



The Chimes

Date: May 8, 2020
Volume 20 Number 9

Modesto Church of the Brethren

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Pastor: Andrew Sampson Ministers: Every Member of the Congregation

Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.



May 10 -Mothers' Day: Corinthians 13:1-13 -
"The Greatest gifts"

May 17 - Acts 2:42-47 - "Community"

May 24 - Jeff Glass will be preaching



Dear friends,

How fascinating it is to me the feeling that time either moves faster or slower. For example, it felt like the month of April crept by and several times I had to check the calendar to make sure that we were still in April! Whereas, I can hardly believe that we are already a week into May and this Sunday will be the second Sunday. How many of you have felt something similar? I assume that there is a theory as to why time behaves in such a manner, but I wonder how it would change with our current situation?

During this uncommon time in our church community, a way for me to feel connected was to make phone calls with each person in the church directory. It met a real need of mine to feel a part of the community. Even though there were some persons with whom I was scarcely acquainted, the responses were positive. If I did not make contact, I left a message regarding my hope that they were staying safe. A number of those persons called back later to thank me. I know others of you have been calling also, and I would recommend it.

It is, I think, a credit to our sense of responsibility and concern for our brothers and sisters that our congregation has remained free of the disease. I trust we can continue to remain patient during this time.

Pat Royer



My unproven theories are that time is moving faster in May than in April because: 1) We thought that the shelter-in-place restrictions would be lifted quickly and the virus would run its course quickly, and we became discouraged when this did not happen. Now we have a better idea of what is happening and why. 2) We had so many changes happening to our lives so quickly that we became mentally overloaded by the stress in April. While in May we have settled into something of a routine and our lives have become more "normal."

3) The weather in April was cool and it felt more like winter, and with May we have had warmer temperatures, sunny days, and it feels like summer. For many people, including myself, sunny days lead to a brighter outlook on life.

I would like to briefly expound on how the church responded to each of these three theories. First, was in sending notes of encouragement through email, social media, etc., working through formal and informal networks to keep us connected to one another, and creating an online worship service for Sunday mornings. Secondly, increasing the amount of communication, working to provide a well-defined plan for what was and was not happening, and offering some of our usual activities in new formats. Thirdly, there's not a whole lot that the church can do about the weather, but we can all appreciate the sun and warmer days.



Despite the coronavirus we have kept active in encouraging, informing, and connecting! We have worked together, adapted to the challenges, moved forward and shown others the gifts and blessing of our community.

I am grateful--so grateful for each one of you and for the community we have! Thank you for all that you are doing and will continue to do. ~Pastor Andrew

April Board Meeting

Our April board meeting was held on Zoom which was a first for many of us. As for the reporting Edie kicked off the evening giving a very positive report for March with \$30,927.66 in income and \$21,158.25 in expenses giving us a surplus of \$9,769.41 for the month. For the first quarter ending March 31, 2020 we found that we were (\$2,641.82) from breaking even for the quarter. Jim Martinez, chair of Stewards added in a later report that giving for the first part of April had been strong. The Stewards are watching giving closely and are considering a couple of options if giving was to slip.

Pastor Andrew gave his report as to his activities in ministry. He has been busy with Sunday sermons on Facebook and YouTube as well as Wednesday Bible studies and our board meeting on Zoom. Easter Week was challenging. Pastor Andrew gave some encouraging numbers for the church's Facebook and online viewership which is up considerably.

Pastor Andrew also brought up the subject of his July attendance at Annual Conference in Michigan with he and David Messamer as delegates. Michigan is a coronavirus hotspot in the nation. Some board members questioned the wisdom of subjecting our two delegates to traveling to Michigan and attending the conference. **(See following article; Annual Conference has been cancelled.)**

The Witness Committee (Jim Costello reporting) has been busy preparing for a time when we as a congregation are no longer in a shelter in place situation. They have recently had 10,000 postcards printed and stored at the church for use when shelter-in-place is no longer required.

Elaine Forcier reported for Worship and Spiritual Life. There was much discussion as to when and how we would go about worship when shelter-in-place is lifted, but we will still have to deal with social distancing until vaccines are available. Pastor Andrew is working with the Commission chairs, as well as the and healthcare professionals from the congregation as to how and when we will reopen as a church and what it will look like (social distancing, etc). We missed most of the Easter experience and he wants the reopening of the church to be special. More to come from this group as we move forward.

Felton Daniels (our Member at Large) brought up a challenge to the Board members of forming small groups supported by Zoom. The church has several existing small groups that are no longer meeting due to shelter in place. Pastor Andrew and the Board will be working on this challenge.

Karleen Daniels does not have little people to take to Children's Church but she has not been resting. Karleen has been using her time online studying youth programs at other churches and what programs they are using. When this virus problem finally goes away Karleen and her Christian Ed team will be prepared.

Bill Johnson reported for Building and Grounds. The janitors and yard maintenance crew continue to do their assigned work.

We have asked the janitors to reduce some of their weekly vacuuming and to divert their time to increased disinfectant cleaning of all hard surfaces in the church (tables, chairs, pews, counters in all rooms).

The Deacons were especially busy during the Easter season with a very successful Love Feast with a Zoom attendance of 35 plus. The Deacons continue to be in regular contact with shut-ins by phone. Ironically, we are all shut-ins under the current conditions.

Meeting online by Zoom will take some getting used to. We need to find new ways to stay in contact with each other and work harder to make it successful. There is a lot of good news about the work of the church. This letter is just an effort to share with the congregation some of what is happening in and about the church even though we are abiding with shelter in place requirements.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Johnson, Board Vice Chair
(Karen Cosner Board Chair currently in Pennsylvania with family)



From **Newsline**

The Church of the Brethren email news service

May 7, 2020

Church of the Brethren Annual Conference will not be held this summer

The Standing Committee of the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference met by video conference call for a specially called meeting on Thursday, May 7. The Standing Committee, which is made up of district delegates to Annual Conference, discussed a recommendation from the denomination's Leadership Team, in consultation with the Annual Conference Program and Arrangements Committee, to cancel the Annual Conference scheduled for July 1-5 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Standing Committee affirmed that recommendation and is announcing that an in-person Annual Conference will not be held this summer. It is with great sadness that this decision had to be made.

As previous news releases regarding Annual Conference have indicated, the safety and health of Conference participants have been the highest priority. It became apparent within the past few weeks that because of the unsettling character and demands of the COVID-19 crisis, the denomination could not safely have a large gathering in July. This special meeting of Standing Committee was called because, by Church of the Brethren polity,

Standing Committee is given the authority to make decisions for the Annual Conference between Conferences.

The decision included a deferring of the Annual Conference theme, program, and featured leadership to the 2021 Annual Conference scheduled to take place in Greensboro, N.C., on June 30-July 4. The business of the 2020 Annual Conference, such as affirming the Compelling Vision, is deferred to the 2021 Annual Conference.

The Nominating Committee of Standing Committee also brought a recommendation to the full Standing Committee that the ballot that would have been presented for election in 2020 will be presented to the 2021 Conference instead. The Nominating Committee will be contacting each person on the ballot to ask if they are willing for their name to be considered in the 2021 vote. People holding positions elected by Annual Conference whose terms expire in 2020 will be asked if they are willing to extend their terms one additional year until the election in 2021 can determine who will replace them.

The Annual Conference Office is preparing to offer full refunds of registration and all other fees paid by those who already had registered for Annual Conference this year. Refund information, and an option to donate, will be sent by email. We are blessed that our host facilities in Grand Rapids have agreed to waive over a half million dollars in cancellation penalties if Annual Conference will return to Grand Rapids in our next open year.

The Program and Arrangements Committee is glad to announce that Annual Conference will be back in Grand Rapids on July 3-7, 2024. The Program and Arrangements Committee is working on plans for one or two online gatherings as a denomination during the week of July 1-5 when Annual Conference would have been held, although no business will be conducted. More information will be available in the coming weeks.

This will be the first time in the 233 years of recorded Church of the Brethren annual meetings that the Brethren will not be able to meet together in person. Even throughout the Civil War years, World Wars I and II, the Great Depression, and more, Brethren have gathered each summer to discern God's will, worship, and fellowship together. We mourn that this year the pandemic makes such a gathering impossible.

TUESDAY MEN'S GROUP



Our Tuesday morning Men's group at Perko's was dealt a blow when the shelter in place order went in place in March.

We have found a way to get back together (as many of you have) by using Zoom, Skype or whatever else is out there. It's far better to get together in person but that may not be possible in the foreseeable future.

But it is great to get together to share online what's going on in both personal and church levels. For me personally it was great to see all the guys and to hear from them.

Pastor Andrew (and crew) continue to do a great job on Sunday sermons and bible studies. The deacons and others in the congregation have been making calls to many in the congregation who are isolated and we thank them for this service. While we are still sheltering in place and waiting for celebrating worship at church I would encourage those who are not using Zoom (which is a free service) to consider it to keep in touch with friends in the church and family while we remain physically isolated for the near future.



Welcome Statement

Believing that God's unbounded love and grace, as taught by Jesus, are offered to all and meant to be shared and celebrated by all, we embrace persons of every age, race, sexual orientation, ethnic and religious background, physical and mental ability, and economic means as vital and integral members of God's family. As an Open and Affirming congregation we welcome everyone to participate in the life and worship of our church.



GOT CABIN FEVER?!?

After weeks of 'sheltering in place', how about getting out of the house to enjoy some 'safe space' outdoors at our labyrinth site? Take a stroll along the meandering pathway, then relax on the shady benches provided. Check out the Redbuds & Crepe Myrtle trees planted last fall and then pop in to The Quiet Place (Monday-Thursday from 9 AM-12 Noon) to reflect on the spiritual readings provided. Hopefully you'll go home refreshed & renewed for the challenges ahead.



Keep Jolinda and Stephen Reddy and their extended family in your prayers. Jolinda has been in Memorial Hospital for a few days, but she is likely to come home this weekend.

I would like to say thank you to the MANY calls and notes and flowers I have received from my congregation. And three of you have joined me on my front porch for a little conversation. I am blessed! ~Rita Matthews

Mothers' Day will be different for many during social distancing, as there won't be the family get-togethers that we might normally have. Some suggestions: Use social media such as FaceTime or Zoom to communicate with Mom; send e-cards; if you live nearby, leave a gift on the doorstep. Keep in your thoughts those who live far away from their mothers, or have only memories of their mothers. Celebrate the day creatively!

