



# The Slackwood Grapevine

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March 2024

## INTERIM PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

The final steps in our Lenten journey are upon us. Holy week is here. Each Spring we take these steps together, longing to be closer to God and hoping to be more faithful. Throughout the Lenten season we pause and reflect, ponder our lives of faith, our inner spirits. Now, Palm Sunday and Holy Week, as we reread the same scripture from years gone by and hold on to familiar hymns, we hope that maybe this time we will experience something new.

So, considering each year we tell the same story, how do we make Jesus' story transformative to us? Maybe the real lesson is that the story does remain the same. Each year, after 40 days of self-reflection and prayer, we celebrate the love of God found in the empty cross and the empty tomb. More importantly, each moment of this story must be listened to, felt, experienced, and shared. The other day I came across an article that expressed the importance of being present and not glossing over the story of Christ's passion, his suffering, his betrayal, his arrest, his crucifixion – all the uncomfortable moments of Holy Week. It is easy enough to start the week with shouts of hosanna and then return the following Sunday to sing alleluia.

How can we really meet Jesus at the empty tomb if we were not with him through the Passover meal and arrest of Maundy Thursday and the trial and crucifixion of the passion observed on Good Friday? We must be willing to feel and acknowledge the pain and suffering Jesus went through to give us the gift of grace.

I know it is not pleasant to relive the passion. I remember sitting with a congregation earlier in my ministry and watching their faces and their expressions as we watched Mel Gibson's movie "The Passion". The sound of the whip, the shouts of the crowd, the pounding of nails, and the crying of Jesus' followers is difficult to endure. It makes it real. When Jesus cries out to God "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" we hear his human fear and understand how alone he must have felt. We cannot celebrate Easter without this moment and know that it was endured out of love for the world, for each and every one of us.

May you find comfort in knowing that each year our journey ends up at the empty tomb. There is no alternate ending to this story. So it is important then that we don't make these days ordinary or commonplace. As we walk a common, well-known path, may we choose to use this time to discover or re-discover the depths of God's love shown through the resurrected Christ.

Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

Pastor David

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## FAREWELL TO STARR ALLEYNE

After more than five years of ministering alongside of our Slackwood church community, Starr Alleyne, our Director of Family Ministries, has resigned in order to pursue additional education and training to enhance her career. Starr has been a gift to us through her leadership and compassionate care, her active involvement and participation in our church community, her faithfulness. On **Sunday, May 5, we will celebrate Starr and honor her ministry with us at a special reception following worship**; we hope you will join us to share your gratitude and blessing with Starr as she follows God's leading! Starr's last day with us will be June 9 when she will lead youth group via zoom.

With Starr's resignation, the Christian Education Committee has formulated a new job description for a Christian Education Coordinator, which Session has approved. A search committee is being formed and will begin the process of finding someone to call to this position. The new position is focused on oversight of Sunday School and Youth group and enrichment of our Christian Education program. It is part-time, 8-10 hours per week, 43 weeks a year. For more information, contact Mark Thomas or Pastor David.

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE

There are still opportunities for you to join Slackwood and our community this Easter season. Holy Week began with Palm Sunday on March 24<sup>th</sup>. The congregation waved palms and placed them in front of the sanctuary. "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"



Thank you to Pastor David, for his sermon. As we move through this week toward Easter, let us think about what we can let go of such as shame, hate, and judgment and what we can return to such as love, compassion, and acceptance.



This is a reminder that this year's Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service will be a joint service with the other Presbyterian Churches of Lawrence Township. The service will be held on March 28<sup>th</sup> at the Lawrence Road Presbyterian Church (1039 Lawrenceville Road). There will be a simple soup and bread dinner (free of charge) at 5:30 pm. The local Presbyterian choirs will join together for the service, which will begin at 7:30 pm and include Communion. *Volunteers are needed to provide bread in time for dinner that evening.*



On March 29<sup>th</sup>, the Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville will hold a Good Friday service at 12:15 pm in their sanctuary. All are welcome to attend.



On Easter Sunday at Slackwood, there will be an early service in the garden starting at 8:30 am, weather permitting, followed by a light breakfast including fruit, bagels, and beverages in Fellowship Hall. An Easter Egg Hunt will take place outside during breakfast and before the 10:30 am service in the sanctuary. Please consider joining us for these events.

Mark your calendars for May 19<sup>th</sup>. Our Pentecost service will also be Youth Sunday. Plan to attend and watch our young people take part in leading the service. Some of our youth will be confirmed that day as well.

Please continue to support Slackwood by ushering, being a liturgist, participating in the choir, or attending our monthly planning meetings. See a member of the worship committee if you have questions or are interested.

If you wish to be a part of the worship committee, our next meeting will be held after the worship service on April 28<sup>th</sup>. All are welcome to attend.

The Worship Committee

## **BIBLE STUDY**

Bi-monthly **Bible study** will resume April 18th at 7:00 pm via zoom. The group will meet the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month to discuss the scripture passages for the upcoming Sunday. Please let Pastor David know if you would like to participate.

## **CONFIRMATION**

This year's confirmation program is nearing the end. The six youth: (Miles Buck, Noelle Buck, Nabila Elsharabasi, Emma Moore, Jillian Moore, Peyton Valentino) have been very involved in the classes, growing in their understanding of what it means to be a faithful follower of Christ. On April 13 they will have a day-long retreat at the church, including participating in a mission project for Embrella, a local non-profit that embraces, supports, and advocates for children, youth, and families within the child welfare community. Please continue to keep the confirmation youth in your prayers.

## **SPRING CLEAN-UP**



The Spring Clean-Up was originally scheduled for Saturday March 23. However, the weather forecast called for a real soaking rain all day. So, the Clean-Up will take place on the planned rain date, Saturday March 30. With several items to address around the property, we are hoping for "real" spring weather to get the property looking good for Easter on the 31<sup>st</sup>. As usual, we will gather at 8:30 am and conclude by 12:00. Any time you may have to help pitch in would be gratefully appreciated! All that is needed is your willingness to join in the "fun!" Hope to see you there and bring your favorite rake or shovel!

## **COMMUNITY EASTER EGG HUNT**



Due to the inclement weather on the originally scheduled date for the community Easter Egg Hunt, we had to reschedule the event to Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm. Hope you can make it! Just meet us in the church parking lot for the holiday fun.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

Did you know that we have a fund at the church that is titled the Slackwood Church Trust Fund? It was set up a number of years ago to provide an opportunity for people to make a donation to the church that could have a lasting effect. The funds donated are invested and only the income from the investment may then be used for a need at the church identified by the Session. This a good opportunity to make a contribution in honor of someone, in memory of a loved one or as a result of estate planning that may assist the church for years to come. If you are interested in making such a donation, contact any member of Session.

## **TIME TO CUT GRASS**

We maintain the church grounds throughout the spring and summer. The Property Committee is always seeking a few good people! If you are available to help cut the grass this year, you can sign up on the sheet in Fellowship Hall. Tom Clark or Bill Mansmann will be glad to fill you in and help get you started.

## **DEACONS CORNER**

The deacons met and elected the following officers: Moderator, Terrie Mansmann; Vice Moderator, Bailie Gregory; Secretary, Sandra Thomas; and Treasurer/Sunshine, Maureen Rickman. With the addition of our new deacons, we revised the Shepherding Group List. This list has a deacon paired with an elder (so we all can be supported). Deacons are responsible for reaching out to the church members on their list and their elder teammate through cards, phone calls, or visits. The purpose of this connection is to provide support to our

church members, giving us a better understanding of their family, activities and needs. So if a new (or veteran) deacon contacts you.....welcome them and know that they are only being friendly, want to get to know you better, and not asking you to do anything! Once the list is finalized it will be shared with the congregation and posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. The deacons also agreed, along with others in the congregation, to provide desserts for the post gathering after the Celebration of Life Service for Todd Mansmann at 11am, on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to Carol Belles who will be coordinating this effort.

## **TALENT / NO TALENT NIGHT**



Thanks to all who participated in the St. Patrick's Talent/No Talent night by sharing their covered dish, their laughter, their applause and/or their awesome "talent" to the delight of all. It all contributed to a fun night of fellowship for everyone.

## **TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION**

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no greater commandment greater than these." - Mark 12:30-31

The Truth and Reconciliation Group would like to invite everyone out on Saturday, June 22nd at 2 pm for a showing of the movie "Rustin". Civil Rights activist Bayard Rustin was instrumental in helping to organize the 1963 March on Washington. If you can't make it, this movie is a must see. You will be inspired by this story of love in action. It honors those who have worked tirelessly and risked much to work together to help our country live up to its creed.

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

"O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD all the earth." -Psalm 96:1

If you are in awe of God's creation, especially during this time of year, please join us for Messy Morning during the regular Sunday School hour on Sunday, May 5th. Messy Church will focus on worshipping God. We hope to share scripture and songs that glorify God as well as teach us about worship. We hope to have everyone participate that can make it. Weather permitting, we will end our time together in our beautiful Meditation Garden.

## **COMMUNITY SUMMER FAIR – AUGUST 17**

Just another reminder that the 2024 Community Summer Fair will be held on August 17<sup>th</sup>. Planning is already in the works and your help would sincerely be appreciated! It takes many jobs and lots of willing people to pull this amazing outreach opportunity off. There will be a sign up sheet on the Fellowship Hall table to join the committee or you can email Ginger Baker at gingerwells55@hotmail.com.



## **CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF TODD MANSMANN**

Family and friends of Todd will gather in the Slackwood Church sanctuary at 11:00 am on Saturday, April 20, 2024. Please join us to celebrate the life of Todd to remember his God given gifts of kindness and love.

Please check our calendar online for upcoming meetings and events:  
<http://www.slackwoodchurch.org/event-calendar.html>