser

Friday August 19 @ 6pm
Harrisburg First Church



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!



/bcmpeace



/bcmpeace



/www.bcmpeace.org

Faith and Justice Corner

Third Annual Community Oration

Frederick Douglass, "What To the Slave Is the Fourth of July?"



12:00 Noon, Monday, July 4
Lebanon Valley College

Annville, PA, main campus, just off
Rt. 934 & Rt. 422.

Join us for our third annual community oration, one day shy of the 170th anniversary of the first time Frederick Douglass delivered his searingly powerful speech on the horrific realities of racialized slavery in America. Because we as a nation have a solemn obligation to remember.



Organized by the Lebanon County Branch of the NAACP and hosted by Lebanon Valley College. Contact: naacp.leb.co.pa@gmail.com

Join us for our Third Annual Frederick Douglass Community Oration on the LVC campus on Monday, July 4!



In this film, descendants of Frederick Douglas talk of July 4th in the eyes of African Americans; those who descended from slaves. "What to the American Slave is your fourth of July?" These youth and young adults shed light on the 4th of July being celebrated as a day that America gained freedom but not black joy and black life.

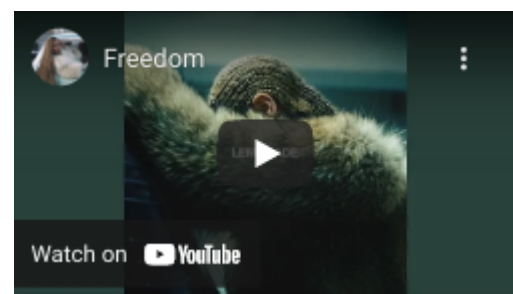
WHEN WE
ARE FILLED
WITH LOVE
FOR OTHER
PEOPLE IN-
JUSTICE BECOMES
INTOLERABLE.
AUSTIN CHANNING BROWN

Beyonce's song "Freedom" is a powerful word in a time where women, minorities and the BIPOC community fight for equal rights and opportunity.

A poem by Ann Van Dyke

My Godson tells me
He has always felt
He is not enough.
Not Black enough.
Not White Enough.
He has a foot in both worlds
And moves back and forth between them
Feeling like an imposter in both
Not quite belonging anywhere.
This fine, gentle, smart, kind-hearted child of God.
Not enough?
America, what have you told him?
Oh my dear young man
You belong.
You belong.
You belong.
And you know things that so many others do not.
You know it's just skin.
Certainly, skin that can have major impact
On what doors open or do not open to you.
But you know
It's just skin.
And your beautiful, perfect skin
Enfolds your beautiful, perfect heart and mind.
Trust me, dear one
You are enough.

My Goddaughter tells me
She's always known
She was not quite girly enough.
Somewhat girly, somewhat boyie.
A foot in both worlds.
And moves back and forth between them.
Feeling like an imposter in both.
Not really belonging in either.
Not belonging anywhere?
America, what have you told her?
I do know.
With great sadness, I do know.
I know how she got that message.
The message that there are only
Two ways for humans to belong.
Two "choices."
She tells me she did not choose.
She simply is.
So if not embracing all things feminine
Or all things masculine
Who then is she?
Mostly her own sweet, inquisitive,
thoughtful, kind, fun self.
This sweet, inquisitive, thoughtful, kind, fun
child of God.
Trust me, dear one.
You belong.





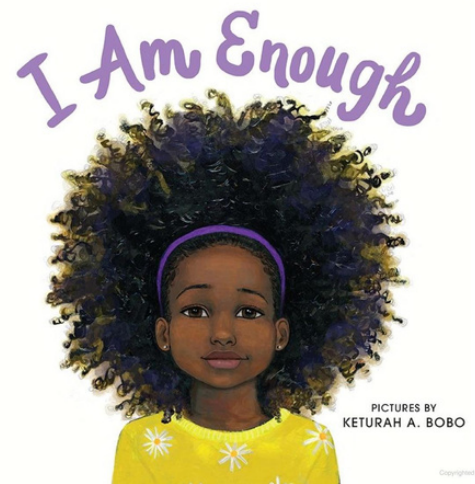
The Youth Corner

Social Justice Library Book of the Month!

GRACE BYERS

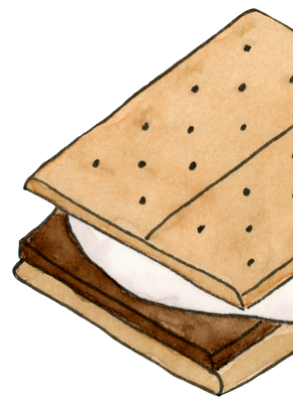
"I Am Enough" by Grace Byers is a powerful book that uplifts children and embraces diverse communities.

As a multi-cultural Church in the inner city, it is imperative that we not only recognize but uplift the beauty of God's creation in all colors, shapes and sizes. In doing so, we raise confident leaders in our community; encouraging peace amongst diversity.



CAMP SWATARA

Does your child want to learn about God over a warm campfire? Sign them up for Camp Swatara! Visit the link below
<https://www.campswatara.org/camps/register>
to sign up!



SCHOLARSHIP FUND AVAILABLE FOR SUMMER CLASSES!

Summer time is a great opportunity for kids to participate in many of the different academic programs that are available through schools like Temple, HACC, or the Whitaker Center. If you have questions about the fund or need help applying, contact Donna Benson or the Church office. Applications can be found at
<http://www.hbgfirstcob.org/scholarship-fund/>

CHRISTIAN ED TEAM LEADER NEEDED!

Are you someone who is passionate about teaching and education? Do you enjoy staying organized and planning events? Are you looking for an opportunity to get involved here at First Church? Well the Christian Ed Team is looking for a new team leader for 2023! If you are interested in serving in this way contact Donna Benson or Pastor Lexi for more info.

Congregational News and Announcements

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

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 3 | ___ Welcome Table | ___ Zoom and Video |
| | ___ Scripture Reading | ___ Announcements |
| | ___ Time for Young Disciples | |
| | | |
| 10 | ___ Welcome Table | ___ Zoom and Video |
| | ___ Scripture Reading | ___ Announcements |
| | ___ Time for Young Disciples | |
| | | |
| 17 | ___ Welcome Table | ___ Zoom and Video |
| | ___ Scripture Reading | ___ Announcements |
| | ___ Time for Young Disciples | |
| | | |
| 24 | ___ Welcome Table | ___ Zoom and Video |
| | ___ Scripture Reading | ___ Announcements |
| | ___ Time for Young Disciples | |
| | | |
| 31 | ___ Welcome Table | ___ Zoom and Video |
| | ___ Scripture Reading | ___ Announcements |
| | ___ Time for Young Disciples | |

Are YOU 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.



Join Pastor Lexi for a morning meditation every Wednesday at 9am! We will be highlighting different forms of spiritual practices, prayer, and meditation. If you are in need of spiritual grounding, please consider entering this space!

Praise Reports

For a successful week of VBS! We thank every single teacher, staff, volunteer and child for making this experience memorable.

Prayer Requests

For every family within our congregation and out that have experienced Covid-19; we pray for healing and respite.

For Julie Newsome and she recovers from illness.

For those affected by recent court rulings.

More Announcements



Upcoming Conferences

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/

PRIDE FESTIVAL

July 30th 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM

The pride festival occurs annually here in Harrisburg and is a day to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community! You may enjoy art, live performances, delicious food and so much more!

Emergency Responders Plaza Harrisburg, PA



The City of Harrisburg will host the July 4th Food Truck Festival and Fireworks on Monday, July 4th from 1–9pm at Riverfront Park. The event will feature 45+ food trucks as well as activities for all ages! The fireworks display will begin at approximately 9:15pm.

Food Truck Fridays

Spring Creek Church of the Brethren welcomes back Food Truck Fridays on the 4th Friday of the month on 7/22 and 8/26 from 5 - 8 PM in the church parking lot located at the end of Areba Avenue, Hershey (335 East Areba), rain or shine.

The event is free and open to the public -- just pay as you eat! For event details: 717-533-7192 or www.facebook.com/SpringCreekCoB



Pastors Away

Pastors Away– Included are dates that our pastors will be away from the church. Note that one pastor will be available even while the other is away, except during Annual Conference. If you are having trouble getting into contact with a pastor reach out to the Church office at (717) 234– 0415 or at hbgfirstcob@yahoo.com

Pastor Josiah Away– Annual Conference July 10th– 14th

Pastor Lexi Away– July 1st– 8th, Annual Conference July 10th– 14th



Even More Announcements

ON EARTH PEACE (OEP)



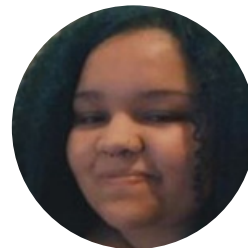
On June 29th, On Earth Peace hosted a day of celebration, highlighting their work and the leaders who make things happen! This day was celebrated with worship, cooking, KNV training and more.

Thank you OEP for all that you do!



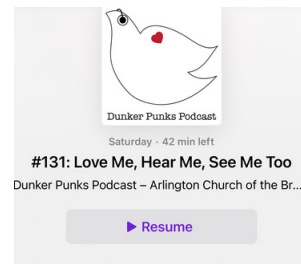
Devin Dixon-Rosario

LGBTQ+ Justice Organizer



Briel Slocum

Youth & Young Adult Intern



Is your church a safe space for all people? In this episode of the podcast, Briel Slocum, Devin Dixon-Rosario, and Samson Arnold share stories of young people coming out as LGBTQ in their communities and the difficulties, blessings, and hopes therein.

Current OEP interns from HFCoB

CAMP SWATARA

CAMP SWATARA

Ice Cream & Trail Clean!

JULY 16, 2022
8AM - 2PM

Join us for a fun day of trail work, then stick around for an ice cream social!

Info & RSVP:
www.campswatara.org

SUMMER CAMP SCHEDULE

Date	East	West	Mountainside/Off Site
May 30 - June 8	Staff Training	X	X
June 10 - 11	Big and Small 1 Grades K-3 (Fri-Sat)		
June 12 - 16	Monarchs Ages 16+ (Sun-Thu)	X	X
June 19 - 23	Creation Guardians (Overnight) Grades 1-6 (Sun-Thu)		Mountain Adventure Grades 9-12 (Sun-Thu)
June 20 - 23	Creation Guardians (Day) Grades 1-6 (Mon-Thu)	X	
June 25 - July 2	Musical Grades 7-12 (Sat-Sat)		X
June 26 - 30	Wacky Tonky (Day & Overnight) Grades 1-6 (Mon-Thu)	X	X
July 4 - 7	Wacky Tonky (Day & Overnight) Grades 1-6 (Mon-Thu)	X	X
July 8 - 10	Youth Weekend Grades 7-12 (Fri-Sun)		
July 11 - 13		Big and Small 2 Grades K-3 (Fri-Sun)	

2022 Theme: Be A Hero!

10% OFF!

Have a child that's going to Day Camp? Get 10% off in the campground for the week!
Info: www.campswatara.org

<https://www.campswatara.org/camps/register>

Birthdays & Anniversaries!

→
Happy
Anniversary
July 18th
Alan & Donna Benson



July 1st	Anna Hunn
July 3rd	Cynthia Carter
July 4th	Jennifer Burkett
July 7th	Kayode Olotu
July 9th	Gerry Wertz
July 13th	Sierra Dixon
July 20th	Kristina Hunn
July 22nd	Roy Frysinger
	Anna Marie Shaffer
July 23rd	Barbara Keim

On Friday, June 14th, Ephrata COB held an appreciation event for ministers. This event had free food trucks, games and more! We thank God for all people of ministry, as faith without work is dead! Shoutout to all ministers within our church family and all who embody God's love through their work!!

Do YOU want to submit something for the Growing Edge?

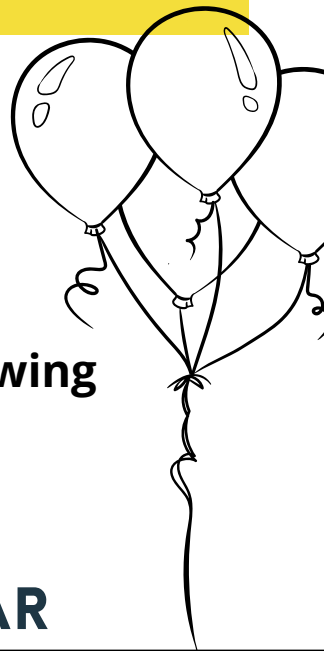
Please send the material in to the office by
July 18th.

JULY ANE DISTRICT PRAYER CALENDAR

Pray for this Church

This Church is Praying for Us

3 Jul 22	<u>Harmonyville (Pottstown, PA)</u>	<u>Akron (Akron, PA)</u>
10 Jul 22	<u>Paxton (Harrisburg, PA)</u>	<u>Richland (Richland, PA)</u>
17 Jul 22	<u>Ephrata (Ephrata, PA)</u>	<u>West Green Tree (Elizabethtown, PA)</u>
24 Jul 22	<u>Palmyra (Palmyra, PA)</u>	<u>Parker Ford (Pottstown, PA)</u>
31 Jul 22	<u>Ambler (Ambler, PA)</u>	<u>Hempfield (Manheim, PA)</u>





VBS Vacation Bible School VBS



"The Christian Ed Team and Harrisburg First COB want to share our appreciation for all of your time and talents shared during VBS week !! You each made a difference in the lives of young people in Harrisburg, and shared God's love with them. Special thanks to the VBS planning team: Alyssa, Pastor Lexi, Chloe, Samson and Briel! The meals were fabulous, Renee and Sandy! Art, Science, Bible, Games, Heritage and Worship were enjoyed by all and provided ways to learn about Jesus. "The preschoolers loved their week with you Grandma Romaine!" – Donna Benson, on behalf of The Christian Education Team



July 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4 offices closed for Independence Day	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19 Spiritual Life Team Meeting @ 6 pm	20	21	22	23
24	25 BRT Meeting @ 6 pm National Youth Conference	26 Christian Ed Team Meeting @ 6 pm National Youth Conference	27	28	29	30
National Youth Conference & 5th Sunday & Deacon Picnic 131						

Indoor and Zoom
Worship at 10am

Staff Meeting @
12:30pm

Agape Satyagraha @ 5pm
Computer Class @
10:30am & 2:30pm
Midweek Meditations

Pastors
Day off

National Youth
Conference

National Youth
Conference

National Youth
Conference

National Youth
Conference

Wellness Hub
@10am

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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

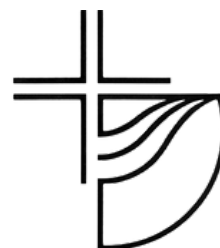
Lexi Aligarbes, HFCoB Co-Pastor

Alyssa Parker, bcmPEACE
Operations Manager

Devin Dixon-Rosario, HFCoB
Administrative Office Manager

Our Staff

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



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