



The Vine

News, Information and Inspiration from Royersford Baptist Church
Volume 51/Issue 5 September/October 2020

welcome

Welcoming Our New Pastor, Sarah Strosahl-Kagi!

Please join your Friendly Local Pastoral Search Team in welcoming our new pastor, Sarah Strosahl-Kagi, whose ministry among us begins officially on September 1, 2020! Sarah, her husband Josh, and their children Asher and Ellie are already part of the RBC community, but Sarah's new work among us will still constitute a big change for them. As we welcome Sarah in her new official capacity, we offer some suggestions for welcoming our new pastor – these were collected from a variety of different sources:

- Pray for Sarah and her family
- Send a “welcome” email to PastorSarah@rbcabc.org
- Send cards of welcome – you can send those care of the church office
- Embrace her uniqueness
- Be prepared to follow
- Set realistic expectations; give her time to get her footing
- Give her permission to fail
- Only talk about her in a positive light, both publicly and privately
- Lead with grace – Sarah won't know what are the RBC “sacred cows” – do we have those??
- Don't offer a million suggestions!
- Don't compare her to previous pastors!

You may think of other ways to welcome Sarah aboard – let's let the warmth of the Spirit be abundant among us!

A LETTER FROM OUR NEW PASTOR



I write this- my first article for The Vine!- from the comforts of a 14 day quarantine. Our family was exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID19, forcing us into a strict quarantine to stop any more potential spread. Thankfully, we've received negative test results, but recommendations are that we continue to quarantine for the full 14 days. This was not what I had planned for the month of August.

None of this is what any of us had planned. No one planned to have a global pandemic; no one planned to be social distancing for months on end; no one planned to miss graduations, weddings, funerals, friends, and family. But here we are.

I'm reminded of Mary, Jesus' mother. Mary experienced her own series of plans disrupted. She did not plan to get pregnant out of wedlock or to have a baby in a manger. I may not embrace these changes as well as Mary did, but like Mary, I am comforted by Emmanuel. The very name means God is with us.

God is with us through plans disrupted, through losses, and through our grief. God is with us despite social distancing and quarantine restrictions. God is with us as we continue to discover what a new normal might be.

I doubt that when Mary called her baby, "Emmanuel" she could have imagined that in the year 2020 we would be interpreting that as God is with us in Zoom and YouTube, across distances and between masked faces. But I know Mary would agree- God is with us. Whether in a manger or in a zoom call, God is with us. And that is something we can plan on.

I look forward to what our plans- and disruptions- will bring to us here at RBC.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Sarah

When contacting Pastor Sarah, please use the following information:

Email: pastorsarah@rbcabc.org

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

Some thoughts by Reid Trulson

*For the beauty of the earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies,
Lord of all to thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.*

It was likely a sunny day in that part of England, not an oppressive sun driving him to seek the shade, but a cleansing light heightening the greens of the fresh spring grass waving in the wind around him as he sat on the hill above the silver blue Avon River shimmering below. Even if the day differed somewhat from my imagination, the sight clearly moved the man to praise the One who had fashioned such beauty. Then it led him, Folliott S. Pierpoint, to share this inspiration with others by fashioning the poem (above) that was set to music and became a hymn that, across the Atlantic, we still sing in worship today.

Elsewhere in Europe, I was led to a very old Orthodox church building that had once housed a living, worshipping congregation. Then the Soviet communists determined to rid the nation of religion and forcibly closed the church. The building's interior was stripped bare and the icons scraped from the walls. Everything but a portion of one icon escaped the purge. It was the image of an angel, one of two that had stood pointing into an empty tomb. The communists walked away having accomplished their goal, leaving behind the naked shell of a building with gaping doorways through which cows or other creatures would occasionally enter. Throughout the decades that followed, local believers would also enter the neutralized structure. There they could gaze at the beautiful though fading image and quietly say to each other, "Yet He is still risen!"

A winding English river and the remnant of a wall painting – both of these things of beauty drew peoples' thoughts to God. Although Protestant Christians have tended to give it little attention, there seems to be a connection between beauty and our relationship to God. The author of Ecclesiastes seems to suggest this in saying "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11) Malkhaz Songulashvili, the Baptist bishop of Tbilisi in the Republic of Georgia, speaks of an "apostolate of beauty." An apostle is a person sent on a mission to communicate the message of God's love. Similarly, an "apostolate" can be fulfilled when individuals are sent to communicate that message through inten-

tional actions such as social service, prophetic work for peace and justice, care for creation, ministries of reconciliation, healing, worship and the arts.

For several months, many in our congregation have recognized that this pandemic may be creating new opportunities for us in worship and ministries. Leadership Council is actively considering recommendations for ways to safely resume in-person worship. One proposed action is to facilitate proper social distancing in the sanctuary by temporarily moving the pews into Fellowship Hall and placing the padded sanctuary chairs throughout the sanctuary 6' apart for the seating of individuals, couples or families. This recommendation creates the opportunity to maximize our space for socially distanced use.

The recommendation could also create something else – the opportunity to exercise the apostolate of beauty.

In the July/August issue of *The Vine*, I quoted the apostle Paul's words, "Whatever is lovely...think about such things" (Philippians 4:8) and invited us to imagine how bold new expressions of beauty might enhance and inspire our worship. Would new configurations of space in the sanctuary enable us to more closely encounter various forms of beauty (works of art such as floral arrangements, paintings, draping of fabrics, candles, sculpture, carvings, and more)? Might we more deeply commune with our risen Lord and one another by moving the Lord's Table with the communion bread and cup off the front platform and into our midst? Could we imagine local artists displaying their work in the Narthex and sanctuary expressing specific themes? Might we celebrate a profusion of energy through colorful pictures created by children – our own and those of the RBC Nursery School?

The "apostolate of beauty" is far different than simply "decorating the church." Intentionality is required for beauty to fulfill the mission of communicating God's love. Visual elements introduced into specific worship services will fulfill their mission only as they serve and enhance the other elements of worship, potentially even communicating through the eyes that which is not perceived through the ears.

Has the Holy Spirit given you a spiritual gift that can express itself through beauty and the arts? Spiritual gifts are not given simply for personal enjoyment. Every such gift is intended to build up the body of Christ. Might we discover the unique mission of beauty when we meet again?

Artists arise!



RBC YOUTH

What can I say... this summer has not been one that our RBC Youth will remember fondly. We are used to doing so many fun things in the sun, at the church, away on a trip and ultimately together. But as we have had many newsletters now to process these current times in quarantine and social distancing, I really wanted to focus on something positive and joyful!

As we all know, and are all very excited for, we have picked a new pastor for RBC! And in that process, we had a week where we all had opportunities to meet Sarah and ask questions and ultimately get excited about what is to come. Our Youth group hosted a social distant meet and greet that we called "S'mores with Sarah" where we set up a fire pit in the church parking lot, brought our masks and camping chairs, and spent two hours together, playing silly games, asking questions, and of course eating S'mores. Don't let the simplicity of this little event

fool you... this was a big deal. Our Youth group at this point had not officially met in any capacity (in person) since March, and while we had been hosting zoom calls and staying connected the best that we could, I frankly wasn't sure how many youth we would get to come to this event. But for all of those same reasons I was unsure we would get youth to come, we had a great turn out of 20 youth to show up!

This event was uplifting in so many ways, for many people. And while we did not get to do much this Summer as a youth group, and we continue to navigate safely through our decisions to meet in person. I am choosing to focus on this joy.

In addition to this, please keep all our Youth and those that work in the schools in prayer, as they begin this new school year.

-Ryan Seckman

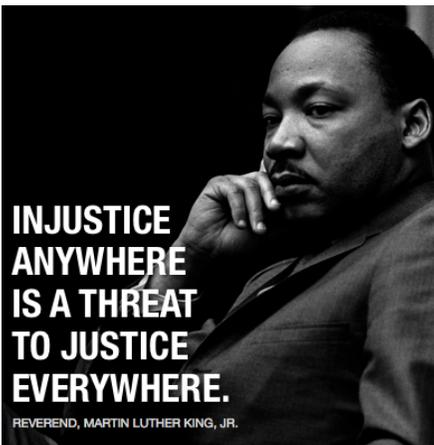


WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

Join the Adult Education Class on **Sunday, September 13 at 11:00 a.m.** where we will be thoughtfully and prayerfully reflecting on ideas and themes for upcoming Saturday Song Services.

The group will move through a brainstorming activity via Zoom breakout rooms.

What you can do to prepare: Bring a song, scripture, reading, poem, artwork, photo, or just a word that is meaningful to you. OR just show up ready to listen, think, and discuss!



Online Worship & Adult Education At RBC

As we continue to social distance, don't forget about our weekly Zoom events:

- **Saturday Worship Song Service** at 1:00pm on Zoom
- **Sunday Morning YouTube Worship Playlist** posted at 7:00am on Facebook or the church website
- **Sunday Sermon Facebook Premiere** at 9:30am on Facebook
- **Sunday Sermon Talkback** at 10:00am on Zoom
- **Sunday Adult Selectives Class** at 11:00am on Zoom
- **Sunday Youth Group** (6th-12th grade) Meet at 6:30pm on Zoom

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 them the participation form links sent in the Midweek newsletters.

**A word about Zoom video conferencing: Zoom on your computer or on your smartphone through the Zoom app are both free. Please contact laracifelli@gmail.com if you have questions about this technology.*

ADULT SELECTIVES SERIES: COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE

Sunday Mornings at 11:00 a.m. beginning September 20th

On September 20th, RBC's Adult Education Class will begin a six session course entitled *Courageous Conversations about Race*. This will be a follow up to the work we did several years ago.

The classes on **September 20th and 27th** will review some of that work. We will learn some terminology and history and get more comfortable participating in discussions, and those who participated before will be able to refresh their understandings and look a little deeper at their own racial experiences.

Classes on **October 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th** will move us toward anti-racism, putting our beliefs into action, and building our "toolbox" as we become anti-racists in our communities and world.

We hope you will join us!

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.



Dear Friends,

We all find ourselves this spring and summer living through very uncertain times. As followers of Jesus Christ, sometimes the best response we can give in the face of overwhelming unknowns is to take the time to remember how each of us has experienced and known God's faithfulness in the past.

International Ministries has only been able to participate in the mission of God for the past 206 years because of God's faithfulness. God has allowed us to serve him through two world wars, the Spanish Flu, the Great Depression, 9/11, the 2008 recession, and so many other times of distress, upheaval, and loss around the world.

In each of these crises, it was not always obvious what God was up to or where God's hand was at work. In John 11, when Jesus reaches the tomb of Lazarus and meets Mary and Martha after Lazarus' death, the sisters are both saddened, saying "if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Yet, even this sad statement held a clear expression of trust and hope in Jesus.

When confronted with uncertainty, we who follow

Jesus have the opportunity to respond with faith. My prayer for you is that you are able to trust Jesus to make clear in God's time the things that perplex you during this pandemic.

This year's World Mission Offering theme is "I once was blind, but now I see." We are seeing God at work in so many hopeful and encouraging ways through our global servants and global partners. Now more than ever, your participation will help global servants and partners rebuild and re-establish ministries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and crisis.

I urge you to consider prayerfully how your faithful giving and prayers could be used by God at this moment to impact the lives of many in need of him around the world today... until it is on earth as it is in heaven.

Gratefully,

Sharon Koh
Executive Director / CEO

American Baptist International Ministries

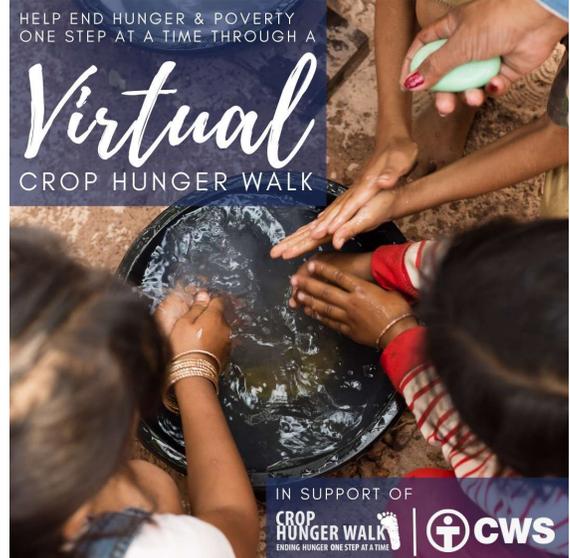


FROM THE GREEN TEAM

According to Sustainable America, there is a way we can save gas, save money, and save the planet. It also makes us healthier and smarter. It doesn't take any time at all, once we are educated about what we are doing. What is this wonderful step we can take every day, to do all these good things? We can Idle No More. The movement called "I Turn It Off" encourages us to turn our vehicle off, any time we are going to idle for more than 10 seconds. You read that right. Ten seconds. It says that we waste more gas than we use, if we leave our vehicle on beyond 10 seconds. Perhaps this is something that you have never thought about. So, when do we do it? This idling happens in the most subtle places: drive-thrus, driveways, banks, car washes, schools, train stations and train tracks, malls, and bridges, even stop lights that you know are long. Think about that for a minute. If you idle 5 minutes warming up your car (30 seconds is all that is needed), and 3 minutes at a bank drive through, and 4 minutes checking messages on your phone sitting in some driveway, then you have idled for 12 minutes that day. That adds up to 73 hours of idling a year, equaling 25 gallons of gasoline wasted. If you include all Americans, that adds up to 3.8 million gallons of gas wasted everyday with just personal vehicles. It also means 12 million gallons of gas wasted every day with all vehicles. And it's such an easy fix! The money we would save in gas alone would be over \$14 million. It is actually illegal to idle in many areas. Just the act of eliminating personal vehicle idling would be like taking 6 million cars off the road. The vehicle exhaust from all this idling is linked to an increase in asthma, allergies, heart and lung disease, and cancer. Even children exposed to higher levels of vehicle exhaust in utero have lower IQ's by age 5. It is also good for your engine, since excessive idling can damage it. Be a good example to others, modeling and talking about what such a simple act can do to help in so many ways. You can go to ITURNITOFF.COM and officially sign a pledge. Or you can do it right here and now:

"I Pledge to idle for no longer than 10 seconds when I am not in traffic".

There! That wasn't so hard, was it? It's such a simple way that we can all be part of helping, not hurting, our beautiful Earth.



The CROP Walk is virtual, but the need could not be more real!

CROP Hunger Walk is here again! Taking place virtually for our Spring Ford community on Sunday, October 18, 2020. RBC is ready to participate as usual, but due to the current pandemic situation, it's happening in a new way! To keep everyone safe and healthy, Walks are going virtual – either walking alone, with immediate family or in small groups walking a safe distance apart.

The work of Church World Service and our local food pantry, Project Outreach, continues. 25% of the monies collected stay local, and the rest is distributed around the world where hunger affects millions of people. With the possibility of a global famine on the horizon, raising money for vulnerable people is needed more now than ever.

Join us – virtually - as we continue our shared commitment to stand up for the poor, the forgotten, those left behind. The CROP Hunger Walks this past Spring were down nearly \$1 million. It is urgent that this Fall we continue to raise funds to provide permanent solutions to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster.

Checks can be made payable to CWS-Crop and be mailed to RBC or brought by the office on weekdays between 9 am and 3 pm.

RBC Virtual Book Club



What do these things have in common? Ice hockey, the social services system, the Belgian Congo in the 1880s and a Russian aristocrat under house arrest. They are all topics in upcoming selections of the RBC Book Club. You are invited to join us for lively discussions that add insight into each book we read. We meet on Zoom at 7:00pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month. Join in whenever you can! Let us know about the great books you're reading – we're always looking for suggestions. Send an email to K26mason@gmail.com to receive the Zoom invite. Here are our upcoming books to read.

For September 17th

Beartown by Frederick Backman

Beartown is a tiny community with a junior ice hockey team that is about to compete in the national semi-finals. That team is the reason people believe tomorrow will be better than today. But that match is the catalyst for a violent act that will leave the town in turmoil. Accusations are made, and like ripples on a pond, they travel through all of Beartown, leaving no resident unaffected. This novel explores the hopes that bring a small community together, the secrets that tear it apart, and the courage it takes for an individual to go against the grain.

For October 15th

Closer Than You Know by Brad Parks

Disaster is always closer than you know. It was a lesson Melanie Barrick learned the hard way growing up in the constant upheaval of foster care. But now that she's survived into adulthood—with a loving husband, a steady job, and a beautiful baby boy named Alex—she thought that turmoil was behind her. Until she goes to pick up Alex from childcare only to discover he's been removed by Social Services. And no one will say why. Her nightmare grows worse when she arrives home to learn her house has been raided by sheriff's deputies, who have found enough cocaine to send Melanie to prison for years. The attorney assigned to Melanie's case has her own troubles, among them a cold case of a serial rapist who has victimized dozens of women, including Melanie. Yet now her attacker might be the key to her salvation... or her undoing.

For November 19th

King Leopold's Ghost by Adam Hochschild

In the 1880s, King Leopold II of Belgium seized for himself the vast and mostly unexplored territory surrounding the Congo River. He looted its rubber, brutalized its people, and ultimately slashed its population by ten million--all the while shrewdly cultivating his reputation as a great humanitarian. Heroic efforts to expose these crimes eventually led to the first great human rights movement of the twentieth century, in which everyone from Mark Twain to the Archbishop of Canterbury participated. King Leopold's Ghost is the haunting account of a megalomaniac of monstrous proportions, a man as cunning, charming, and cruel as any of the great Shakespearean villains. It is also the deeply moving portrait of those who fought Leopold: a brave handful of missionaries, travelers, and young idealists who went to Africa for work or adventure and unexpectedly found themselves witnesses to a holocaust.

For December 17th

A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles

He can't leave his hotel. You won't want to. In 1922, Count Alexander Rostov is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, and is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin. Rostov, an indomitable man of erudition and wit, has never worked a day in his life, and must now live in an attic room while some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history are unfolding outside the hotel's doors. Unexpectedly, his reduced circumstances provide him entry into a much larger world of emotional discovery. Brimming with humor, a glittering cast of characters, and one beautifully rendered scene after another, this singular novel casts a spell as it relates the count's endeavor to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a man of purpose.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ROYERSFORD BAPTIST CHURCH NURSERY SCHOOL???

On September 9th RBCNS will not have their halls filled with excitement of the children coming to school for the first time. Although we are disappointed, our teachers will still be in the classroom, behind a computer, but just as excited to see our students on the other side of the screen. While being a virtual preschool may not be ideal, both Mrs. Moffa and Mrs. Amit are very excited about the program that we have created. We have been working very hard to make sure that the children will enjoy their preschool years. Our program is offering zooms, pre-recorded crafts and every other week social meetups!! Craft supplies will be provided to each child and will be dropped off by our school board so parents do not have to worry about collecting supplies for their child. While some schools are postponing the opening of their preschool, or worse, not opening at all for the school year, RBCNS has been thinking out of the box to create this virtual program! We still have a very limited amount of spaces in our virtual program, so if you or someone you know is looking for something for their child to do, send them our way. Take a look at the RBCNS Virtual Preschool flyer below for more information. RBCNS director, Melissa Moffa, can be reached by email: director@rbcns.org or call 610-948-4584 with any questions or to register a child today!

RBCNS GOES VIRTUAL

Live Instruction

- Teacher-led circle time, share session, story-time, a song, & class interaction
- M, W, F Sessions
- 2 Classes
 - 9am: PreK & PreK+
 - 10am: 2/3's & 3s

Recorded Craft

- 3 pre-recorded crafts by YOUR teacher *each week*
- ALL SUPPLIES provided directly to your home weekly
- Complete on your own-time

Social Time*

- Bi-weekly meetups offered for each class!
- Participation is always optional and at your family's comfort level
- Create some sidewalk chalk pictures, nature walks, bring your bike to school day, and more...
- Siblings welcome! (small material fee may apply)

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact:
Director Melissa Moffa
director@rbcns.org or
(610) 948-4584



*All in-person events will follow the RBCNS Health and Safety Plan and will need a parent/guardian to attend



CARRY OUT HOPE IS RETURNING ON JULY 13TH!

Pick up lunch to go- Mondays from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Royersford United Methodist Church is offering free carry-out lunches, in partnership with the Ridge Pike/Lewis Road Wawa, Royersford Wawa and Fiorenza's Food for Friends. Lunches will include a sandwich, chips, fruit, and bottled water. We invite you to come to the glass doors at the lobby entrance on Church Street to collect your lunches.

Volunteers will bag your choice of items for you. In these unprecedented times, we are returning to support our community.

FREE Take-Out

**Sandwiches
Courtesy of Wawa**

**Sides and
Beverages
Included**

All Are Welcome

**Reopening
Monday, July 13,
2020**

**We'll see you
again soon!**

Royersford UMC

380 Church St.
Royersford, PA

610-948-4507

www.royersfordumc.org





Steven & Beth Smith	Sept. 12
Scott & Nancy Ritchie	Sept. 23
Ryan & Danielle Crist	Sept. 25
Mickey & Becky McDaniel	Oct. 22
Linnie & Sandy Smoyer	Oct. 24



SEPTEMBER

Sharon Brownback	11
Mark Hite	11
Dallas Schurr	12
Millie Collins	16
Karen Hite	17
Mary Glassman Jones	20

OCTOBER

Lara Cifelli	4
Emma Trulson	14
Gene Wheeler	21
Becky McDaniel	25
Ryan Crist	30

New Address!



Margaret Clevensine has moved to a new room:

Sanatoga Court
 225 Evergreen Road, Room 125-A
 Pottstown, PA 19464
 New phone number:
 610-327-6598

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