



# The Slackwood Grapevine

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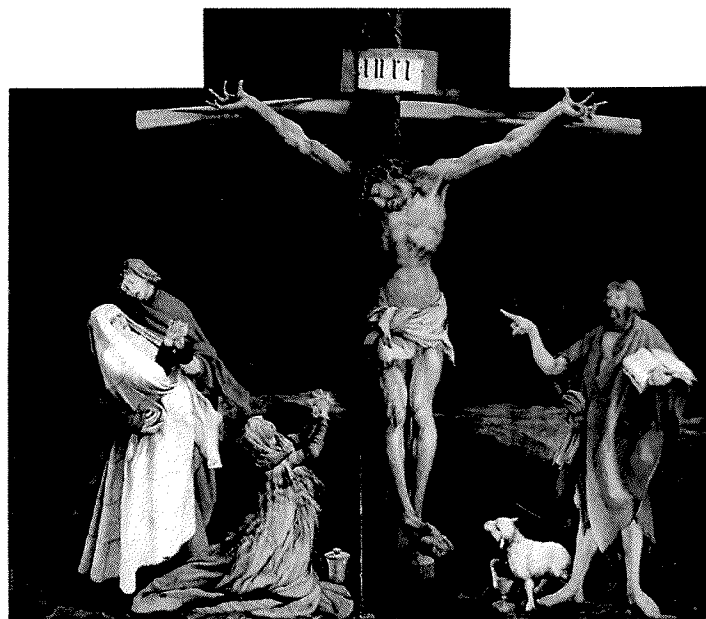
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July 2018

## Reconsidering the Role of the Church

Our church continues to benefit from our proximity to Princeton Theological Seminary in a variety of ways. One of those ways is my ability to attend lectures of well-respected professors and scholars. Last week I heard Dr. Andy Root speak powerfully about who the Church is called to be in the present age.

To demonstrate who we are called to be as the Church, Root showed a painting, *"The Issenheim Alterpiece"* by Matthias Grünewald, which shows John the Baptist pointing to Jesus while being crucified. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is shown at Christ's opposite side, collapsing in anguish in the arms of John, the beloved disciple of Christ. Below Mary lays Mary Magdalene who is on her knees with her hands folded in a posture of prayer. **The hands of every character in this painting are remarkable.**



So who are we called to be as the Church? First, we are called to be a community of faith which **points people to Jesus Christ**. We may not have all the answers, but we know the one who does. Being a Christian or the Church is not about who we are and what we've accomplished. No, it is about who Jesus is, what He has accomplished, and the significance and impact that Christ's life, death, and resurrection has on all of humanity. Jesus deserves the focus!

Secondly, as Mary Magdalene illustrates, we are called to be a community which prays together. We are all searching for answers to important questions, as well as a sense of hope, purpose, and direction. Turning to God in prayer demonstrates that during times of joy, heartbreak, and everything

in between, **we can fold our hands and speak directly to God.** When we pray to God, we are turning and trusting in the only one who can provide the answers, direction, strength, comfort, and guidance that we need.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, being held by John, illustrates how the Church is called to **use our arms to embrace those around us.** When we use our arms to love, support, and comfort one another, we are living out what it means to be the Church. There are times in our lives where, like Mary, we feel as if we are going to collapse under the weight of grief, pain, and despair. During those times, how vital it is to have the love and support of our members to hold on to us and keep us from falling.

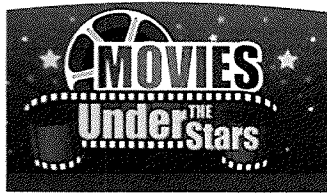
I hope you will join me this summer as we explore further what it means to be the Church. There is no better Epistle to do so than by studying Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Though it was written nearly 2000 years ago, what Paul was trying to teach the Ephesians still holds true today. I am very excited to preach from Ephesians as we continue to ask, "Who is God calling us to be as the Church?" My hope and prayer is that the book of Ephesians and the sermons preached will faithfully move us forward as a church that is in line with God's desire for who we are called to be during this particular time and place.

Your Pastor,

Ryan

## MOVIE EVENTS

The next outdoor movie event will be held on the church's back lawn on Saturday, July 14 at 8:30 p.m.



and will feature the family friendly movie "Ferdinand." Bring a lawn chair or blanket and enjoy an evening with church family and neighbors. In case of rain, the movie will be held indoors.



On Wednesday, August 15 at 3:00 p.m., the movie "On Golden Pond" will be shown in air conditioned fellowship hall. Come in out of the heat and enjoy this classic movie.

## A NIGHT AT THE BALLPARK

Church members and friends are invited to a night at the ballpark on Friday, August 17 when the Trenton Thunder will play the New Hampshire Fisher Cats. The game begins at 7:00 p.m. and tickets are \$8.00 each. The church bus will take anyone who would like the convenience of being dropped off at the main entrance. To reserve your tickets, sign up at church any Sunday, or contact Carol Belles. Deadline for reservations is Sunday, July 22.



## END OF SUMMER COMMUNITY FAIR

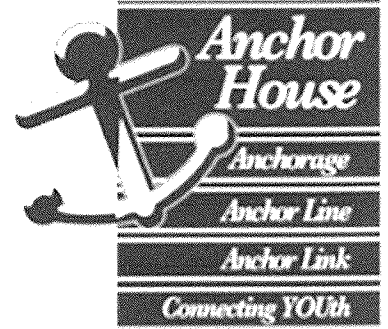
Once again this year, a fun neighborhood fair will be held on the church grounds on Saturday, August 25 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. There will be games, ponies, food, fun and prizes for people of all ages. Come out, meet our church neighbors, and enjoy a free, fun day. This event has become a highlight of the church year and is a great outreach program. Volunteers are needed for a number of tasks. If you can help out, sign up at church any Sunday or contact Amelia Irmer or Karen Nolan. This is one event you really don't want to miss!

**WE ARE A COMMUNITY**

## PEACE AND GLOBAL WITNESS OFFERING

Once again this year Slackwood will participate in the Peace and Global Witness Offering of our denomination. The offering is received on World Communion

Sunday (October 7) and one quarter of the money received is donated to a local organization. This year the session has designated Anchor House as the recipient of those funds.



The mission of Anchor House is to provide a safe haven where abused, runaway, homeless, aging out and at risk youth and their families are empowered to succeed and thrive. Anchor House Shelter was founded in 1978 to move homeless and runaway youth off the streets of Trenton and reunite them with their family. Today, Anchor House Inc. provides shelter, school outreach, transitional and supportive housing, and street outreach to youth, ages 12 to 21 years of age, from Mercer County and throughout the state of New Jersey. Your generous donations will support this important program.

## MEN'S BREAKFAST CLUB

As summer is here, we will be taking off the months of July and August. We will resume our Breakfast Club on Friday September 21, at 9:00 a.m. at the church. Enjoy your summer and mark your calendar for the September meeting!



## CHURCH FINANCES

We are generally in sound financial shape after six months of the current fiscal year. But.....Please keep up the great support through the summer months! We still have the normal expenses and bills will need to be paid. So plan on continuing to support the work of your church even though you may not be around each Sunday. Have a wonderful summer!

## DONATE THROUGH THE CHURCH WEBSITE

Recently we have set up a method to donate to Slackwood using the internet. If you are not around during the summer, this is a great way to keep your

support current. Simply go to the church website: **Slackwoodchurch.org**. On the home page under the picture look for the link: **Give Online to Slackwood Presbyterian Church**. Once you click on the link, you will be directed to the donation page and follow the instructions.

Donating this way is quick and safe. Please note that there is a small processing fee for this service. If you include this fee in your donation, the full amount will be sent to the church. Thank you for your support.

### FALL RUMMAGE SALE

It may seem early, but we would like to provide you with the dates for the sale! Mark your calendar and save the dates of October 10 – 13, 2018 to help in this great activity!

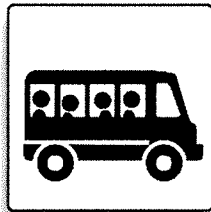
### CALLING ALL GARDENERS

If you enjoy being outside to do gardening and like viewing the results of your effort, your help is needed at your church. We have numerous small garden areas around the church property that need tending to from time to time. We are in great shape now but those pesky weeds often make a comeback. We could designate a small area for you to maintain, and with many involved we can make it much more manageable for all of us. If you are interested, please speak to Carol Belles.



### TRANSPORTATION MINISTRY: WHEELS FOR WORSHIP

During May of 2014 Slackwood took ownership of our minibus. Since then it has become a visible sign of our church's ability to serve the transportation needs of those needing a ride to worship, transportation in Unity marches, Lawrence Community days, assisting other churches in mission trips, church activities and the Lawrence Memorial Day parade. All worthwhile items that foster the reach and visibility of Slackwood in our community. A transportation ministry requires more than just a minibus. Funds are required for fuel, maintenance, registration and insurance.



Looking for a way to support the church without another church meeting? Donate to the Wheels for Worship fund! Consider making a donation to this worthwhile outreach. Envelopes are found in the church pews or indicate "Wheels for Worship" on your donation or use the church website.

### SPIRITUAL MESSAGE

By Cathy Salvatore

JOHN IS HIS NAME

Luke 1: 57-66; 80

On June 24<sup>th</sup> we celebrate the birth of St. John the Baptist. The birth of John the Baptist is, to the story of our salvation, a "tipping point", a dramatic moment when everything can change all at once, "by being Baptized." How powerful it was when, upon spying Jesus coming to be baptized he said, "Behold the Lamb of God."

John's destiny, and ours, is to be a light, to go before the Lord to prepare his way. Through us our "tender compassion of our God will shine on those who sit in darkness"

John tells us, "He must increase in our lives and we must decrease." It is to say, the overture is complete, and now the great opera begins.

The Messiah will reign. .

### Five Ways to Follow Jesus Like St. John the Baptist

1. Joy - Finding Christ in his presence creates joy
2. Humility - St. John's life purpose was to point people towards Jesus with humility
3. Follow with Charity - Repent and follow Christ with love
4. Courage - St. John wasn't afraid that living in humility would turn people away from his messages.
5. Follow with Selflessness - If one is asked, what is in it for me? When we share the faith, it is time to get some generosity lessons.

