

SUMMER 2021

Honey Brook United Methodist Church

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SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:30 AM

SUNDAY SCHOOL WILL BE BACK IN SEPTEMBER

WORSHIP: 10:45 AM

NO FELLOWSHIP TIME FOLLOWING THE SERVICE

UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!

FROM THE PASTOR

We will continue our series of messages on the Gospel of Mark throughout this summer. We will be learning about how Jesus simply kept surprising people with His words and actions. He simply did not fit their image of the Messiah.

We have talked recently about one way that Jesus really surprised and even upset those who considered themselves to be very religious....the way that He behaved on the sabbath.

Keeping the sabbath of course is the 4th of the 10 commandments...the foundation of the law that God gave to Moses. The 10 commandments are found in two places in the Old Testament. The 4th commandment on each list goes as follows.

Exodus 20:8-11

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

"Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. ¹³ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do. ¹⁵ Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day."

The main point in each passage of course is that the sabbath (7th day of the week) was to be a day to rest from your labors...everyone got day off!

Notice that God gave two different reasons. In Exodus 20:10, it says that God rested on the 7th day of creation which makes this day holy. In Dt 5:15, God reminded the people that they had been slaves in Egypt before he rescued them so they are to honor him by observing the sabbath.

It is important to recognize that in both passages, God is letting the people know that this idea of a day of rest is a blessing and a good thing for them (and for us of course). God did not have to "rest" but He did to set an example for us...for our benefit. And reminding the people of their former plight was a way to show what He had done for them and also to just remind them of how much their parents and grandparents would have loved to be able to rest while they were working for the Egyptians.

The point is that the sabbath was meant to be a blessing...a day when we can enjoy ourselves and take a break from the rat race. By the time Jesus came on to the scene, the religious experts had turned the sabbath into a day of stress and a burden by coming up with rules upon rules that were to be followed. (God just tells people to take a break)

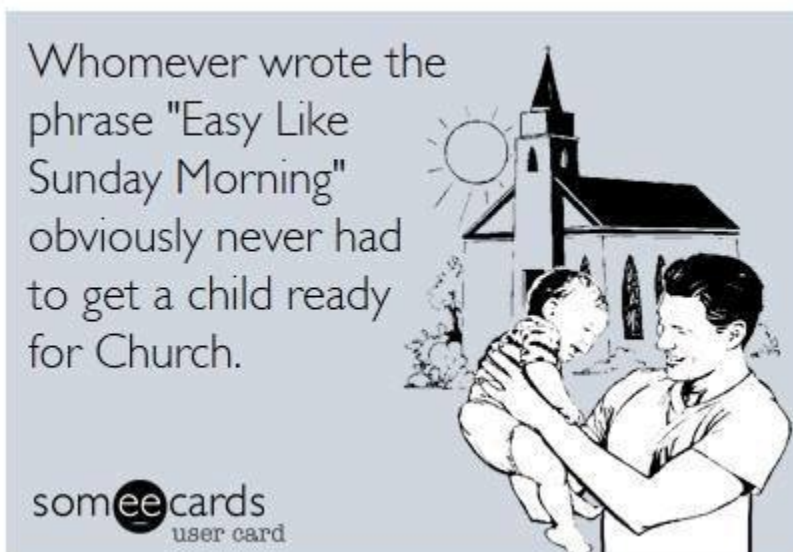
Jesus almost goes out of His way to break those rules now and then in order to illustrate that God is looking for us to spend our time doing good and enjoying His presence....not simply following rules. This caught folks by surprise but hopefully we learn from His actions.

We know that the day of worship moved to Sunday for the vast majority of believers to honor the day of the resurrection of Jesus. Of course, it is important to worship together in order to honor our Lord and support and encourage one another. But it is also good to realize that exhausting ourselves in our efforts to gain and hold onto the things of this world simply hurts ourselves physically and spiritually.

May we all take the time to regularly step back and simply relax in the presence of our Lord. His grace and mercy continue to surprise as He is more loving than we can imagine in a world that needs grace, mercy and forgiveness more than ever.

Blessings to you all

Pastor Ray





CHOIR NOTES

Thank you very much to everyone who has led singing and shared in the worship services by providing the solos and duets for special music. We continue to sing our praise to the Lord!!

We look forward to having the choir return in the Fall!!

ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT

The 236th session of the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference convened May 20-22. For the second consecutive year, the conference was held mostly online. Business sessions and teaching time was done via zoom. The ordination and memorial services were held in person but were by invitation only.

Similar to 2020, there were fewer resolutions at the business sessions and a limited amount of discussion and debate. The resolutions were primarily related to the financial matters that must be renewed annually.

-There were 3 separate resolutions that dealt with pensions and benefits for those who have retired.

-One resolution set the minimum salaries for current clergy.

-One resolution established the "advance specials" for the coming year. These are the ministries that churches have the option of supporting through the conference. Once again this year, Lumina, which serves families in Lancaster, is included as one of these advance specials.

-There was a resolution which established the process by which funds from disaffiliating churches will be distributed.

-And finally, two churches were closed. These were both in the East District, [Asbury UMC of Norristown](#) and [First UMC of Perkasio](#)

In other news from the conference:

-We had some good news from those presenting the budget. Each church will be forgiven for one month of the Connectional Ministries Fund (which

supports the conference and district budgets) forgiven this year. That will be a savings of several hundred dollars for our church.

-There are a large number of clergy who are retiring this year including Susan Sliker who immediately preceded me here at New Holland. Pastor Susan is active on Facebook and I am sure she would appreciate any kind words of support as she enters this next phase of her life.

-A number of reports were presented including one from our camps. The good news is that Gretna Glen, Innabah and Pocono Plateau will all be holding in person camping experiences again this summer.

-Finally we got to meet our new bishop. Peggy Johnson is part of the large retiring class and will be replaced by Rev John Schol as of September 1, 2021. Rev Schol is from Southeastern PA and served churches in this area before becoming a bishop.

While it was a blessing to be able to hold this conference remotely, we do look forward to meeting in person next Spring.

And feel free to contact Pastor Ray with any specific questions about this conference or other denomination business

Copies of the 2021 church budget are available on the glass case at the entrance to Fellowship Hall

PRAYER MEETING

We will continue to hold weekly prayer meetings thru zoom and encourage those who are able to participate. Weekly emails will be sent with all of the information you will need to be part of the group. . Please continue to send prayer requests to the church office or to Pastor Ray so that they can be added to the prayer chain. While we are separated physically, we continue to be joined together spiritually as the body of Christ!

Community Outreach



Just a reminder that we continue to collect items for the Operation Christmas Child Shoebox ministry. Place these donations on the table in Fellowship Hall (the quilters corner) and thank you for allowing us to get a head start on 2021 Christmas

AND we continue to collect food items for Steeple to People. Our church family has been very diligent in filling this shopping cart!! Thank you all very much!

AND will the meals at the Honey Brook youth center restart soon.



We are HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THE RETURN OF OUR PEACH FESTIVAL. It may be a bit different but it will be back. The date will be August 21st. Look for a sign-up sheet for helpers and supplies!

CONTACT KAREN FELLENBAUM WITH QUESTIONS AND ALSO TO BE A PART OF THE PLANNING

LUNCH BUNCH Bible Study is back! We will be going through the book of Revelation along with enjoying lunch together at area restaurants.

The plan is to meet every other Wednesday at noon but dates and locations will be announced.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL IS COMING!



An Indiana Jones styled action adventure to discover why we are all priceless to God. Bible School will be online again this year. We are filming the segments now and will release the videos on YouTube like last year beginning July 11th.

Please share this link <https://vbspro.events/p/events/39944c> with anyone who would like to register their children or who would like to sign up to volunteer. Once signed up we will deliver the packets or have a drop pick up location to provide all necessary materials. The videos will be available for you to watch and participate for 30 days following their release.

UMCOR aids displaced people in Congo

By Philippe KitukaLolonga

June 3, 2021 | BENI, Congo (UM News)

Jean Tshomba, coordinator of the United Methodist Committee on Relief's disaster management office in East Congo, explains to displaced people where the aid comes from and how it is distributed at Kalinda Stadium in the Mulekera commune in Beni, Congo. UMCOR provided almost \$100,000 USD for food and other relief. Photo by Philippe KitukaLolonga, UM News.

In northeastern Congo, many farmers are afraid to work in their fields, due to threats by Allied Democratic Forces rebels. Hunger and starvation are daily realities.

In response, the United Methodist Committee on Relief recently provided almost \$100,000 USD, buying a one-month supply of food and other necessities for more than 850 vulnerable households.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, violence has increased significantly in the eastern provinces of Congo. More than 20,000 security incidents were registered in 2020, an increase of 38% over 2019.

Tensions have risen since the launch of a government-led security operation against the ADF in October 2020. Armed groups have targeted civilians and displaced populations in the region, killing scores of people.

The European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations reported a new wave of extreme violence affecting Beni in North Kivu. Since December 2020, 150 civilians have been killed and more than 100 people wounded or kidnapped. Most were women and children. On May 1, Congo President Felix Tshisekedi Tshilombo declared a state of siege in the regions of North Kivu and Ituri.

Some 67,000 people have fled their homes and are now living with host families in Beni. These populations are extremely vulnerable and in need of food, health supplies, and access to clean water and sanitation.

KaviraMwavita, the mother of three children, lost her husband to the ADF violence. Now

homeless, she received food and other items from the UMCOR-led distribution. “The church has given me hope for life,” she said.

In January, Chantal Masika was raped by ADF soldiers. “The United Methodist Church has shown us love,” she said. “I have never received any help, but today the church has given me a smile.” Her family of 10 moved to Beni after the assault.

“I ask the church to accompany us psychologically, too,” Masika said, “because if I remember this rape in the presence of my husband, I am sometimes traumatized.”

Henry Sinvansire, a Beni District lay leader and volunteer, said The United Methodist Church preaches by acts of kindness, rather than words. Even as the distribution was occurring, ADF forces burned down the SambokoMoliso United Methodist Church, 25 miles from Beni.

Justin Matembere, the village chief of Samboko, said, “This action of The United Methodist Church for us displaced is beneficial.”

He expressed hope that other groups would “help us because we live homeless, and we are exposed to several health difficulties with our families.”

He called on the Congolese government “to restore peace in our villages so that we can regain our homes.”

The situation in Beni has been critical for two decades, with the insurgence of ADF. By rejecting food assistance from local authorities, survivors are trying to prompt the government to focus on eliminating the rebel forces. Affected populations are seeking help from faith-based and humanitarian organizations.

BintouDiao is a program manager for UMCOR’s International Disaster Response unit.

“The implementation (of the food distribution) was particularly interesting,” she said, “because armed groups representing the displaced and the local community in Beni have been protesting, often violently, against local government authorities and humanitarian actors to express their frustration with the lack of security and the government’s inability to restore peace in the area.”

When the team arrived in Beni, they first engaged in negotiations with various local groups to get access to the displaced for the distribution.

Jean Tshomba, coordinator of UMCOR's disaster management office in Eastern Congo, identified the most vulnerable displaced households, selecting recipients regardless of ethnicity, religion or race. He urged other humanitarian organizations and religious groups to join United Methodists in similar efforts.

Tshomba said the level of insecurity in the area and continuous gunshots made the process stressful and daunting at times. Yet, the team gained the trust of local leaders by demonstrating full transparency about their intentions and by involving some of their members in the relief activities.

Bishop Gabriel YembaUnda of the East Congo Episcopal Area thanked UMCOR for the rapid intervention.

“I appeal to the entire population to unity, love and prayer,” he said, “for the restoration of lasting peace and to support the president.”

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFUL SUPPORT!