



The Vine

News, Information and Inspiration from Royersford Baptist Church

Volume 51/ Issue 3

May/June 2020

FEAR NOT, FOR I AM WITH YOU.
I AM YOUR GOD.
I WILL strengthen
YOU. I WILL
help YOU.
I WILL UPHOLD YOU
WITH MY righteous
RIGHT HAND.
ISAIAH 41:10

Sitting in Hope **A Devotional by Karen Hite**

One of my devotionals this year is called *How to Sit*, by Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Zen Master. These meditations are about finding your center, and about how to find quiet within yourself.

We are in a time when some of us have too much quiet by ourselves, because we live alone. Some of us have too much quiet because we are out of work. Some of us are working harder than imagined, all sitting at a computer. Where is the internal quiet? As a teacher who is used to being in the same physical space as my students, moving around the classroom and campus, communicating via computer and trying to learn new and creative ways to use Zoom leave a lot to be desired. Parents trying to work from home, with kids trying to be schooled from home, creates a lot of sitting but not necessarily any quiet.

But people are finding quiet. There is quiet in the skies. There is quiet in our daily, typically rushed, lives. I am somewhat envious of a friend and of a neighbor. They both have children under the age of six. By and large, their children are oblivious to what is pressing around many of us. They are simply living their life. Watching my neighbor's children play outside, seeing my colleague's baby on Zoom, and seeing pictures of my friend taking walks with her young children

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give me great hope and great joy. I am reminded that not everyone is sitting too much, or alone too much, or busy beyond imagination.

I want to share one short passage from *How to Sit*. For me, it speaks to all of the sitting we are doing, the aloneness some of us feel, and the power of tools like Zoom. I am reminded weekly, during one of the RBC worship gatherings, how lovely it is to see everyone that shows up, even if we can't have our own private conversation. You are all part of my extended family, and this tool keeps us connected.

"There may be someone sitting with you who is holding a big block of fear or despair, but who isn't saying anything. She is trying to hold it as she sits. If you are sitting there, present and solid, you are already helping her. Your presence says, 'Don't worry, I am here with you. I will help you to embrace and hold that fear and despair in you.' Alone, it is difficult to hold a lot of pain. But with the collective energy of the group, it becomes possible."

This is true whether we are sitting in a pew or on the other end of a Zoom call.

In addition to sitting, I want to mention hope. Two of the wisest pastors that I have been blessed to call friends spoke of hope, and spoke of hope often. Both died in their early 60s, and both died far too soon. Many of you know both of them, and in these times that feel full of stress, I want to remind us - and myself - of the words of hope that they left so many people with. My friend Charles Rice used to say "I am not optimistic, but I *am* hopeful." And he was. He knew that we can always hope that tomorrow will be better than today. Martin Massaglia ended every service with words that I came to appreciate very deeply. Romans 15:13 tells us "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, you may abound in hope."

Sit and find your center. Sit and accompany a friend through this time. Sit and connect with others. Go out and take a walk or a bike ride - it clears the mind! Allow God to fill you with hope. Hope has carried people through many difficult days. Hope will carry us through this time as well.

—Karen Hite

A Quick Update from the Finance Team - 4/30/2020

Hey folks, a quick summary of RBC's financial situation is that, at the moment, it does not appear the pandemic has wreaked any particular financial havoc. We are in about the same place we have been. Which is to say our giving is sufficient to pay the costs that we are incurring and we are not dramatically draining our modest surplus. And we are continuing to pay our staff. This is good news.

However, as we have said before and will continue to say - our current level of giving will not prove sufficient when we begin to incur the expense of a pastor. This is an issue we will have to address, most likely sooner rather than later.

For now,

Blessings,

The Finance Team



I have a question for you all... How many of you had ever used Zoom or some other video chat before March, and how often? Now let me follow up that question by asking if you are all video chat experts at this point? There is no doubt that we as a people and individuals are beings stretched, not just to our wits end, but to learn new things and new ways to doing old things. In this time of social distancing we still need social interactions, and we have learned just how much value our social interactions hold to us. God created us to be in community, and as a Church that is at the center. But now, we have been placed outside of that box of normalcy and must still find a way to be in community.

Our Youth Ministry is no different, and for those of us who have teenagers, or remember being teenagers, community and friendship is everything! So, we have been brainstorming ways to be a community and be a support to our youth while we can not meet together at the church. And, as for many of us, Zoom has become our best friend. If you are not aware what Zoom is, it is a video chat software that allows for large groups to join a call together. RBC has been hosting Zoom calls for a Saturday Song service, Adult Selective Sunday school class, countless meetings and personal connections. Our RBC Youth has also been using Zoom to maintain our Youth group meeting time on Sunday nights. It looks a lot different than what Youth group used to look like, but it offers an anchor to our weeks. A time

we can get on a call together, share about our weeks, our highlights our struggles and just connect. But it also would not be youth ministry if we did not have some fun as well! We have been getting creative with some games that we can play over these calls. Things like crowd charades, scavenger hunts, and screen games all can work well and make for a fun Zoom call.

Unfortunately, we have also had to spend some time processing disappointments. Many of our exciting plans have been cancelled, including our Spring Retreat, and our Summer trip to Creation Music Festival. Our students themselves have had many exciting events and trips cancelled, and it is a challenge to adapt. We are all in this together and are looking for ways to hold each other up.

On top of all these Zoom meetings we hold, I have been a part of a weekly Zoom meeting with some regional American Baptist Youth workers. And in our time together we talk about creative ways in which we are reaching our youth, and what we can do when we ease out of this quarantine. It is an exciting challenge ahead of us, and new connections have been made in the midst of staying inside.

Do I wish that our youth group could meet together in one place? Of course! But I am confident that God finds a way to work, move, act and breathe into our lives, even when life gets turned upside down.

Hold each other up in prayer.

--Ryan Seckman

WHEN WE MEET AGAIN

Some thoughts by Reid Trulson

*When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.*

Baptists in many parts of the world sing the hymn composed by Rev. John Fawcett in 1782, “Blest Be the Tie That Binds.” Many of them know and sing all five verses. The fourth verse (quoted above) reflects today’s circumstances particularly well. The coronavirus pandemic has caused inward pain by isolating us in our homes apart from one another. Yet we remain joined in heart as we communicate by phone and internet, and we hope to meet again.

It may be a month or more before our county moves from the RED to YELLOW phase and places start to reopen. At least an additional month will then pass before we can enter the GREEN phase of general reopening. If new COVID-19 cases spike upwards during this process, our county will revert to the restrictions of an earlier phase. Health officials are advising us to reconsider all aspects of public gatherings as we reopen.

This is not the first time that major crises have led people of faith to re-think where and how to meet together.

Nearly two thousand years ago, the Jewish faith was uniquely focused on the temple in Jerusalem. About forty years after Jesus’ resurrection, the Romans attacked Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. With the temple in ruins, the Jewish people no longer had a place to conduct the worship and priestly acts of sacrifice. The crisis led them to re-think the conduct of their faith. Jewish worship changed from being temple-based to being text-based. Worship now centered in homes and syna-

gogues and focused on reading the scriptures and on prayer as sacrifice.

Almost seven hundred years ago, the bubonic plague ravaged Europe and led many Christians to reconsider the practice of their faith. The Church had taught that priests and church hierarchy were necessary mediators between people and God, but neither had been able to protect people from the plague. The crisis led to less reliance on priests partly due to a loss of confidence in the clergy and partly because almost 40% of the priests had died and replacements were not available. Some blamed their own sins for the plague and turned to extreme forms of asceticism. Others blamed the Jews. They beat, robbed and killed Jews or expelled them if they refused to convert. Today some believe that the crisis of the plague created an independence of thought that enabled the Protestant Reformation.

Just over one hundred years ago, health issues led many churches to rethink their practice of the Lord’s Supper. The work of Louis Pasteur in France (1850s and 60s) and Robert Koch in Germany (1880s) had combined to establish the theory that disease is transmitted by germs. Joseph Lister in England (1870s) had pioneered practices of sanitation against germs. Outbreaks of diphtheria and tuberculosis were a concern during that period, and a debate arose about the risk of transmitting disease by sharing a common cup during communion. The Scovill Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church of Cleveland, Ohio appears to have started the innovation when it used individual communion cups instead of a common cup for the Lord’s Supper on December 6, 1891. The practice spread rapidly among Protestant churches. By 1919 Royersford Baptist Church was also using individual glasses for communion.

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These are just three examples of many times that believers have rethought and re-shaped their practices of faith and worship.

So what will it be like when we are able to meet again?

None of us can provide that answer by ourselves. It's something we will need to pray about, discuss and discern together as a community of believers. Our answers may emerge in phases and be shaped in part by experimentation.

Jesus said we are to love God with all our heart, soul, MIND, and strength (Mark 12:30). This is a time to thoughtfully consider what it means to be the church. We have always said that we are the church and that our church building is but a tool. This pandemic is a proper time to learn how to be a congregation without congregating – to learn how to grow as a healthy, worshipping and ministering community even if we cannot gather for long periods of time.

I am neither a prophet nor a prophet's son. I do not know how long our isolation will last. What might it mean for us if the pandemic continues for several years rather than several months? What if a COVID-19 vaccine is discovered, but then the virus mutates or a totally different virus causes a new pandemic?

The RBC Leadership Council has voted that we should not resume our public worship services before our county reopens. We already know that when Montgomery County moves from the RED to YELLOW phase and starts to reopen, we will still need to practice social distancing. In the YELLOW phase, no groups larger than 25 people will be permitted to gather indoors

for any purpose, including worship, weddings and funerals. How would we decide who could come to a particular worship or event?

We know that people with no symptoms can still carry the virus and infect others. Health officials therefore say that in the YELLOW phase we may still need to wear masks and stand or sit six feet from one another. Congregations should not sing. Choirs should not rehearse together or sing in public. How should we share the Lord's Supper if even passing individual communion cups could infect our neighbor?

Should we change the way we greet each other at worship and elsewhere, knowing that shaking hands can transfer germs that cause disease, especially respiratory illnesses such as colds, flu and COVID-19? Should we adopt the Asian greeting of placing our palms together with a slight bow? Or is placing a hand over the heart with a polite smile and nod of the head a better cultural fit?

We must use mind, heart, spirit and strength to love God, to love our neighbor, and to reconsider how we shall meet again.



UPDATE ON COVID-19 IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

During this coronavirus pandemic, the Montgomery County (MONTCO) Commissioners are providing weekly webinars to advise clergy and other faith leaders. Reid Trulson is participating in those virtual meetings on behalf of RBC. The public can go online at <https://data-montcopa.opendata.arcgis.com/pages/covid-19> for MONTCO news releases and data updates.

As of 12:30 p.m. Thursday, April 30, Montgomery County had 4192 confirmed COVID-19 cases (up from 2313 last week, 1402 two weeks ago, 707 three weeks ago, 313 four weeks ago, 68 five weeks ago and 17 six weeks ago). There had been 275 related deaths in the County. The largest numbers of confirmed cases were in Lower Merion, Springfield, Cheltenham, and Abington Townships. (In our area, Lower Providence had 272 cases, Upper Providence had 140; Limerick had 43; Pottstown had 70; Colledgeville had 10; Royersford had 16.)

MONTCO is operating a COVID-19 test site at the Central campus of Montgomery County Community College on Mondays through Saturdays from 10 AM to 4 PM. Appointments must be made at www.montcopa.org/covid-19 or by calling 610-631-3000.

The site can test 250 people per day. At present, 14% of the people being tested daily are testing positive. This rate of infection appears to have reached a plateau and is not yet showing a decline.

Officials expect Montgomery County to reopen in coordination with Philadelphia, Delaware, Bucks and Chester Counties, even though other PA regions will reopen earlier. Each County will transition from RED to YELLOW to GREEN phases as they reopen. To move from RED to YELLOW and partially reopen, a county must have:

1. Fifty or less new daily cases per 100,000 residents within a 14 day period. (Based on MONTCO's population this equals 30 new daily cases in a 14 day period.)
2. Enough testing available for individuals with symptoms and target populations such as those at high risk, health care personnel, and first responders.
3. Robust case investigation and contact tracing infrastructure in place to facilitate early identification of cluster outbreaks and to issue proper isolation and quarantine orders.
4. Assurance that the area's high-risk settings including correctional institutions, personal care homes, skilled nursing facilities, and other congregate care settings have adequate safeguards in place such as staff training, employee screening, visitor procedures and screening, and adequate supplies of PPE to support continued operations.

There is no proven treatment or vaccine for COVID-19. Reports from Asia indicate that some COVID-19 survivors have again become infected. People with no symptoms can be carriers of the illness and infect others. Even in the YELLOW and GREEN phases of reopening, people will need to continue some forms of social distancing until a proven vaccine has been discovered and mass vaccinations can take place.

PASTORAL SEARCH TEAM UPDATE **AS OF APRIL 27, 2020**

Applicants

As you know, after our “back to the drawing board” announcement at the end of February, we are once again in the process of identifying potential candidates.

We have received a new batch of profiles from the American Baptist Personnel System (ABPS) and have identified 3 folks whom we have invited to further engagement; we expect to hear from them shortly. We have also identified one other ABC candidate who came to us from outside the ABPS, whom we have also invited to further engagement. For those who confirm interest, we will schedule Zoom interviews.

We are also finding that there may be ways to contact potential candidates outside of the ABPS; we continue to carefully explore those, as they are less formal.

In addition, we are adding interview questions that will give applicants an opportunity to share their insights on how the pandemic we’re all experiencing will/could/should affect the way we do (and be) ‘the church’.

What About An Interim?

On the subject of an interim, we will, along with the Leadership Council, continue to evaluate the need as the future unfolds. On the one hand, it’s clear that an interim would be a ‘focal point’ and presumably provide administrative assistance. On the other hand, we are not discerning an urgent need for this, at least for now. We are not having difficulties arranging for online preachers. Check out the RBC website <https://rbcabc.org>. With the able help of Lara and Alex Cifelli, Ryan Seckman, Janelle Trulson and a cadre of worship leaders, we are continuing to use and develop online worship resources. *If you want to participate in the online song and prayer service on Saturdays at 1 pm, and/or online Christian Ed on Sundays at 11 a.m.*, email laracifelli@gmail.com and she will send you a Zoom link.

We also have a group of 10 pastoral care volunteers who are making regular contact with *all of the families in the congregation* by email and/or phone – the feedback we are receiving is that this is working well.

If you or someone you know is in need of assistance, please either let your call team volunteer know or contact Terry Myers at the church office – rbcabc@rbcabc.org – 610.948.4170.

It’s our plan to continue to provide updates for you at least monthly. In the meantime if you have questions please contact either of the Pastoral Search Team co-chairs: Mark Hite – mrkhite@aol.com / 215.530.4352 or Bob Brownback – rabgto@gmail.com / 610.310.7504.



GRADUATE **RECOGNITION**

If you know anyone related to our church congregation who is graduating this spring, please notify the church office as soon as possible. You may call and leave a message, or send by email.

The Leadership Council has voted to continue to suspend public worship services at RBC until Montgomery County Commissioners approve reopening of public gatherings.

Online Worship at RBC

During the period of social distancing, RBC continues to offer worship experiences, educational opportunities and online resources to help people connect and continue on our missional pathway of worshiping God, building relationships, studying scripture, serving Christ, and undergoing transformation. [Click here to read more about RBC's Mission and Vision.](#)

Each Saturday afternoon at 1pm, we hold a live song service via Zoom* video conferencing. These services contain a variety of congregational and special music, prayer, scripture, inspirational word and sharing time. On May 2nd we also added the element of virtually sharing in the Lord's Supper. Participants in these services can choose their level of participation based on their comfort level within the online environment. (Some choose to have their camera on to connect visually with their RBC brothers and sisters, and others participate without sharing audio or visual so they can simply "tune in" or listen to the service from the comfort of their home.) People can submit specific song requests through the weekly song service participation form, which gets mailed out on Mondays and collected every Thursday. (Participation forms work best in the google chrome browser.) It has been a joy to connect and worship with RBC folk and also with brothers and sisters across the country who participate with us in this service!

Each weekend **we post a Sunday morning worship playlist.** You can find this on our [website under "Online Worship"](#) or on our [Facebook Page](#). The playlist contains an instrumental prelude, a message provided by special guest preachers, and song lyric videos supporting that week's theme.

On Sundays at 11am, we continue to offer our Adult education opportunities via Zoom* video conferencing. The April classes were a Bible study of "The Prophet Elijah" led by Reid Trulson. In May, our classes will be led by various members and special guests of RBC's Green Team. Weekly description of each class will be provided in our Monday church email as well as in the Wednesday *Midweek* newsletter. We request that those interested in participating fill out the weekly participation form. (Participation forms work best in the google chrome browser.)

Please note, these events and resources are not limited to RBC members! If you know people in your community or around the world who might benefit from or be interested in our online resources, please send their email address to Lara Cifelli, or forward them the participation forms.

*A word about Zoom video conferencing: Zoom on your computer or on your phone through the Zoom app are both free. Please contact laracifelli@gmail.com if you have questions about the technology or [click here for a brief tutorial pdf.](#)

Rev. Karen Selig will be bringing our recorded messages
for the five Sundays in May.



GREEN TEAM SUNDAY CLASSES

The Green Team will be leading the Adult Selectives Classes during the month of May. See the Midweek Reminders each week to register.

Our Earth is in trouble, and we can all help it. In fact, it is not really optional that we all need to be a part of helping our beautiful Earth, this incredible gift from God, in order for it to be able to continue to support all life. The Green Team has put together a five-week class to help us learn both the problems and the solutions.

Our first class, beginning May 3rd and led by Kay RolfsMassaglia, is focused on what is climate change, what effects it is having on our Earth, then what can we do about it.

Our second class will be presented by John Hite (isn't Zoom wonderful?) about plastics, both the prevention and the solution of too many toxic plastics in our lives.

Our third class, led by Mary Glassman, will have two topics - the problems caused by our addiction to paper, and solutions of how to use less, according to Mary's Grandma! The second half will be how to compost, led by George Reitnour.

The fourth class will be focused on food, led by Kay. From planning a more sustainable menu, to informed shopping decisions, to healthy cooking, to cleaning up wisely, storing safely, and throwing away intentionally. Each part of eating impacts the environment in a positive or negative way.

The fifth class in the original plan was to be a shared meal. So to try and recreate that, it will be a cooking demonstration which you can participate in from your home. Kay will be making homemade tortillas, refried black beans, and Mexican Rice. You will have a list of ingredients and can cook along with her. It will kind of be like sharing a meal.....sort of!

Anyhow, please join us for one or all five classes. You, too, can hop aboard the Environmental Express, and help heal the Earth through changing the simple actions of everyday life.

The Leadership Council is deeply appreciative of the devotion our staff members have demonstrated in making the effort to carry out their individual responsibilities during this difficult period of the COVID-19 crisis and the ensuing closure of the church building. We thank each of them:

Sharon Brownback

Alex Cifelli

Lara Cifelli

Danielle Crist

Bo Delano

Terry Myers

Ryan Seckman

RBC's ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE 2020

Moderator– Ken George

Vice Moderator– Bob Brownback

Clerk– Emily Parker

Treasurer– George Reitnour

Financial Secretary– Bernice Rogers

Education– Millie Collins

(Adult Education, RBC Kids, Church Nursery, RBC Nursery School, Vacation Bible School)

Worship– Janelle Trulson

(Choir, Communion, Drama, Hosts, Planning, Technology, Worship Leaders)

Spiritual Growth & Caring– Mark Hite

(Gifts Discovery, Small Groups, Social Event Planning, Women's Ministries)

Mission & Outreach– Reid Trulson

(ABC Missions, CROP, Evangelism, Hands-on-Worship, Mission Trips, RBC Players)

Administrative Support– vacant

(Buildings & Grounds, Kitchen Team, Finance/Business, Office Volunteers, Staff Relations, Website/Public Relations)

Youth Ministry– Charlie Denning

(Small Groups, Student Leadership, Summer Mission, After-School Program, Youth Group)

This list identifies RBC's administrative structure, including the Clusters for church activities, as well as the name of the individual who is responsible for those activities. These Cluster Facilitators help make up the Leadership Council. Please contact the appropriate Facilitator if you have questions, comments or needs. Most names, emails and phone numbers can be found in the church directory.

Additionally, during this in-between time until we select our new pastor, the following individuals have agreed to help meet our spiritual needs: Stan Murray, Jose Ortiz, Marcia Ricketts, Stan Slade, Cyndi & David Strosahl, Sarah Strosahl-Kagi and Reid Trulson.



JUNE

Jose Ortiz	1
Samuel Savage	8
Janelle Miller	15
Ron O'Neil	21
Maggie Hite	23
Amy Smith	28

MAY

Ginny Dearolf	10
Stephanie Ford	13
Allison Fisher	20
Jack Parker	21
Stan Murray	23
Lorri Engstrom	24
Norah Turley	24
Philip Covelli	28
Janelle Trulson	30
Helen Christman	31



Curt & Emily Parker	May 1
Guy & Megan Wescott	May 4
Grace Herstine & Philip Covelli	May 17
Bob & Ginny Dearolf	May 17
Charlie & Judy Denning	May 22

Stan & Cathy Slade	June 16
Ralph & Dolly Eichelberger	June 18
Paul & Sandi Rosenberry	June 27
Alex & Lara Cifelli	June 30

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

Royersford Baptist Church
452 S. Lewis Road
Royersford, PA 19468

Royersford Baptist Church (RBC)

Office - 610-948-4170

Email - rbcabc@rbcabc.org

Website - www.rbcabc.org

Staff:

Pastor -

Youth Director- Ryan Seckman

Worship Coordinator- Lara Cifelli

Choir Director- Sharon Brownback

Accompanist- Alex Cifelli

Administrative Assistant- Terry Myers

Interim Custodian- Bo Delano

Nursery School Director- Kristin
Christopher

***RBC is affiliated with American
Baptist Churches USA***

***(Office & Pastor's hours will
vary during COVID-19
closure)***

Office Hours:

**Monday through Friday,
9 am - 3 pm**

Youth Pastor's Hours:

Monday Off

Tuesday 11 am – 3 pm

Wednesday 9 am – 2 pm

Thursday 11 am – 3 pm

Friday 11 am – 3 pm

If these times don't work for you,
please call the office. We will help
you schedule an appointment at a
time convenient for you.

Sunday Schedule

9:30 am – Worship

10:10 am – RBC Kids

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 differ-
ence in the Kingdom of
God.

