



# The Slackwood Grapevine

Slackwood Presbyterian Church  
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Rev. Ryan Irmer, Pastor  
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May 2017

## ***“Coming Alive”***

One of the unique challenges we face today in our interconnected world is what to do with the 24-hour news cycle that bombards us with so much news and information. This is a reality of our time and how we deal with it is important. Some choose to ignore it all and remain uninformed regarding current events. Maybe they don't think they can impact what's going on so they don't "waste their time" trying. So they make the choice to focus on their work, their family, time with their friends, or enjoying their favorite hobbies. My problem with this approach is that we need a well-informed citizenry to protect or reestablish living within a healthy democracy. Furthermore, when there are so many people that are hurting, ignoring them or turning your back on them is not the right approach and doesn't reflect the lifestyle that Jesus has called us to.

Then there are others who overindulge in daily events and political headlines so much that it moves beyond staying informed and into a perverse form of entertainment. This isn't healthy either as one often loses a proper balance in life and becomes incapable of appreciating perspectives that are different from their own. Yes, they are staying on top of every little detail but they are often doing so within their own "information bubble" that they've created. We saw examples of this especially last year with the all-consuming nature of the presidential election.

There is a real struggle to create a healthy balance between informing ourselves as to what is going on all around us and not allowing it to take over our lives. An additional challenge is then figuring out what we should do about current events and important issues. If we stand up for climate change one week, speak out against the ongoing famine in South Sudan another, and then advocate for Criminal Justice reform the next, we will spread ourselves so thin that we will end up being utterly ineffective, frustrated, and completely exhausted. So what should we do? How can we strike the proper balance in our lives of both staying properly informed and also knowing what to get involved in and what we may have to say "no" to?

Last week during a conversation, someone brought forward this quote by Howard Thurman, *"Don't (just) ask yourself what the world needs. (Also) ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive."* I like this quote because it doesn't ignore the world's problems but it also doesn't call us to try to solve them all either. Yes, we should be aware of what the world's needs are but we also need to be equally aware of **who we are**, what we are passionate about, and what unique gifts God has given to each of us. When we are aware of what makes us "come alive" and then we look for opportunities to utilize it to the glory of God and in the service of others, then we have the chance to make the greatest impact possible. This approach is also more sustainable and will guard against "burnout." So ask yourself **what makes you come alive** and then allow **that** to inform you as to how you can best utilize your passions and unique gifts towards something that you love or feel strongly about.

Your Pastor,

Ryan I.

## SESSION ACTIONS – APRIL 19, 2017

At its April 19 meeting the session:

- voted to approve the baptism of Benjamin Morrison during the service of worship on July 23;
- learned that incoming students from Princeton University will once again use the church facilities for sleeping and eating from September 4 to 8 while performing community service;
- learned that a church picnic will be held on June 11;
- voted to purchase 12 padded oak wood arm chairs for the sanctuary.

## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The next meeting of the Slackwood PW will be on Thursday, May 18, 2017 at 12 noon. Please bring a sandwich; dessert will be provided.

Please prepare for lesson 9 in the PW study book

Read Matthew 15:21-28 and Luke 10:38-42. Also Mark 7:25-30

## MEN'S BREAKFAST CLUB



The next meeting of the Club will be Friday, May 19, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the church. Also, mark your calendar for the June 16 meeting to join in the great breakfast, fellowship and work of the church!

## MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

Slackwood Church will be participating in the Lawrence Township Memorial Day parade on Saturday, May 27. The parade begins at 10:00 a.m. from the Lawrence High School parking lot. The bus will leave the church at approximately 8:55 a.m., so if you want to ride on the bus, you need to be at the church by 8:55. If you plan to parade but don't want to leave that early, there is plenty of parking at the high school and you can meet



others from the church, and the bus, by 9:45 a.m. The parade route is an easy walk and a lot of fun.

## CHURCH SCHOOL PICNIC – JUNE 11



June 11<sup>th</sup> marks the end of our church school year and our annual picnic. Please join us immediately following the morning church service.

Utensils, drinks, hot dogs, and hamburgers will be supplied. Please bring a covered dish or dessert to share and join us in fun and fellowship!

## COMING EVENTS

The Membership, Outreach & Hospitality Committee is working on several events to take place over the summer months. Mark your calendars now so you won't miss any of them.

Friday, June 16 – 8:30 p.m. on the lawn behind the church. Watch the movie "Zootopia" with others from the church and community. Bring a lawn chair or blanket. Popcorn and beverages will be provided. Invite your neighbors and friends.

Friday, July 14 – 8:30 p.m. on the lawn behind the church. Watch the movie "Sing." (Details same as above.)

Wednesday, August 9 – 3:00 p.m. in air conditioned fellowship hall. Watch the movie "The Quiet Man," with John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara & Barry Fitzgerald. The story of a retired American boxer who returns to the village of his birth in Ireland where he finds love. Refreshments provided. Beat the heat by coming into the air conditioning and enjoying time with friends.

Saturday, August 26 – 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. – End of the Summer Community Fair. Games, ponies, food, fun and prizes for all ages – all free!

## CONGRATULATIONS!



Congratulations to two church family members who are graduating from high school this year. Sydney Thomas is graduating from Burlington Township High School and Anna Zuckerman is graduating from Morrisville High School. Our love and best wishes to both.

## RUMMAGE SALE

Another successful rummage sale was held! We made \$3,060+ for our mission projects over the day-and-a-half of sales. This year we had lots of furniture, clothes, and white elephant items, but a rainy day on Saturday for the sale. In spite of difficulties, lots of fun, fellowship, and outreach took place. Thank you to every person who worked setting up the sale, the sale itself, the food prepared to keep us going (especially Betty Okeson and Fred Mitchell), and the clean up afterwards. A lot of work goes into every sale and the efforts of each person are greatly appreciated. Got a busy calendar? Can't wait for the next challenge.....Mark your calendars **now** for the fall sale: **Wednesday, Oct. 11 to Saturday, Oct. 14, 2017.**

Terrie and Bill Mansmann, Co-chairs

## HOSPITALITY AT SLACKWOOD

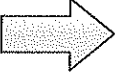
Three session committees have been working hard on finding ways in which Slackwood Church can continue and improve its ministry of hospitality. Several elders and deacons attended a workshop in January on "Hospitality & Congregational Life" and came back excited and with lots of new ideas. A lot of time and energy has been put into discussing the subject and you will soon begin to see the results of those discussions.

The Worship Committee is actively looking to expand the list of ushers present each Sunday to be sure everyone entering the sanctuary is welcomed and assisted. In addition, there is a new and improved way to obtain visitor information through "Visitor Information Cards" that are now being used. Aspects of the

worship service that are familiar to most such as the Gloria Patri, the Doxology, and the Lord's Prayer are now printed in the bulletin each Sunday. This will make it easier for visitors to follow along and participate in every aspect of worship.

Ginger Baker, from the Membership, Outreach & Hospitality Committee, is putting finishing touches on a refreshment list where people have signed up to provide refreshments following worship each Sunday. Lex Chu, also a member of Membership, Outreach & Hospitality is organizing a list of greeters that will be at the main entrances of fellowship hall before worship to welcome all who enter. That committee is also working on creating an organized annual list of luncheons/receptions, etc. so each committee/group knows what is planned and who is in charge of each event.



There are multiple entrances into Fellowship Hall and the sanctuary  and so the Property & Finance Committee is working on signage to direct people to our main entrance. Property & Finance recommended to session, and it was approved, to provide seating within our sanctuary that would assist those with special needs. There will be a row of matching cushioned chairs with armrests for those who need assistance getting in and out of their seat, or those who may not be able to sit on hard wooden pews. Within this area there will also be space available for those who are in wheelchairs so they feel a part of the congregation during worship while not blocking any aisles.

These are very exciting times at Slackwood and it is hoped that you will see how each of these items of hospitality is vital to the health of our congregation and makes a positive impact in the life of visitors. If you have any questions about hospitality at Slackwood, feel free to speak with the chair people of these committees: Sandy Murray, Worship; Carol Belles, Membership, Outreach



& Hospitality; Bill Mansmann, Property & Finance, or to Pastor Ryan.

## SPIRITUAL MESSAGE

By Cathy Salvatore

Held in Jesus' Hand  
Read: John 10: 28  
Psalm 95

Thinking of our early childhood memories by walking with our father holding his hand carefully, by watching each time so I would not stumble. He would pull me up before I would fall to the ground. Some fathers are good and kind, but not all care for their children's needs and not all care for their present life.



But, our Father in heaven is and does care, He knit us together in our mother's womb and provided our needs and goodness in His creation.

When we stumble our Lord is there to pull us up and grasps us in His hand. Therefore, no one will come to snatch us from His mighty grip. No devils, the world, or our sinful flesh can seek to pry us loose.

So, our earthly fathers may fail us, but our heavenly Father never will. We are forever in the palm of His hand.

Let us pray always to be fixed in the palm of His hand with His enduring love.

By grace we believe it, we accept it and we live it. Amen.

### **"My Social Security Account"**

The Trenton Field Office of the Social Security Administration has sent the church a packet of pamphlets regarding "My Social Security." This is an important service offering for New Jersey residents of every age. This is a way to access your information online if you are currently working, about to retire or already receiving benefits. If you are interested, copies of the pamphlet can be found on the table in Fellowship Hall.



## Modern Parable of the Lobster Rev. Carolyn Wittwer



Long ago, when the world was very new, there was a certain lobster who determined that the Creator had made a mistake. So he set up an appointment to discuss the matter.

"With all due respect," said the lobster, "I wish to complain about the way you designed my shell. You see, I just get used to one outer casing when I've got to shed it for another. Very inconvenient and rather a waste of time."

The Creator replied, "I see. But do you realize that it is the giving up of on shell that allows you to grow into another?"

"But I like myself just the way I am," the lobster said.

"Your mind's made up?" the Creator asked.

"Indeed!" stated the lobster firmly.

"Very well," smiled the Creator. "From now on your shell will not change...and you may go about your business just as you are now."

"That's very kind of you," said the lobster, and left.

At first the lobster was very content wearing the same old shell, but as time passed he found that his once light and comfortable shell was becoming quite heavy and tight. After a while, in fact, the shell became so cumbersome that the lobster couldn't feel anything at all outside himself. As a result, he was constantly bumping into others until it got to the point where he could hardly breathe. With great effort he went back to see the Creator.

"With all due respect," the lobster sighed, "contrary to what you promised, my shell has not remained the same. It keeps shrinking!"

"Not at all," smiled the Creator. "Your shell may have gotten a little thicker with age, but it has remained the same size. What's happened is that you have changed—inside—beneath your shell."

The Creator continued: "You see, everything changes...continuously. No one remains the same. That's the way I've designed things. And the wisest choice is to shed your old shell as you grow."

"I see," said the lobster, "but you must admit it is occasionally inconvenient and a bit uncomfortable."

"Yes," said the Creator, "but remember, all growth carries with it both the possibility of discomfort...and the potential for great joy, as you discover new parts of yourself. After all, you can't have one without the other."

"That's very sensible," said the lobster.

"And something else," offered the Creator, "When you let go of your shell and choose to grow," said the Creator, "you build new strength within yourself. And in that strength you'll find new capacity to love yourself...to love those around you...and to love life itself. That is my plan for each of you."

Change is a part of living.

We cannot stop it any more than we can stop the sunrise.

But to truly grow is another matter. To shed old shells and old ways, we must be willing to let go of who we were in order to discover who we are becoming.

To grow, then, requires some choices:

To be alive every moment...

to expand our capacity to love...

and to seek greater fulfillment in ourselves and others.

# Slackwood Presbyterian Church

## May-June 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MAY 14 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service	15 7:30 PM AA Meeting	16 7:00 PM Membership, Outreach and Hospitality Committee	17 7:00 PM Session Meeting	18 12:00 PM Pres. Women Meeting 6:30 PM AA Meeting 7:45 PM Debtors Anonymous	19 9:00 AM Men's Pancake Breakfast 1:00 PM Daughters of Scotia	20 8:30 AM AA Meeting 7:00 Trenton Thunder Game
21 9:30 AM Messy Church Event 10:00 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship 11:45 AM Deacons Meeting 11:50 AM Liturgist Training 12:00 Property Committee Mtg. 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service	22 7:30 PM AA Meeting	23	24 7:00 PM Session Meeting	25 6:30 PM AA Meeting 7:45 PM Debtors Anonymous	26	27 8:30 AM AA Meeting 10:00 AM Law.Twp Memorial Day Parade 10:00 AM Grace Church Bazaar
28 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship 11:45 AM Worship Committee 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service	29 <i>Memorial Day</i> 7:30 PM AA Meeting	30	31	JUNE 1 6:30 PM AA Meeting 7:45 PM Debtors Anonymous	2	3 8:30 AM AA Meeting
4 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service	5 7:30 PM AA Meeting	6	7	8 6:30 PM AA Meeting 7:45 PM Debtors Anonymous	9	10 8:30 AM AA Meeting
11 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship 11:45 AM Church Picnic 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service	12 7:30 PM AA Meeting	13	14	15 6:30 PM AA Meeting 7:45 PM Debtors Anonymous	16 9:00 AM Men's Pancake Breakfast 8:30 PM Movie "Under the Stars Zootopia"	17 8:30 AM AA Meeting

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- June 18: Father's Day
- July 14: Movie Under the Stars – "Sing"
- August 9: Movie – "The Quiet Man"
- August 26: Community Fair

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May 2017

*When I come to the end of my rope,  
God is there to take over*

*The Slackwood Grapevine*  
Newsletter of the Slackwood Presbyterian Church