

# The Vine

News, Information and Inspiration from Royersford Baptist Church

Volume 52/Issue 4

July/August 2021



## Summer Sundays at 11:30

For the summer months, the Membership Care Group and the Adult Selectives Group are joining forces to facilitate a time of fellowship and sharing a picnic lunch together on Sundays at 11:30. Any and all are welcome --singles, doubles, families, and pets! Bring your own picnic lunch and join us each Sunday in July at the locations listed below:

- July 4: No gathering due to 4th of July holiday
- July 11: Hosts: Deb and Roger Savage  
967 Miller Rd, Pottstown, PA 19465  
Walk at Kenilworth Park
- July 18: Hosts: Bernice and Herb Rogers  
1725 S. Collegeville Road, Collegeville, PA 19426
- July 25: Upper Schuylkill Valley Park  
1615 Black Rock Road, Royersford, PA 19468

## A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR



At the end of June, I attended the American Baptist Churches Biennial Mission Summit, a gathering of our denomination that takes place every 2 years. It is a time for attending to business, worshipping together, and fellowshiping with other American Baptists across the US and Puerto Rico. The event took place virtually this year, and it was a wonderful time of connection with our siblings in Christ.

The biggest takeaway for me- RBC isn't special. Of course, you are special to me and special to Christ and occupy a special place in this world, but perhaps a better way of saying it is that we aren't alone. It can be easy to think we are the only church that was online-only for so long, that we are the only church examining what our future holds, that we are the only church with financial instability, that we are the only church with declining numbers. We are not alone in this! So many of our fellow churches are facing similar questions and uncertainties. The good news is that we can lean on one another, learn from one another, and walk together on this road towards discovering God's next thing for us. I was encouraged by colleagues from across the country, even as I began to feel less and less special.

We aren't unique in our challenges, but we are uniquely called to this place and this time. And we are joined by a great cloud of witnesses who have walked similar roads before us and alongside us. I think that's a pretty special place to be.

Join me in prayer for RBC and our fellow American Baptist Churches as we continue to listen to God's voice.

Faithfully,  
Pastor Sarah

## Update on RBC Property Exploration

As of June 1, RBC has officially begun an exploration process with the consulting group Sympara as to what possibilities exist for our property. Sympara's mission is to repurpose religious assets for the common good. A team of 8 of us from RBC (Pastor Sarah, Mark Hite, Nancy O'Neil, Mary Panetta, George Reitnour, Kay Rolfs Massaglia, Deb Savage, and Reid Trulson) will meet throughout the summer with Sympara's founder and CEO to explore the needs of the community around us, take stock of the assets RBC has, and explore possible ways we can respond to God's call to us here in Royersford and beyond.

*This team is not a decision-making team.* We are using this time to thoughtfully and prayerfully discern and explore what might be next for RBC. At the end of our exploration period, we will report to the congregation what we've learned and possible steps forward.

I invite you to be in prayer for our team and our whole congregation in the coming months. I'm excited to see where God will lead us in this next phase of ministry together!



For many months now, I have been writing articles about our Youth Ministry, and what kind of things we have been up to while socially distant from each other. We have been playing it safe and refraining from in person gatherings until the numbers suggested otherwise and we as a Church agreed it was safe to meet again. And it has been tough... It has been challenging finding ways to run a youth group without in person gatherings. So, when we got the “okay” to start meeting in person again, words could not express how relieved and excited I was to get our kids together.

So, without wasting any time, I put together a youth group night for that same week that I was told it was okay to meet. We gathered outside the Church for some water games and fellowship, and we had a great time. I received word from youth and parents about how even just that one evening together lifted spirits and made those youth that attended incredibly happy! After this event, I knew that I then wanted to put together a kickoff to the Summer and an open welcome to all our upcoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders and those that might feel new to the group. A POOL PARTY! Who does not love a good pool party in the Summer! The Parker family was gracious to host us as we put together a Youth Group Pool Party on June 26<sup>th</sup>, that was open to all youth INCLUDING our new and upcoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders, which we have a few of this year. As our youth leaders and I put together a list of names of all the possible kids we could have this year in youth group, between new 6<sup>th</sup> graders, friends that are interested and, of course, our youth group

veterans, we came up with a list of roughly 30 names. This is huge! Our group has not seen a list of names that large in many years, and after a year and a half of this pandemic, it is even more substantial. While we did not get 30 kids to come to this pool party, we had a lot of new faces, and we had a blast! We have a good foundation of kids to grow our group as we look forward and come out of this pandemic.

I typically am not a numbers guy when it comes to running the youth group. I think a youth ministry of 5 kids is just as important as a group of 50, but in a time where we have been limited in what we can do for over a year, I want to build excitement about being back. I want to make sure that we can draw our youth back into Church, and because relationships are foundational in that, having more friends around for these kids just makes things all that much more enticing for them.

Things are looking up, and we are back in person for our youth group gatherings. Still with some limitations as we practice safety precautions, but energy is high, and we are ready to see what God has in store for our group this coming Summer and the school year to follow!

—Ryan Seckman





## ***OUT & ABOUT WITH RBC MEMBERS***

**ROYERSFORD BAPTIST CHURCH NURSERY SCHOOL** will be opening in the Fall. The playground has been closed because of flooding that had happened and the need for repairs. RBC members and parents of the Nursery School have been working every Saturday on the playground. It is labor intensive shoveling, raking and moving soil. Luckily, we need the soil for fill in the front yard.

The play ground may not look different when you walk by it but it will be a safer place to play and the flooding problem will be alleviated.

These work days are a visible demonstration of the Scripture: Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:12.

We are all gracious with each other's limitations. One of us can push the wheelbarrow but can't lift it. One of us can shovel but can't wheel the wheelbarrow. Some people's loads are lighter than other people's loads.

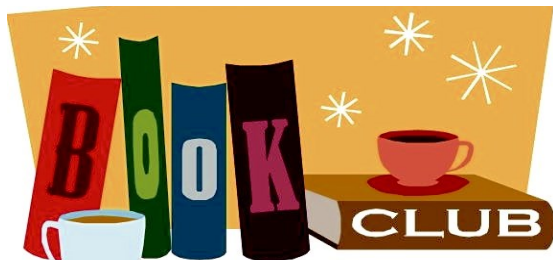
It is joy to work together and know the kids will be able to be back on the playground. The next work day will be July 17th at 8 am. We encourage and need more volunteers. Parents and nursery school alumni are encouraged to come out and help.

### **FELLOWSHIP TIME ON SUNDAY MORNINGS**

Sunday mornings at 11:30 there is a fellowship time this summer at Upper Schuylkill Valley Park and two Sundays we will be hosted by church members. Deb and Roger Savage will host on 7/11 at 967 Miller Rd, Pottstown 19465. Bernice and Herb Rogers will host on 7/18 at 1725 S Collegeville Rd, Collegeville Pa 19426. Bring your own lunch and catch up with church friends.

### **SMALL GROUP MINISTRY**

RBC has a small group ministry. You may or may not know that these groups have existed for many years. A recent discussion with the small group leaders reveals that long lasting and powerful relationships were forged by small group experiences. Small groups can take many forms and can be short-term or long-term. A long-term small group meets on a regular basis for study, prayer, sharing and fellowship. Please let Melissa Reitnour know if you want to find out more about becoming a member of a long-term small group or if you have an idea for a short-term small group.



The RBC Book Club is going back to meeting in the church parlor! You're invited to join us at 7:15p.m. on the third Thursday of the month. Here is the list of upcoming selections and dates:

**July 15** "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" by Betty Smith

**August 19** "The Girl from Jakarta" by Hester Keegan

**September 16** "The Sun is a Compass" by Caroline Van Hemert

## CHRIST, COVID, CHURCH AND CHANGE by Reid Trulson

We thank God that COVID-19 is currently under control in Montgomery County. For three consecutive weeks prior to this writing, the positivity rate in the county has been less than 1%. A positivity rate of 5% indicates that the virus is under suppression, and a positivity rate of 1% indicates the virus is under control.

A *Wall Street Journal* opinion writer noted that our nation has been experiencing “a plague of biblical proportions.” He observed, “Sometimes the most important ingredient for spiritual renewal is a cataclysmic event.” (Source: Robert Nicholson, “A Coronavirus Great Awakening?” *Wall Street Journal*, March 26, 2020)

Here is one aspect of renewal that the pandemic has taught us: RBC will be best served by being a hybrid church that continues to offer in-person as well as online worship, gatherings, meetings and other services. We began that transition when we resumed in-person worship in our air-conditioned Fellowship Hall on June 20 while continuing online worship on Zoom.

Step by step we are moving to the day when we can return to worship in our sanctuary. At present we are preparing to return to the sanctuary with a joyous worship service on Sunday, September 26. Our return, however, will be part of a transitional process versus a single day, and it's unlikely to be church-as-usual.

Throughout the summer months, as long as the virus remains under control in our area, we will progressively relax and remove the COVID-19 health and safety protocols we have been observing. We will take these steps while continuing to monitor the incidence of virus infections in our area. If the positivity rate in Montgomery County returns to unsafe levels, we will resume our previous COVID protocols.

We know that the genetic code of the coronavirus is constantly changing. One or more of the mutations are known to be more easily transmitted and result in more severe sickness. Some variants also reduce the effectiveness of antibody therapies and vaccines. Furthermore, University of Pennsylvania microbiologist Frederic Bushman reports that all the new infections in the greater Philadelphia area are now variants. (Source: Marie McCullough, “Delta virus strain ‘definitely here,’” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 1, 2021, p. B1)

RBC is seeking to make decisions that are informed by scripture, by our best understanding of science and data and by guidance from the Pennsylvania and Montgomery County public health offices. Jesus' command to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:28-31) guides us to give particular care for the wellbeing of people who have compromised immune systems as well as the health of the unvaccinated children among us. For this reason, we will continue wearing masks during in-person worship services. We will review this and the remaining protocols after Labor Day.

In the meantime, let us celebrate our week-to-week progress as we grow into a future of effective ministry as a hybrid church. Let our journey reflect this song that we have often sung in worship:

I will never be the same again  
I can never return, I've closed the door  
I will walk the path, I'll run the race  
And I will never be the same again.  
There are higher heights, there are deeper seas  
Whatever you need to do, Lord, do in me....

These words composed by Darlene Zschech express the change that the Holy Spirit brings into our life as well as our commitment to welcome and walk in that change. As we sing the words “I” and “me,” we quite naturally think of this spiritual journey in personal terms. But in Christ Jesus we are a new creation. Not only are we individuals, we are also a family – members of the body of Christ. Therefore, we should also sing the song in the plural:

We will never be the same again  
We can never return, we've closed the door  
We will walk the path, we'll run the race  
And we will never be the same again.  
There are higher heights, there are deeper seas  
Whatever you need to do, Lord, do in us....

And so I close these thoughts with the following reflection: “The Coronavirus has changed many things. Some things will remain the same—the unchanging Truth of the Gospel, of course. But much will be different—and should change—because of what we're experiencing and learning as a result of this crisis.” (Source: <https://info.aspengroup.com/key-questions-to-prepare-for-a-new-season-of-ministry>)



## Spotlight on a Mission Project

Did you ever go to summer camp as a kid? Camp is a great place to learn how to swim, sing around a campfire, ride a horse and make new friends. Our Baptist partners in Cuba and the Dominican Republic offer youth camps where children can have fun while they learn about God's love for them.

There are four camps, two in Cuba and two in the Dominican Republic which can host up to 800 children. The leaders have big dreams about being able to host 1,000 children and youth each year. Their dream will increase the size of the dorms and bath facilities, as well as the kitchens and meeting rooms. They want these camps to operate year-round!



Their big dreams not only include improving the facilities, but to be able to offer scholarships and have program materials that help with the physical and emotional growth of the children as well as their spiritual growth.

\$100 will send a child to summer camp for a week! \$250 will provide playground equipment for two camps. \$500 will remodel a dorm. Donate online at: <https://www.internationalministries.org/cuba-and-the-dominican-republic-youth-camps/>

Join our Baptist partners in praying that the camps will be an outreach program to the children's families and their surrounding communities.





# FROM THE GREEN TEAM

## *Solving the Plastics Dilemma*

### *Did You Know...*

That we can all be a part of solving the plastics dilemma. And what is that, exactly? Here are a few facts from the latest issue of “Yes!” magazine to help you understand. 1) The toxins from plastic production and pollution are everywhere – in the air we breathe, the food we eat, in the water we drink, and in our bodies. 2) Mounds of plastic are ending up on the beaches and streets of primarily poor countries around the world. 3) In the last 70 years, more than 8 billion metric tons of plastic have been manufactured. Only 9% of that has been recycled. 4) Plastic’s largest market is packaging, nearly half of which is single use. (141 tons). 5) Textiles are the second largest source of plastic waste, at 42 tons. In fact, clothing is mostly plastic, 64% of the total market. 6) The US did not sign on to a recent international agreement (187 countries did) which limits international trade for plastic scrap in “recycling”. The US still sends plastic scrap to 89 trade partners, mostly in poorer countries. 7) The 10 worst plastic polluters are led by Coca-Cola whose plastic waste is found in 51 countries, followed by PepsiCo (43) and Nestle (37) and Unilever (37). 8) Quote from the Editor of “Yes!”: “We all know by now that we’ve been lied to about the effectiveness of recycling plastic.” But it’s not all bad news, and this publication has several words of encouragement. From Mexico City banning all single use plastics, to 3 communities which have come up with creative ways to repurpose the plastic waste around them, there is hope. In addition, I wanted to share that our church is making its own small contribution in repurposing plastics by collecting and delivering caps and lids to EcoPlastics of Delaware. Thanks to Becky and Kori who delivered 60 pounds last month, that will not end up in a landfill! So, keep those caps and lids coming, to the church or my house (340 Spring Street).

But, back to the solutions. How can we get rid of our throwaway culture? Let’s start with the personal level. We can think very carefully before we buy anything, especially if it is packaged in plastic. Like those apples at Costco. And many products which have layers of unnecessary packaging. Remember the old credo from WWII: Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without! This isn’t just for our grandparents. It’s for us too. As we purchase items, let’s think about where it will end up when we are done with it. Sarah Lazarovic (in “Yes!”) created a “Buyerarchy of Needs”. This is to be constructed in a triangle, with the first choice at the bottom: Use What You Have. Borrow. Swap. Thrift. Make. Buy. There are a lot of choices before “Buy”! We are in a culture of too much. Too much food. Too many choices to wear, too much to store, and too many that are unfixable. We can encourage producers to be responsible for their plastic waste, and encourage circular economy, to keep materials recycling forever. This is also called closed-loop manufacturing. These systems repurpose their waste to produce energy. Here’s a good phrase to say before purchasing: “There is no such thing as away.” They are referring, of course, to throwing it away. That item always ends up somewhere—in the ocean or on a beach, in the street of a poorer country which needs the income, or in a landfill wreaking havoc for centuries to come. So keep this phrase in mind when you shop. There is much we can do. Slowing down to first do some research about viable alternatives can save quite a few items from the land of no return. The problem is huge, and we can be a part of the solution on whatever level we are comfortable: personal, community, or global. We can all do something, whether we are part of the Green Team or not. This is a huge dilemma, and needs immediate attention from everyone, whether we want to or not. What will you do next time you shop for an item? Will you be part of the solution?

# RBCNS GRADUATION AND MOVING-UP CEREMONY

On May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 the parking lot came to life here at RBCNS! There was a lot of excitement in the air from the kids, parents, grandparents and more! Our teachers worked so hard for the last month to have the children ready for graduation and moving-up day! The children learned songs and actions to go along with the songs. They practiced almost every day online with their teachers and you could tell they were ready.

Mrs. Amit worked hard at creating her song. She wrote the words, put it to a tune and put some actions to it. The 2s and 3s class rocked it on Moving-up Day! Below is them in front of the crowd singing their song. After their song, they got a little award that congratulated them for completing their Virtual School Year at RBCNS! We also gave them a book to take home and read with their families. Mrs. Amit is surely going to miss seeing her kids this summer.

Mrs. Moffa's Pre-K class was amazing. Not only did they practice their songs and moves online, but they also came two times to school to practice in the parking lot. They walked to a spot in front of their parents, sang their songs and danced and then they all received a diploma for graduating and a book from Mrs. Moffa. They are definitely ready for Kindergarten! Mrs. Moffa is going to miss their smiling faces and all their funny stories this summer!

After the Graduation and Moving-up Ceremony we had some snacks, drinks, and PIZZA! The kids all had a great time celebrating with their family and friends! Look below at some of the pictures from the day!



PRE-K Graduating Class with Mrs. Moffa



All the families at our Graduation/Moving Up Ceremony



Mrs. Amit and the 2s & 3s



One of our graduates in her cap and shirt!





### JULY BIRTHDAYS:

Elaine Fitzgibbons	2
Sandy Smoyer	3
Melissa Reitnour	5
Sophie Cenet	8
Ronald McCorkle	14
Chris Scales	15
Brywn Schilling	25
Nancy O'Neil	27
Judy Denning	28
Susan Vaughn	29
Cathy Slade	31

### AUGUST BIRTHDAYS:

Marge Henkel	2
Karen Schodle	4
David Strosahl	8
Peter Dramby	9
Joyce Hedrick	15
Reid Trulson	15
Howard Hess	16
Sherman Hess	19
Emily Parker	26
Robin Sexto	26
Asher Kagi	29
Margoth Hinostroza	30

*If there are any additions/changes that need to be made to the birthday and anniversary list, please contact the church office.*

Eric and Devon Engstrom	July 9
Kiera and John Phillips	July 9
Bob and Sharon Brownback	July 10
David and Cynthia Strosahl	July 10
Fred and Weege Neiffer	July 14
Reid and Janelle Trulson	July 24
Shawn and Abigail Turley	July 26
George and Melissa Reitnour	August 6



Royersford Baptist Church  
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**Royersford Baptist Church  
(RBC)**

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Website - [www.rbcabc.org](http://www.rbcabc.org)

**OFFICE HOURS:**

**Monday through Friday,  
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**



*RBC is affiliated  
with American  
Baptist Churches  
USA*

**STAFF:**

**Pastor -**  
Sarah Strosahl-Kagi

**Youth Director-**  
Ryan Seckman

**Worship Coordinator-**  
Lara Cifelli

**Accompanist-**  
Alex Cifelli

**Administrative Assistant-**  
Terry Myers

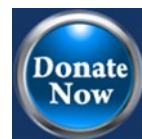
**Custodian-**  
Danielle Crist

**Nursery School Director-**  
Melissa Moffa

**NOTE:**

*Pastor and Youth Director hours  
will vary during the COVID-19  
pandemic. Please call the office  
at 610-948-4170 to schedule an  
appointment.*

If you have been touched by the ministry of RBC, you can be part of continuing our ministry together through your financial gifts. Our website has online giving options that make it possible for you to be a part of supporting the work of Royersford Baptist Church. Your gifts and your prayers make a vital difference in the Kingdom of God.



For the latest in news and information about Royersford Baptist Church, visit our website at:

[www.rbcabc.org](http://www.rbcabc.org)