



June 2020

Volume 12, Issue 6

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## Online Worship and Other Unexpected Blessings

What tragic and trying times we live in, and yet how many new opportunities for Christian ministry we encounter each day! Christians are not always able to determine the contexts in which they minister, but they are charged by God to minister as best they can at all times and in all situations. As I write this Gram article, the number of coronavirus cases continues to rise. And yet states are beginning to reopen public spaces and allow local businesses to expand operations. We are entering yet another period of a “new normal” when we are not sure which way is up. Despite the uncertainty, we can still do our best to worship God and serve our neighbors.

### Evaluating the Effectiveness of Online Worship

As we navigate this new reality, we look back at some of the ministry efforts we have tried in the last 6 weeks. Of what we did, what will end up being temporary and what will prove to have enduring value? Each person will have their own answers, but I wanted to give you my take on one of the big innovations of the last month: online worship (including online giving). Greg, myself and others have enjoyed working together to bring about a number of worship and meditation events. Being so close to the camera has encouraged me to speak more directly to my audience. But I’ve also missed seeing the look in someone’s face when they resonate with a point I’m making.

There’s no question that online worship offers some exciting possibilities for ministry going forward, the question is how to incorporate what we’ve learned into the regular ministry program of the church. I’m going to ask the worship committee, Session, and congregation to reflect on the church’s experience with online worship and seek God’s guidance as we make decisions about the future use of the medium.

### Trends to Consider

Before we begin discussions about the future of online worship, however, there are a number of social trends we should keep in mind:

1. People travel and vacation more than they did in the past. I read a study recently that said regular church members only attend services at 50% of the rate they did in 2000. I’m sure there are many reasons for the decline in worship attendance by members, but certainly two reasons are a growing need to travel for work and the ability to vacation on the weekends far away from home.
2. In our 24/7 work culture, families with young children believe they do not have the time in their schedules to spare for a big family activity like going to church on Sunday morning.

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3. Most people currently only give offering when they are physically present in a church service.

4. The decline in attendance and giving during summers and long vacations undermines the long-term viability of most churches. There are a number of negative consequences for a congregation when church members don't participate weekly in the life of the church. Church members don't maintain friendships within the congregation. Ministers and teachers cannot foster weekly, ongoing conversations on important topics through classes, book reading, and sermon series. Finally, ministers and lay leaders find organizing events and ministries harder and harder. In general, the current trend towards inconsistent worship saps the energy of the local church.

### **Online Worship helps Solve a Number of Ongoing Challenges**

I can see online worship becoming a necessity for most churches going forward. The only way we can stay connected as a community under current conditions is to worship and give online. That's been our experience in the last 6 weeks. But even when the pandemic passes, we might consider continuing online worship. Online worship and giving offer a chance for traveling workers to participate and support their church. The online option also allows families who are out of town during the summer to maintain at least some measure of continuity with the life of their church.

As we head into the summer, I urge church members to try an experiment. Use this time as an opportunity to get familiar with online worship and giving. Write down what you like about the experience. Write down the negatives of the experience. Ask God for help in getting the most out of online worship. Then in September tell your minister, session, and worship committee what you have found. At the end of the summer we should have some great insights into our next steps.

Online worship offers the church many opportunities and challenges to a congregation as it seeks to praise God, worship together, and serve our neighbors during these trying times. As we go forward, let us be open to God's guidance in how we can and should shape the church's online worship presence. Let us ask God for help in the best ways to experience online worship and deepen our faith life. Let us pray to God for guidance in participating in weekly activities even when we are far from home.

Yours in a common ministry,

Rev. Glenn

**Buckingham Presbyterian Church**

**10:00am**

**WORSHIP WITH US**

**ONLINE**

**facebook LIVE**



## A Note from Historian Lynne Murray

One of the advantages of being elderly (I was 78 in February) is that I remember some of the wonderful people that contributed to our congregation over the years. In no particular order, it will be my pleasure to acquaint you with some of those families.

This month I would like to recall Carol Parker Rose's parents, Dalmas and Gladys Parker. They were the nicest people! And they set a great example for Carol; she thinks of things to do when she isn't even asked! I was surprised and pleased by Carol's purchase of chrysanthemums to be planted around the church before the concert I sponsored in October.

I especially remember Mrs. Parker in our adult Sunday School class so I got to know her quite well. Dalmas was in evidence every Sunday as he sang in the choir for many years. Carol tells me her grandmother, Mamie Parker, was also very active. Gladys' sister, Evelyn Hall, was an active member of BPC and a close friend of my mother, Dorothy Taylor.

Carol's brother Mike worked for us at the Empress Motel and mother said he was one of the brightest mathematicians she ever saw [and she was great]. Today Mike is an accountant at Perdue. No surprise there!

Take Care, and don't let the virus get you!



Happy Trails, Lynne    murray476@mchsi.com

## Your Deacons In Action

- In memory of the wonderful things Pat Pylypczuk did for Buckingham Church as a Deacon and a friend, the Deacons were honored to prepare a meal for her family after they returned from the cemetery. Our members prepared the food and it was delivered to Cecil Tull's house before they returned.
- During the month of May the Deacons celebrated our senior shut-in mothers. We purchased small plants from the Worcester County Developmental Center, Debi dressed them up a bit, and then we delivered them. Too bad we couldn't stay and visit a while.
- Deacons helped feed children in need at Ocean City Elementary School by connecting with the teachers that are doing this work. As families struggle during these challenging times, we became aware of some children who attended OC Elementary who were not receiving the foods that others were getting due to the distribution process. Some of the teachers were picking up this slack and asked for our help. The Deacons donated \$200 to supply 20+ families with milk, eggs, cheese, lunch meat, and fresh fruit. Hopefully this will last for more than a week. Lindsay ordered these items from Sysco and they were "boxed" and delivered to these families by Wendy. Lindsay has received some cash donations toward this mission. If you would like to make a donation, just send a check to Buckingham Church and mark it for Ocean City Elementary.



## Christian Ed

Christian Ed is beginning to plan events for this summer. We feel the normal VBS procedure of dropping children off would not be the best idea this year; however, we will still have some events. S'More Time with Jesus will only be held outside with activities encouraging people to stay distanced. So far, we have spoken with Cascading Carlos and John the Magician to begin lining dates up. We will keep everyone posted as we start putting them together. We also met with Brian, a local guy who sells and installs playgrounds. We are waiting to hear back on his team's proposal but plan to have the playground installed in the next month.

## Mission Report

Mission has been keeping in the loop with local needs. The blessing box is being used and stocked well. There are IGNITE funds left from the Blessing Bags and building the Blessing Box The mission committee had laid out plans for a community garden in February. Many church members came out the last few weeks and removed the rose bushes and replaced that area with raised beds for the garden. Currently planted in the garden are large tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, squash, zucchini, cucumbers, green bell peppers and red bell peppers. We hope many from our church and community will make use of it and we can change the vegetables out for each season.





## Mission Report Cont'd

It was brought to the mission committees' attention some local families who attend Ocean City Elementary School could use help with fresh food items. As well as the Spirit Kitchen wanting to provide the 200 families, they help every other week with eggs. The Maryland food bank is beginning

to run low on fresh foods with so many needing food right now. Many people from the church and community have offered financial help. The Deacons helped provide each family with a gallon of milk, a dozen eggs, a pound of ham lunchmeat and a pound of sliced cheese. A local couple provided the church with 12 chickens to pass out to the families this week. Three kids from Newark, who attend S'more Time with Jesus, set up a lemonade stand and raised \$450. They wanted their donations to go to help those in need and help feed the hungry. Debi raised money from selling her senior bracelets and will be donating the funds to provide 200 eggs for the Spirit Kitchen in their next food drive. God is on the move and working in our community!! If anyone would like to help, we are trying to help these families as long as possible. We are able to purchase the food from Sysco when we are placing the orders each week. We are currently helping 22 families and the cost is about \$11 a family to provide the milk, eggs, cheese and lunch meat, please contact Lindsay or any mission committee member to help!

On a side note, I would like to thank Pam for getting the menus out each week, as well as, Lynda Truitt, Kristin Parker, Nance Hall, Jerry Woroniecki, Jeff Porter and the many others who have popped in to help with the **"Sysco Popup Shop"**! Each week they meet at church and help unload the Sysco truck, spread all the food out and assemble the orders placed for the week. We then call the people who have placed the orders and they pay and pick up outside the kitchen door of the church. There are about 40 orders each week from members of our church and those in the community who have heard about it. It has really been a great time for fellowship and outreach to those in the community having a hard time finding the basics like ground beef, chicken breast, toilet paper, paper towels etc. There are also other great menu options including seafood, premade dinners, and yummy sides! We will continue to offer this popup shop as long as possible!



# SYSCO POPUP SHOP!

# Buckingham Church's Blessing Box



Supplies are quickly being depleted in our BLESSING BOX. Donations of the following items are needed and appreciated:

- Individual packs of tissues
- Tooth brushes
- Tooth paste
- Disposable razors
- Bar soap
- Bottled water
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Bottled sodas
- Individual snack items

## Prayer Request Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please pray for:

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Requested by:

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Please place my request in the weekly bulletin:

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_

No: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:

Buckingham Presbyterian Church

20 South Main St.

P.O. Box 248

Berlin, MD 21811

Attn: Secretary



**COMMUNION** will be held

**MID-SUMMER**

**July 19, 2020**

- 6/1— ROBERT Bunting
- 6/2— PAUL Chambers  
KATIE Mathews  
KRISTIN Parker
- 6/4— ALEXANDER Gaddis
- 6/5— Aubrey Tull
- 6/9— Jeremy Ashton
- 6/10— THOMAS Cropper  
Sophia Macrides
- 6/14— Laura Truitt
- 6/16— Oliver Vocke
- 6/18— RICHARD Holland, Sr.
- 6/19— JASON Parker
- 6/22— ROBERT C. Arthur  
CHARLON Pruitt
- 6/25— EMILY David



- 6/6— WILLIAM & CAROLE Smith
- 6/11— TOM & LYNDA Truitt
- 6/14— Fred & MADELINE Moore

**Happy Anniversary**