



Mount Gretna UMC

Happenings

September 2021

Dear Friends,

During the summer I, like many of you, watched the Olympics in Tokyo. Of course, I watched the stunning acrobatics of the gymnasts. I am always amazed at their flexibility and strength!

As a person who, in recent years, has taken up running, I really appreciate the need to remain flexible. Nothing is worse for me than not stretching and warming up and then trying to “run stiff”. Nothing wants to work! Flexibility is important in physical exercise and playing sports AND it is also important in our social and our spiritual lives as well.

However, when it comes to our social and spiritual lives, it seems, too often, that we are told that being flexible is a bad thing with a capital “B.” In the media, in the political arena (especially this year), and in the Church the very ideas that we might be do things differently or even change our minds from time to time is met with accusations of being weak, cowardly, or a traitor to the cause.

It is true that when it comes to our convictions, we need to have what I call our “non-negotiables,” the things that center us and are foundational to who are. Often in talking to folks about faith I will tell them of my non-negotiables of faith which can be found in the great creeds of our faith like the Apostle’s and Chalcedonian Creeds. These are my center, and my foundation, but they are not all that I believe. If they were, my faith would be quite two-dimensional and I would miss out on many opportunities to grow and mature as a Christian. No, I prefer to be flexible in many areas of my faith so that when an opportunity arises to go, explore, and learn new things, I can seize it and enrich my understanding of who God is and how God calls me to live as a Disciple of Jesus Christ in the world today.

There have been many instances in my faith journey where apparent “roadblocks” have turned into fabulous detours that have both strengthened my faith and my knowledge, but I see now that those things may not have happened at all if I had been unwilling to do something different from what I first expected. Sort of like how Shawn and I would never have had the wonderful vacation that we did a couple of weeks ago if we had not been willing to detour around the roadblock that presented itself on our trip.

So, as we get back into our routines this fall, remember that while it’s important to have and know what your non-negotiables are in life, it is also important that we don’t make everything in life a non-negotiable. Keep

that list small and allow yourself to be flexible enough to take a detour every now and then. Who knows, that which is a detour to you could be God's way of helping you to grow into the person you were always meant to be.

Blessings,

Pastor Mike

SEPTEMBER SERVICES IN THE TABERNACLE



Our 10:00AM worship service is currently being held in the Campmeeting Tabernacle. It is a wonderful space and remaining there helps to keep us all safe during the latest surge in Covid-19 cases.

Please Remember:

- Facemasks are not required if you are fully vaccinated. However, if you feel more comfortable continuing to wear a facemask during the service you are welcomed to do so.
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Our annual Church Picnic at Gretna Glen will be held on **Sunday, September 19th**. We will gather at Gretna Glen for the 10:00AM worship service, with the picnic to follow. Please bring a covered dish to share and place settings with you for the picnic. We do ask that, if possible, please also bring a \$5.00 per person donation for the use of the camp facilities, which will include boating. Children 12 and under are free.

Our special guests that morning will be Susquehanna Service Dogs. Please see the article below for more information.

There will be an 8:30AM service at the church.

DISABILITIES MINISTRY UPDATE

By: Randy Swope

The Mt. Gretna UMC Disability Ministry is pleased to announce the most recent awards provided during June to both Quest Inc. and Susquehanna Service Dogs (SSD).

Funding provided to Quest Inc. by the Disability Ministry has filled a much-needed gap due to their recent loss of funding from the United Way. The funding was not halted through any issues pertaining to nonperformance or compliance. Instead, the United Way diverted the Quest Inc. funding stream into a new prototype family-based service program.

In the future, a Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist from Quest Inc. will visit the Mt. Gretna UMC and deliver a brief presentation to the congregation. The Disability Ministry feels an essential component of our outreach is to create an awareness within the congregation concerning the obstacles that impact individuals with physical and mental challenges who reside within our local community. Moreover, the ministry believes there is an obligation to provide everyone in the congregation with a complete accounting of how the disability ministry endowment funds and offerings are being spent.

In addition, Susquehanna Service Dogs are going to provide a volunteer accompanied by a puppy or dog in training for a demonstration. They have been invited to the church picnic at Gretna Glen on Sept. 19. After the demonstration, there will be a question-and-answer period. I am hoping there will also be an opportunity for both the children and adults to meet the puppy or dog in training.

Posted below is a recent success story from SSD, a photo, and personal note from the individual who recently received a fully trained service dog from SSD.

From Mandy: No words can express how grateful I am. My heart is full, my life is in a beautiful place. I haven't been able to say those words in many years. I have a whole new family, support and purposes to look forward to. Thank you SSD! Thank every single human involved in the enormous process. ❤️ Mandy



The Disability Ministry is already looking forward to 2022 and supporting a new award initiative and partnership with Developmental Disability Services (DDS) of Lebanon, Pa. DDS provides a week-long summer day camp for children with various types of disabilities who would not be able to attend the Gretna Glen Summer Camp due to the nature of their special needs. The disability ministry hopes to provide scholarships for up to 5 children.

Finally, anyone within the Mt. Gretna UMC congregation is welcome to contact me at any time with questions pertaining to awards, funding amounts, and the identification of all current disability ministry partnerships.

WEEKLY ZOOM PRAYER MEETINGS THURSDAYS AT 7PM

You are invited to join Pastor Marilyn and members of our congregation as they come together on Zoom to pray for the joys and concerns of friends and family, our nation and the world. The group was formed during the Covid lockdown and continues to be a time of fellowship and taking our cares to God.

ZOOM can be done on a laptop, tablet or smart phone. If you have email: the church will send you an email every week with the link.

BUT PLEASE NOTE--ZOOM calls can also be made from any cell phone by dialing in to the phone number that is in the weekly email.

Don't forget: We still have an email Prayer Chain that is coordinated by member Sarah Ellis. You may call the office with prayer requests at 717.964.3241 or email them directly to Sarah at stellis999@gmail.com. If you have any questions, feel free to call Pastor Marilyn at 717.269.8613

FOOD BANK SUNDAY

The first Sunday of each month we collect money, non-perishable food items and paper products for the Lebanon County Christian Ministry Food Bank.

We thank those who have participated in the past and encourage everyone to use the list of suggested items that can be picked up in the church lobby each month to help with purchasing items that are needed.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Wednesday, September 15 @ 7PM – Administrative Board Meeting (via ZOOM).**
- **Sunday, September 19 – Church Picnic @ Gretna Glenn.**
- **Sunday, October 10 – Missionaries to Peru, Dick and Ruth Robertson will be in worship.**
- **October 28 – Trick or Treat Open House.**
- **November 21 – Tentative date for Thanksgiving Breakfast.**
- **November 28 – First Sunday of Advent / Advent Bible Study (TBA) begins.**
- **November 30 – Charge Conference.**