



Words of Faith

Volume XXI, No 1
January/February/March 2015

Simple Words of Faith from Rev. Hess:

As I write this it is ten days before Christmas. Everyone is frantic with 'purposeful' activity – our to-do lists seem to be getting longer instead of shorter! But the weather has been challenging. It's not the snow storms we have had of late but rather the last five days we have been living in a gray cloud, and although there may be 50 shades of gray, it really is a 'downer'. I also realized by the time you receive this Newsletter, if the last 3 years are any indication it will be mid-January.... Note to Self: maybe we need to rethink our three month distribution to get away from this Christmas/New Year rush at the printers...we will again be in the gray. From mid-January through the end of February it will be cold and very, very gray (and lots of white?). We homo sapiens need color! We need the Sun!

It reminds me of Noah on the ark for 40 days and 40 nights (hmm Lent?) surrounded by animals not able to get outside and move around? Living everyday just trying to get through the weather stuff? Living with his family whose main job it was to care for these restless animals (can you say pooper scooper). The job itself would have been filled with daunting tasks but added to this is the location AND the gray, rainy days and nights. The rain stops, the flood waters start to subside and the SUN comes out - Aaahhhh - a welcome and needed site! But it doesn't stop there; God sends a rainbow full of colors and promises! The Wow factor is way up on this one.

"As a deer longs for streams of cool, clear water, so my soul longs for you O God, the living God!" Psalm 42 The thirst for God described here by the Psalmist is a profound thirst very much like a desperate, desert searching for the source of life – water! I learned from my Silver Sneakers exercise classes that I teach that as we age we lose our sense that we are thirsty – we literally have to remind ourselves to drink (can you say dehydration). Like Noah and the Zoo Crew, we too need to make it through the gray days ahead. I am suggesting that this January and February we need to remind ourselves to drink deeply of the colors God offers us – the red bird landing on the snow, the green pine needles of the ever-green trees, the purple of Lent, the red hearts at Valentine's Day! And perhaps we are thirsty for Son that shines on our souls as well as the Sun that shines through the clouds?

Blue Service

At the 10:00 Service on February 15th we will honor all of those who protect our community and keep us safe – Firefighters, Fire Police, EMT's, and our state and local police. We are asking them to dress in their uniforms (think work clothes) bring any apparatus/trucks etc. and join us on that Sunday so that we, as a grateful congregation, can say thank you! We will officially invite the Valley Regional and Butler Township departments, but any and all personnel are welcome! Can I hear an 'Amen' from you!

May you lift your souls to a rainbow of hope and love fulfilled!
Your Rainbow Loving Pastor, Jane

Congregation Meeting

Please mark your calendars Sunday January 25th 11:00 am for this important congregational meeting where we look back on 2014 and then ahead to 2015. We need to approve reports presented (please have your reports into us by January 4th), elect representatives to PNEC, appoint a Constitution Committee, and elect a Congregational President, Vice-President and Secretary. It's all good!

Hunger Fast

Lent is a time of preparation for the High Holy Days of Easter. We begin on Ash Wednesday and travel through 40 days and 40 nights to Easter. Our youth are inviting everyone to join with them on a 24 hour hunger fast (you can drink water) from noon on Friday March 20th through noon on March 21st. The kids will eat their regular lunch at school, no after school snack or no dinner and then come to the church at 7:00 to sleep over night (and help set up for the Book Sale) and then have lunch together at 11:30! Any and all are welcome to join us overnight or just come to our breaking of the fast (think Breakfast) at 11:30 – we will be eating the delicious Book Sale soup!! If you are not able to fast with us please feel free to sponsor one of us (\$5) which will all be donated to One Great Hour of Sharing O.G.H.S. Let us prepare our hungry souls for Easter together!



Watoto Children's Choir

If you missed the last concert given by the Watoto Children's Choir from Uganda in May 2012 you really missed a wonderful, and heart moving performance. Well, mark your calendars and don't miss the next visit from these children on Saturday April 18th at 6:00 pm. This group's program is based on John 3:1 "See what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God, and so we are!" Last time we housed these young people over night (thanks to our hosts!) but this year we only have to feed them supper on Saturday evening (we will need help with this meal) and then they will be getting on the bus and moving on after their performance. Please mark your calendars and spread the news! Watoto is coming to Faith U.C.C. P.S. If you would like to learn more go to Watoto.com

18th Anniversary for Faith U.C.C.

We will celebrate our 18th Anniversary as a congregation on March 1st! At the age of eighteen our young people are on the brink of adulthood, ready to vote and register for the draft. This "Becoming of Age" is a milestone that we will celebrate with Stones of Faith! Please use your special Anniversary offering envelope to express your appreciation for our congregation!



RESCUE • RAISE • REBUILD

LAY PASTOR'S CORNER

It has been 91 days since I began my Power of Positive Thinking Challenge! If you read my article in the last newsletter you may recall my invitation for you to take the challenge for a week, month, or even a year to reflect each day and write a word or sentence about something that you are grateful for. If anyone decided to join me in this challenge I would love for you to share with me your thoughts on this challenge and how it has affected your life.

I take a few minutes at the end of each day before I call it a day, to reflect and journal about what I had to be grateful for during the past 24 hours. Even on days that I would call bad days, stressful days, days that did not go smoothly, days I didn't feel well, even days when I was sad I always found something for which I was grateful. This exercise has truly been an attitude adjustment for me and has helped me to focus on what is truly important.

Speaking of focusing on what is important, last year I came across a quote by Howard Thurman that speaks to the work of Christmas. When we think about the work of Christmas we probably think about shopping, baking, cooking, cleaning, wrapping, decorating, etc.

Consistory Notes and more!

A couple of notes of interest from the November/December Consistory meeting include:

1) We were approached by the Lay Licensing committee of the Conference to ask if we were interested in taking on a **Student Pastor**. There is no cost to Faith. The Consistory voted to accept the invitation. We have since been contacted by Sharon Frye who will be starting in January 2015. We will need a few people to serve on her supervisory committee. If anyone is interested please contact Rev. Hess.

2) The Hazleton Chamber of Commerce has chosen Faith UCC as the recipient of the **2014 Best of Hazleton Awards – Places of Worship**. We will receive a plaque and letter of commendation.

3) The **Iglesias congregation** that was purchasing the former Emmanuel's UCC at Church and Diamond Ave. **has paid off their mortgage which we have held**. We have paid for the transfer of title for the property and it is officially in their hands. Good for them! We, on the other hand, now **have a budget deficit of a little over \$7000 per annum**. If every member could increase their giving \$5 per month (\$1.25 per week) we could break even. It's possible. We also are adding a **Spring Craft Show** for Saturday April 25th 9-2. Crafters will pay \$20 per table and we will sell food. We are hoping to make \$1000+. (6 more to go?!)

4) Our **website needed to be upgraded**. The Internet Place that maintains our domain has upgraded their system and we needed to comply. The cost was \$235. The website is now a little more user friendly n that we can add pictures and access all of the pages (and update the information on those pages in a timely manner). Jerry Marley is the new webmaster and has done a wonderful job keeping it up to date. We are still unsure if our own folks use this site or if it is utilized by folks 'church shopping'. One suggestion is to add a **link for podcasts/vodcasts (Video Podcasts!)** for Pastor's sermons. This will take a few more

as we prepare for Christmas, and afterwards the work involves cleaning up, taking down, and putting away the decorations and gifts. Although we may find ourselves exhausted and grateful when all of the work is done, Howard Thurman reminds us that when the celebration is over this is when the work of Christmas begins:

“When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.”



Peace and blessings as you continue “the work of Christmas” in the coming months!

Lynne

dollars but an anonymous donor has stepped forward to sponsor this action.

5) **Tracy E. Smith, our new organist/choir director** is doing a great job. Her three month's evaluation will be completed in February. We are looking forward to welcoming her 'home'.

6) The worship committee also reported that attendance has been down at the **Saturday 6:00 pm service** throughout the summer and fall. We talked about the possibility of cancelling this service (attendance has dipped to 20 people a couple of times), but thought we should perhaps change the time. We are going to take our time with this decision and try to figure out what people want. Perhaps a **change of time to 4:30** would help in the winter when it is dark earlier or even allow folks to come to church and still have their Saturday night date? We will poll the folks and not make any changes until the fall 2015.

7) The heating unit in the Fellowship Hall needed repair. It took three weeks to get the part and therefore we had to cancel Bingo 3 weeks in a row. We are putting in a claim to our Insurance for the costs of repairs (\$2,100) and the loss of income (\$1,500 per week).

Bingo Update

Bingo needs EVERYONE'S help !!! Every Friday night we need at least two cakes, a specialty food item (crock pot size), and five people to work in the kitchen. Please if there is a night that you could work or make something please call Judy at 570-459-2923 or 570-956-1981. Remember Bingo is an ongoing fundraiser for “OUR” church, and to keep it going we need the support of our church family.

Bingo Gift Certificates

Looking for a stocking stuffer? A Bingo Gift certificate would make the perfect stocking stuffer.

Cost-\$15.00

Includes:

- *Admission
- *Magic Number
- *Bonanza Special

See or call Dotty Burrell at 570-788-3910

Women of Faith Pie Sales

Women of faith will be having a Raisin Crumb Pie sale On February 21st. Cost is \$10.00 per



pie. Deadline to order is February 15th. To place an order please call Janet at 570-455-5135 or use the signup

sheet located in the back of church on the table. Pick up will be that day from 11:00 until 12:30. There will also be a Coconut Custard Pie sale on March 28th. Cost is \$10.00 per pie. Deadline to order is March 22nd. To place an order please call Janet at 570-455-5135 or use the signup sheet located in the back of church on table. Pick up will be that day from 11:00 until 12:30.



Your help and support is greatly appreciated!

Attention

The Women of Faith have decided that they will no longer serve funeral luncheons. Our hearts are heavy as this has been a custom for many years at Faith, and our former churches. We would like to thank everyone who has helped over the years. Your help was greatly appreciated.



Book Sale and Soup Sale

There will be a book sale and soup sale on Saturday March 21st from 9:00-3:00. Donations of hard cover and soft cover books are needed. Puzzles, games, music and movies are also needed. Please no text books, encyclopedias or equipment. Help is needed Friday night at 9:00 to set up and also the day of the book sale at 3:00 to help clean up. Please contact Dottie at 570-788-3910 if you can help.



CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE? Have you moved recently? Changed your telephone number?

If so, please call the church office at 454-5982 to make the correction.

Our computer records need to be accurate so that we can get the newsletter, envelopes and other correspondence to you.

You can also drop a note in the weekly collection plate, or send updates to: Faith UCC, 21 Faith Dr., Hazleton, PA 18202. **PLEASE HELP US KEEP OUR RECORDS UP TO DATE.**

SOCIAL HALL RENTAL

Please remember that our church social hall is available for rental by people and organizations both inside and outside of our congregation.

Contact Building Superintendent Judy Hartzel at 459-2923 for rental information.

Secretarial Help Needed

Betty Jean Swigart passed away suddenly in December. Sadly she will be greatly missed by her family and church friends. Her position here at Faith as one of five secretaries was varied and valuable. We are pretty sure we will not find just one person with her skill set. So here is a list of what she did. We are asking anyone that could step into any of these areas to let Rev. Hess know.

1. Ordering supplies (everything from Palms for Palm Sunday, to bulletins, and candle oil, letter head, Lent coin folders, water for coolers, etc.)
2. Ordering flowers (keeping flower chart, ordering the flowers as needed and making sure people who order flowers pay)
3. Accepting UPS deliveries at home (the church no longer has a secretary or sexton that has 9-5 hours at the church and we need someone to accept packages on a regular basis – bi-weekly – and deliver them to the church).

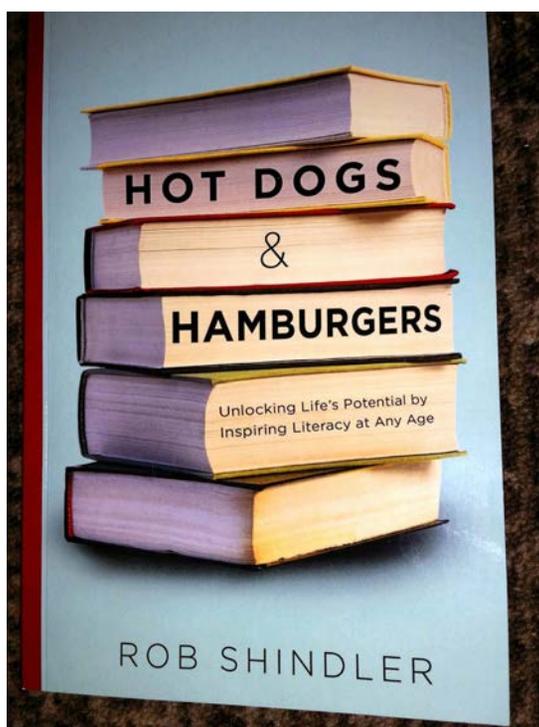
4. Choose and duplicate Children’s Bulletins weekly.
5. Keep clear and concise records of births, deaths, marriages, membership and confirmed members (currently hand written but could be computerized) PS If Pastor starts to keep these records we will be in trouble because no one will be able to read them. ahem, cough, cough.
6. Clean up the pews – pick up left behind bulletins, stock the little holders with envelopes and welcome cards
7. Yard Sales – pick dates, advertise, take reservations, help folks day of Sale
8. Copy scripture for services and send to Lay Readers.
9. Takes care of our Faith UCC Facebook Page
10. Check the church email account with Verizon
11. And anything else the Pastor asks.

FLOWERS-BULLETINS-CANDLES

You are invited to remember or honor loved ones anytime this year by sponsoring **f l o w e r s**, bulletins or candles. The chart is posted on the wall outside the choir room.



Pick a Sunday that is significant to you and your loved ones: anniversaries, birthdays, death days, graduations or any other special days. Please sign up for your special Sundays and then follow the instructions posted. Bulletins are \$10 per Sunday, candles \$15, table bouquet \$27.00, and altar flowers are \$37.50. Your sponsor message will be listed in the bulletin on the appropriate Sunday.



All Church Reading

The United Church of Christ has called on all of us to read the book “*Hamburgers and Hot Dogs*” Did you know that 1 in 5 adults lack the basic reading skills beyond a fourth grade level? Or that almost 85% of all young people in the juvenile court system are illiterate? Participate in this unique, all-church initiative, the United Church of Christ’s inaugural One Read of the inspirational book, *Hot Dogs & Hamburgers: Unlocking Life’s Potential by Inspiring Literacy at Any Age*, by Rob Shindler. We have 5 copies of this book (floating around) our congregation. You may borrow it, read it and then bring it back! March 4th is when we will March Forth for Literacy. Reading does change lives!

LEARNING TO READ BUILDS CONFIDENCE AND HOPE

In this heartwarming story, author Rob Shindler tells how he offered his time, unflagging energy, and unconventional teaching techniques to help a boy with serious learning differences and adults suffering from low literacy levels. A father who wanted to help his son with his reading deficiencies, Rob discovered the way to that goal was through volunteering at the Literacy Center of Chicago. There, he learned firsthand how ridiculous the common misconceptions are about learning disabilities and adult illiteracy. The assortment of students he taught were ambitious people who were eloquent, driven, clever, and so funny they made him laugh out loud. Here, Rob shares his students’ pain and humiliations, frustrations and hopes. *Hot Dogs & Hamburgers* demonstrates that literacy issues reside in all neighborhoods and that its victims are committed to finding dignity and life’s possibilities through learning to read. Rob’s teaching experiences are so motivating and rewarding that once you’ve read his story, you’re likely to begin your own journey as a literacy tutor.

Rob and his wife, Andi, have twins, Isabella and Oliver, and their younger brother, future NFL star Sage. Rob is the founder of Abogados America, a small law firm in Chicago that specializes in representing the Hispanic community, which faces an array of legal injustices. “My Spanish-speaking clients are a lot like adults fighting illiteracy,” he says. “Society tends to judge both before all the evidence is in.” Rob’s hope is that *Hot Dogs & Hamburgers* will bring an awareness of adult low literacy and slow that judging process down.

HOTDOGSANDHAMBURGERSBOOK.COM



Giving Tree Update

We are currently collecting the following items for Bethany Children’s home: Industrial size Jelly, Ketchup, Mustard, Peanut Butter, Hershey Syrup, peaches, pineapple, mixed fruit, large cereal boxes, granola bars, Chips Ahoy and Oreo Cookies.

Rest Stop Coffee Break Update

Thanks to all who helped out in any way, this project netted a little over \$900 to add to the church’s Fundraising for the year. A huge thank you to all!



Faith Circles

We have two circles of Faith that meet once a month here at Faith U.C.C. These circles are sharing groups that are designed to open the scriptures and share our faith. They are open to anyone who is willing to do just that. The Secretaries Circle meets the 2nd Monday of the month from 1:30-2:30 at the church in the Quiet Room (off the Narthex). They are currently reading the book “When Bad Things Happen to Good People”. Elizabeth’s Circle meets the 3rd Monday from 1:30-2:30 in the Quiet Room at the church (reading through Romans). The best part about the circles, you don’t have to know anything. Just come and listen...share your opinion if you’d like!

Easter Flower/Blanket Order Form

Your Name _____	Item	# Ordered
In Memory of _____	Blankets - \$5.00	_____
In Honor of _____	Tulips - \$13.50	_____
Total Due _____	Azaleas - \$28.50	_____
	Hyacinth - \$11.00	_____
	Mums - \$12.00	_____
	Daffodils - \$12.00	_____
	Lilies - \$11.50	_____

Orders due March 22nd with payment
Please send to: Faith UCC, 21 Faith Drive, Hazleton, PA 18202

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Worship Is the Heart of Church

Come to worship and touch the heart of God! As your pastor, I have often suggested that God sends invitations to grace and love from God's heart directly to each of ours. Well I also believe the church has a soul or heart. Worshipping together is a time for the heart of our church to connect with God and similarly, for God's heart to connect with our church's soul. So come to worship God in the spirit of spiritual connections and the truth of Living God.

We begin our calendar year with the beautiful season of White and Gold – Epiphany. This year we will be searching for Jesus along with the Magi and other wise people down through the years! Wednesday February 18th we begin the lovely purple season of Lent with Ashes where we will explore the Spirituality of Darkness using Barbara Brown Taylor's book "Learning to Walk in the Dark" and "Spiritual Practices for Your Congregation" by Lynne M. Baab. In this Lent we will be calmer and more contemplative with instructions to remain seated and quiet until the candles are all extinguished and the flame is carried from the sanctuary (a symbol of God going with us out into the world). The bright colors of Easter begin the first Sunday of April which initiates the Great 50 days. Wouldn't it be great if heaven had visiting hours? I know of a couple of people in heaven I'd like to have a visit with and I am sure each of you do also! So during Easter we will explore Jesus' views of heaven! Come and Search for Jesus with the Magi, Learn to Walk in the Dark and Visit Heaven!

Jan 3	6 PM	Vespers Christmas II/Communion	Feb 28 th	6 PM	Vespers/Communion
Jan 4	8 & 10 AM	Christmas II/Communion John 1:1-9 Christmas is Close to God's Heart	Mar 1	8 & 10 AM	Lent II Communion Psalm 139 "Stones of Faith – 18 th Anniversary"
Jan 10	6 PM	Vespers	Wed Mar 4 th	7 PM	Jt. Lent Service @ TBA
Jan 11	8 & 10 AM	Epiphany I Mark 1:4-11 Pastor Lynne	Mar 7	6 PM	Vespers
Jan 17	6 PM	Vespers	Mar 8	8 & 10 AM	Lent III Psalm 19 The Fear of the Lord
Jan 18	8 & 10 AM	Epiphany II I Samuel 3:1-10 Searching with Samuel	Mar 11 th	7 PM	Jt. Lent Service @ TBA
Jan 24	6 PM	Vespers	Mar 14	6 PM	Vespers
Jan 25	8 & 10 AM	Epiphany III Mark 1:14-20 Searching with the Newly Minted Disciples	Mar 15	8 & 10 AM	Lent IV Numbers 2:4-8 Dark Emotions
Jan 31	6 PM	Vespers/Communion	Wed Mar 18 th	7 PM	Jt. Service @ TBAeavenH
Feb 1	8 & 10 AM	Epiphany IV Mark 1:21-28 Searching with Eyes Wide Open	Mar 21	6 PM	Vespers
Feb 7	6 PM	Vespers	Mar 22	8 & 10 AM	Lent V John 12:17-26 Entering the Stone
Feb 8	8 & 10 AM	Epiphany V Mark 1:29-39 Searching with Motivation	Wed Mar 25 th	7 PM	Jt. Lent Service @ TBA
Feb 14	6 PM	Vespers	Mar 28	6 PM	Vespers
Feb 15	8 & 10 AM	Mark 9:2-9 Transfiguration Compassionate Communities 10:00 Blue Service – Thank You to Fire Fighters, Police and EMTs	Mar 29	8 & 10 AM	Mark 11:1-11 Palm Sunday "Working in Darkness"
Wed Feb 18 th	7 PM	Ash Wed - Isaiah 45:2-8 Treasurers of Darkness	Thurs Apr 2 nd	7 PM	Maundy Thurs Service I Corinthians 11:23-26 Dark Night of the Soul
Feb 21	6 PM	Vespers	Fri Apr 3 rd	12-3	Quiet Service Prayer Vigil
Feb 22	8 & 10 AM	Lent I Genesis 1:1-5, 14-19 Who's Afraid of the Dark?	Fri Apr 3	7 PM	Good Fri Dark Night of the Soul Continued....
Wed Feb 25	7 PM	Jt. Lent Services @ TBA	Sat Apr 4	6 PM	Holy Sat Luke 23:54-56 The Mourning Star or Morning Star
			Sun Apr 5	8 AM	Easter Sonrise Service John 20:1-18 One Foot in Heaven
			Sun Apr 5	10 AM	Easter Service John 20:1-18 One Foot in Heaven

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Faith United Church of Christ
21 Faith Drive
Hazleton, PA 18202
Return Service Requested

January/February/March 2015

**Mark your calendars!
The deadline for our Apr/May/June 2015
Newsletter is March 8th Please be prompt!**

Wish to submit an article for the newsletter?

Please send submissions to :

Karen Herb

PO Box 373

Beaver Meadows, PA 18216-0373

Email: herb2857@aol.com

Phone: (570) 497-4749

You may drop off articles at the church office. Church office hours are: Wednesday from Wednesday 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM Faith UCC e-mail address: faithuccchaz@verizon.net Building Superintendent: Judy Hartzel – 459-2923 Circle of Prayer – To add names, call Carol Koch at 788-1038

Worship Services:

Saturday 6:00 PM

Sunday 8:00 and 10:00 AM

Sunday School: 9:00 AM

Church Office Phone: 454-5982

Kitchen Phone: 454-8427

Rev. Hess Cell Phone: 401-2239

Address: 21 Faith Drive

Hazleton, PA 18202