



The Vine

News, Information and Inspiration from Royersford Baptist Church
Volume 51/Issue 6 November/December 2020





A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

One of my favorite Christmas carols is “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day.” The words, taken from a poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, reflect a somber and melancholy approach to the Christmas season. Longfellow wrote the poem during the American Civil War, lamenting how one could hear the bells of Christmas amidst such pain and turmoil.

*And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"*

This year, many of us might be feeling similarly to Longfellow. Our holiday season will undoubtedly look different- family gatherings cancelled, travel on hold, masked visits, no caroling. Through a global pandemic, political turmoil, and our own personal storms, it may be hard to hear the joyous sounds of Christmas bells.

In our despair as we bow our heads, let us remember that first Christmas two thousand years ago, when there were no bells. There was no caroling, no big family gatherings, no presents under the tree. Just a baby in a manger, and a renewed hope for humankind.

Yes, this season will look different and may have moments of sadness; but in it, may we remember the Christmas message that has - and will- remain constant. Like Longfellow, may we find renewed hope in the bells that *will* peal despite the trials and tribulations of this world.

*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men."*

My prayer for all of us in this holiday season is that we would hear the bells more loudly and deeply than ever before.

Peace,
Pastor Sarah



It is clear that we have moved on from temporary placeholder ministries and worship services, to a little bit more intentional and long-term solutions during this pandemic. This is both sad and exciting. We never thought that 7 months would go by and we would still be having this conversation, but we all have come to the point where we realize that we cannot just pause living fully. That being said... there are still obvious limitations that we have and are adjusting and adapting accordingly to maintain safe social distance protocols and show love by respecting those protocols. We have had many successes in our online presence, through Zoom, our website, Facebook and YouTube which will be something we can carry with us beyond this pandemic time, and in many ways, we have gotten to know each other better through those sources, which is exciting. But it is still coated a bit in sadness as we miss high fives, and hugs, and being surrounded by our church community. Pastor Sarah said it best in one of her sermons recently (depending on when you are reading this article) that we as humans are capable of being both happy and sad at the same time...

Our Youth ministry has also been going through that same mix of feelings over these

past seven months. Through trial and error on placeholder ministries, and just missing each other and the goofy games we used to play. We are excited to say that we have started a couple of small group ministries that are meeting weekly at the church, in the fellowship hall. This is both exciting and sad. We are thrilled to be able to meet, and have something we can be a part of in person and to get us out of the house... but it is not the same as our full group meetings with the games we have grown to love over the years, and the singing that we shared. So, as we still mourn some of those things we crave, we can also be filled with joy that YES... WE ARE BACK! It doesn't look the same, but we are back, and we are having conversations and we are in person! We have to be creative with our games and activities because we still practice social distance protocols, but it sure beats sitting at home!

So, RBC, let us celebrate this little joy in the midst of the hardship and sadness we have been through. And if you know of a kid from 6th-12th grade that would like to be a part of one of our small groups, get them connected with me or our main office, and we will get them in here!

Ryan Seckman



Advent and Christmas at RBC

Our building might be closed, but RBC is still active! We are excited for these opportunities to connect, worship, and celebrate during Advent and Christmas. Mark these special events on your calendar!

Royersford Churches in Action Advent Prayer

Sunday, November 29 at 4:30PM (rain/snow date December 6)

Main Street, Royersford (near the borough sign, below the Pink Moose Cafe)

Join with other Royersford churches for an Advent Prayer Time. Please wear a mask and practice social distancing as we gather with our fellow Christians for a time of prayer and reflection to start the season of Advent!

Family Photos at Church

Saturday, November 28 from 11-3 (Please sign up for a time by calling or emailing the church office)

Are you going to miss having family photos taken at the church? Come by for a socially distant photo session! We will have a photographer taking photos outside the church in a beautifully seasonally decorated space. You must sign up for a time slot and practice social distancing (masks must be worn at all times except when smiling for your photo!).

“Christmas at Home” Bag

This will include materials to help you stay focused on the reason for the season as we continue to worship from home. The worship team is assembling one for each RBC household. You can pick your bag up at the church on Saturday November 28 between 11-3, or someone will deliver it to your house.

Thursday Night Virtual Potlucks

Every Thursday in Advent (December 3, 10, 17) we will gather on Zoom for fellowship and a meal. Bring Your Own Potluck and join us for an informal time together!

Blue Christmas

Monday, December 21 at 7:00PM

This brief, contemplative worship service is for those of us sitting with grief this season. Christmas can be a hard time to not feel joyous. Join with us as we sit with the darkness that is part of this season.

Christmas Eve Virtual Worship

December 24 6:30PM on Zoom

Gather 'round for Christmas Eve worship, including our Virtual Christmas Pageant and the RBC family singing Silent Night. You won't want to miss it!

Special Music

If you'd like to sing or play an instrument for our Sunday worship services, let Lara know. A simple recording on a smartphone will work fine!

Retired
Ministers &
Missionaries
Offering
2020

Hope for Today Hope for Tomorrow



Expressing Gratitude in 2020. Gratitude is a surprising source of health as we live through the coronavirus pandemic. Gratitude helps to provide needed balance while experiencing serious disruption in our lives. Our perspective on many things is healed as we act to express gratefulness to God and to those who have brought blessing to our lives and world. The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) is a tangible act by which we express gratitude to retired American Baptist pastors, missionaries and staff who have served us and the Lord. Their ministries have helped to give us the hope we have for today and tomorrow. Our gifts to RMMO are transformed into a “Thank You” check sent to these men and women on our behalf. RBC will once again receive this offering throughout December. You may give online, by text, by mailing your gift or bringing it to the church office during business hours. Checks should be payable to RBC with “RMMO” in the memo.

“Thankfulness may consist merely of words. Gratitude is shown in acts.”
Henri Frederic Amiel



INSTALLATION SERVICE

FOR PASTOR SARAH

*Sunday, November 15, 2020
at 9:30 a.m.*

We'll be dedicating our 9:30 Zoom service on November 15th as the installation service for our new pastor, Sarah Strosahl-Kagi! Please plan to be present to welcome Sarah in this special way.

Oftentimes these services involve laying hands on the new pastor as a sign of blessing. Since we will be virtual, you're invite to trace your hand on a piece of paper, write your name on it, and mail it or drop it off at the church office before November 11th. We'll be making a string of “hands” that will be on display as part of the installation service. Feel free (but not obligated) to be creative in your presentation!



FROM THE GREEN TEAM THE HOLIDAYS ARE COMING!

As Halloween approaches, it feels like we are sitting on the top of a roller coaster that is about to begin its descent. The holidays are here, and with them come many joys but potentially much stress. How can this year be different? Wait a minute, it already is. There's the pandemic, taking away many of our usual traditions, including some of the ones most sacred to us, the ones that kept us centered on Christ. More panic. More stress. How do we make it joyful while honoring the Earth and keeping Christ the center? Our first line of action could be to take a deep breath and calm down. Let's sit for a moment with the question – what are the non-negotiables? What do we HAVE to have to keep our holidays meaningful? We might all be surprised by our list. When I moved to Cleveland, the first Christmas was SO different. I wrote out a list of 10 activities that I normally did which made Christmas feel like, well, Christmas. I was grieving the losses, but soon found that new traditions in the Cleveland church rose up and made it feel special in a completely different way. I wonder if that is going to happen here, this year. What is taken away? Large parties and gatherings with friends and family. Concerts that took our breath away. Going to the city to experience Philly at its finest. Parades and public ceremonies. Dressing up! And, mostly, worshipping together in person throughout both holidays. So, what can rise up and still help us to honor both the Earth and Christ throughout the weeks to come? We can promote Peace on Earth, both at home and abroad, through acts of concern. We can go on Nature Hikes, (with a nature scavenger hunt for the kiddos), plan a Nature Restoration (such as plant a tree), or make edible decorations for our outdoor animal friends. We can plan a simpler menu for our festive meals with local, organic, and even a few plant based dishes (see Kay for ideas!). But the hardest of all is how to replace our in-person gatherings. Here's where our new pastor and planning team have already gone to work with their creative ideas about how to gather virtually. Even though it feels very different, it can still be very meaningful. And, perhaps, just perhaps, it will help us to focus on Christ this holiday season in a whole new way. Perhaps these will become part of our new traditions, even after we return to "normal". After taking that deep breath, let us watch, as God will again rise up, and guide us into a rich, meaningful holiday season which keeps Christ at the center. God hasn't changed, even if our celebrations have. And that, my friends, is the Great Good News.

When contacting Pastor Sarah, please use the following information:

Email: pastorsarah@rbcabc.org

Mobile phone: 484-366-1155 Church phone: 610-948-4170

**The church office will be closed from December 24 through
January 3. Regular hours will resume on
Monday, January 4, 2021.**

RBC Virtual Book Club



RBC Virtual Book Club CHANGES!!

This December may not have the usual festivities and commitments, but the members of the book club decided we need a shorter book that month. So we're changing our schedule of books!

NOV. 16: *King Leopold's Ghost* (416 pages) is a story of greed, terror and heroism in Colonial Africa.

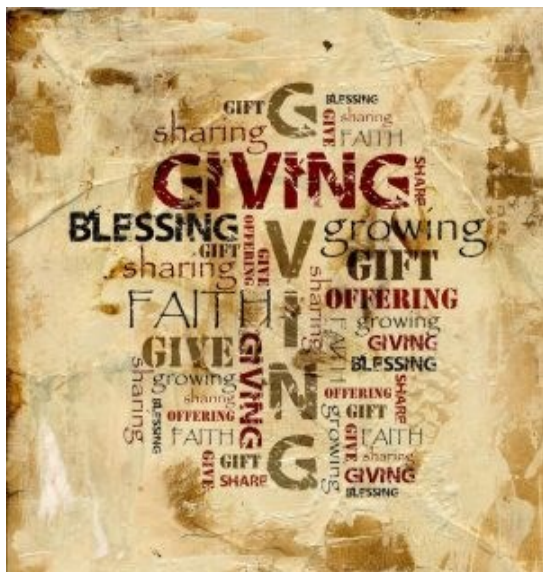
DEC. 17: *Rules for Visiting* (302 pages) is an award winning best seller that's "Fun, hilarious and extremely touching."

JAN. 21: *The Gentleman of Moscow* (466 pages) Historical Russian fiction set in 1922 about an unrepentant aristocrat of the Bolshevik Revolution who is ordered to spend the rest of his life inside a luxury hotel.

If you'd like to join our lively discussions, please send an email to K26mason@gmail.com and you'll receive a Zoom invitation. We meet on the THIRD Thursday of the month at 7:00pm

TRAINING & SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

RBC offers compelling opportunities for church members to receive training and experience in positions of responsibility in managing an organization with substantial income and assets. One of these positions is RBC's chief financial officer: the Treasurer. Three current members of the church have served in this capacity: Nancy O'Neil, Weege Neifer and George Reitnour. This elected position will once again be open to candidates as of our next Annual Meeting in January, 2021. Learn how to use Quickbooks, Excel, on-line payroll services, on-line giving services, and add this experience to your resume while serving the church in a meaningful way in the comfort of your own home. If you are interested, please contact George Reitnour at 610-935-1040 (or reitnour@reitnour.com) to find out more details.



RBC members support one another and their community through the church in times of need. Gifts from members have built up RBC's **Fellowship Fund**, which supports needy members of the church community, to the point where we now have well over \$11,000 available for such grants. In addition, our **Loan Guarantee Fund** (providing loans to church members in need) exceeds \$25,000. Members also give through RBC to Project Outreach's Food Pantry and to ABC ministries. This is a testament to the generosity of RBC members. Do not forget, though, that RBC staff and facilities costs can be covered only through gifts to RBC's **General Fund**. Gifting to RBC's General Fund must increase substantially, and soon, if RBC is to continue supporting its missions, from the nursery school, to youth programs, to worship and outreach. Gifts can be made on-line or by text (see RBC's website for the link) or by checks mailed or delivered to RBC. Email George (reitnour@reitnour.com) with any questions.

What's happening at RBCNS?

Mrs. Moffa and Mrs. Amit have been working hard with our virtual program. The kids are easily adjusting to being on the computer and we are having a lot of fun! In September we talked about school, apples, buses, and started our letters. We also had our two social meetups, sidewalk chalk and lunch with the teacher. In October, we had a lot of fun with fire safety in Pre-K and sharing with our friends on the computer, while the 2s and 3s are having show and tell and doing lots of Fall crafts! Our first social meetup was pumpkin painting and our second one of the month was our Halloween parade. If you are interested in learning more about our program please reach out to the director, Melissa Moffa at director@rbcns.org. Kids are still welcome join in our fun!



Fire Safety—
Stop, Drop and Roll



Social Meetup—
Pumpkin Painting



Show-and-Tell
Paw Patrol



St. Mary's
Franciscan Shelter
for Homeless Families

RBC's turn to supply dinners for the residents of St. Mary's Shelter is November 16 through 20, 2020. A main dish, vegetable, bread and dessert to feed 12 people are needed each day, as well as a driver to take the food to the shelter by 4:30 pm each day.

Contact Terry in the RBC office to sign up. You can call her at 610-948-4170 or send an email to rbcabc@rbcabc.org. Your help in providing a delicious, warm meal is very much appreciated!



NOVEMBER

Margaret Clevestine	9
Phillip Hinostroza	12
Stan Slade	16
Shawn Turley	19
Krystal McLaughlin	21
Charlie Denning	25

DECEMBER

Tonya MacCoy	2
Kiera Phillips	4
Ralph Eichelberger	5
Carol Francis	7
Rachel Fisher	12
Logan Savage	22
Jeff Bedford	25
Martha McDaniel	31



Roger & Deb Savage
Nov. 3

Bradley & Molly Moser
Nov. 3

Ron & Nancy O'Neil
Nov. 22

Gene & Amy Wheeler
Dec. 17

Del & Lorri Engstrom
Dec. 20

Peter & Joy Dramby
Dec. 28

Mark & Karen Hite
Dec. 29

Shawn & Tonya MacCoy
Dec. 29

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

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

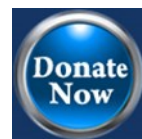
Custodian-
Danielle Crist

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