



2021

From Our Pastor...

Buffalo Valley Lutheran Parish

OUR ENTRANCE INTO GOD'S FUTURE: 2021

As we prepare to enter into a new calendar year with anticipation and hope, particularly after a difficult and challenging year past, may we be able to see and experience God's presence and purpose throughout the world. Even as COVID-19 continues to make itself present in devastating ways, may we continue to walk in faith as we direct our attention and prayers to God and God's ways of grace and mercy, healing and love in and through Christ Jesus. For in Christ, we have come to believe that God is with us, directing the world in which we inhabit in the path of righteousness and the fullness of life towards eternal peace. To recognize such, begins with a new way of looking, a way of "seeing" that casts off the doubts and indifferences that emerge from the troublesome aspects experienced in life, that move in a direction apart from hope. This "new" way of seeing begins with a directional turn towards God's promises and presence, in short, repentance.

As did John the Baptist, Jesus began his public ministry by saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (or "is at hand"). To live within God's glorious and eternal reign is to respond to this gift in the here-and-now with complete trust (faith) and adaptability. The call to repent is a realization that a commitment to change is necessary. Awareness of the presence of the kingdom of heaven seems highly unlikely for those who would be or are unwilling or unable to make changes in their world-view, lifestyle and commitment to God's possibilities and promises.

The call to repent is a challenge to be moved, by the power of God's Spirit, away from those idolatries that attempt to convince us that we are going in the "right" direction and to be placed firmly in the hands of a God who chooses for us, in the life of Jesus, salvation and life eternal that can be seen as a present

reality. In other words, Jesus seems to be saying, "See, the kingdom of heaven is not something you have to wait around for, nor is it something to be gained only later by acquiring a special skill set or by attaining a level of religious perfection. It's here for the taking. With eyes of faith, allow yourselves to be moved by God's grace to see and receive the gift, and believe. Go ahead, and enter now."

On several occasions in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus speaks against those understandings or actions that may and can prove as hindrances for entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Near the beginning of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, he indicates that "unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (MT 5:20). How are we to perceive this condition, as warning or new possibility in Christ? Does it suggest that the kingdom of heaven demands high standards for entrance, possibly indicating that a particular set of values and actions are more worthy than others, and are rewarded as such? Or is Jesus' statement intended to provoke his followers into an understanding of righteousness and the kingdom of heaven that is distinctive from that ascribed by the scribes and Pharisees, which could be suggestive of a system that rewards "certain" works that elevate the doer into an arena of divine favor and dismisses those who "fail" at such works? Is not this "higher righteousness" to be seen and experienced through the eyes of grace?

Later in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus again speaks to that which may hinder or possibly prevent entrance into the kingdom of heaven, as he responds to the sadly ridiculous question of "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (MT 18:1). (Seems like those who seek righteousness by their works are always looking for an angle that will lift them to a higher level than others.) Jesus has this to say: "Amen, I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will (con't page 2)

Parish Pastor
Rev. John D. Yost

Staff Members Of CULC

- Margie Dunkle, Secretary/Asst. Treasurer
- Dianne Shuck, Treasurer
- Cliff Valentine, Financial Recording Secretary
- Loretta Martin, Housekeeping

Council Members of CULC

- Lee Spangler, President & Facilities & Administration
- Dave Murray, Vice President & Inreach
- Barry Spangler, Council & Recording Secretary, & Inreach
- Pearl Gemberling, Outreach
- Doug Gemberling, Outreach
- Maurice Clouser, Facilities & Administration
- Joe Dressler, Outreach
- Kim Blyler, Facilities & Admin
Phone: 570-922-1860
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Parish Council Members

- Lee Spangler, (CULC) President
- Jim Schwartz, (FELC) Vice President
- Sue Jows, (FELC) Secretary
- Drew Christy, (CULC) Treasurer
- Dianne Shuck, CULC
- Kim Sawyer, FELC

Staff Members of FELC

- Diane Scott, Director of Music
- Heather Klose, Church Admin.
- Hank Dorman, Sexton
- Loretta Martin, Housekeeping

Council Members of FELC

- Linda Skinner, Council President
- Linda Lewis, Council VP
- Gloria Mincemoyer, Treasurer
- Emily Seebold, Secretary/Youth
- Ann Beckley, Council
- Mike Culp, Council
- Shirley Heasley, Council
- Sherri Neece, Council
- Kim Sawyer, Council
- Jim Schwartz, Council
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Pastor...con't from pg. 1 never enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Notice: change and repentance are of the same suit.)

Added to this, Jesus speaks favorably to the humility evidenced by child-like awareness, receptivity and trust. Is the change that Jesus calls for an active shift of strategy and implementation that focuses upon what might work to gain access to the kingdom, or is Jesus calling us away from those learned behaviors that seek to manipulate power, influence and control as regards to our fate or destiny? Entrance into the kingdom of heaven as Jesus “sees” it may have less to do with human striving than with a child’s view of being cared for absolutely and completely.

Still later in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus again is confronted by a rich person who seeks a way to “get” eternal life- “What good deed must I do?” (MT 19:16). The absurdity of like questions lingers even as Jesus points us away from an absolute trust in our own “good works” to gain access to God’s favor. “Good works” are to flow from the reception of God’s favor (grace) but are not the means to “get” God’s favor. And so Jesus warns, “Amen, I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God” (MT 19:23-24). Wealth may get us things by worldly standards, but it may serve as a hindrance in becoming able to see and experience the favor God lays before us as gift in and through Christ.

Entrance into the kingdom of heaven, by Jesus’ counsel, may seem difficult if not impossible, but only if and as we maintain an adherence to our own motivations, desires, and actions as the means necessary for such entrance. We fail, not by a lack of effort or production, but simply by not trusting in the possibility of God who provides for us a kingdom, a future as a gracious gift of love. Believe, that you may see! May we truly be able to see this new year from the perspective of God’s promised presence.

Pr. John

Bible Study Schedule

Pr. John will update the participants of the individual groups as decisions regarding the classes are made.

In Our Prayers:

Winifred Aikey
 Jan Beckley
 Roger Dunkle
 Mike Flickinger
 Doug & Pearl Gemberling
 Ron & Darlene Ulrich & family
 Tom Watters
 Ken Smith
 John Snook
 Helen Troup
 Wendy Norton
 Diane Reamer
 John Bowersox
 John Dunkle
 Josh Frank
 Gary & Barb Gemberling
 Toni Hostelley
 Paul Kratzer, Jr.
 Janet Meyer
 Harry Moyer
 Kim Roberts
 Richard Rowe
 Gerry Shively
 Glen VanDyke
 Karen Zimmerman
 Jeff & Jenn Gates
 Harry Hackenberg
 Dave Janaes
 Miranda & Caleb Stroik
 Rita Tinnes
 Kim Blyler
Shut-Ins:
 Jim & Jan Beckley
 Jim & Florence Boop
 Carolyn Bowersox
 Pearl Culp
 Barbara Grimooris
 Joan Herman
 Georgie Linke
 Doris Moll
 Ethel Musser
 Helen Pirone
 Meda Struble
 Ronald Ulrich
 Connie Wagner
In Our Military:
 Brandi Gemberling
 Thaddeus Miller
 Zachary Miller

WORSHIP SCHEDULE:

Christ’s United:

In-person resumes Sunday, February 7th, 8:30AM
Sunday School will also resume and is held following
worship (Sunday 2/7 will be after the meeting)

First Lutheran:

No in-person worship through February.
Council will revisit the issue at the March meeting.



January

- 1 Robert Rantz
- 2 Sherri Neece
- 4 Deanna Billow
Constance Wagner
- 7 Florence Boop
Mary Alice Deihl
- 14 Trevor Spencer
Logan Taylor
- 15 Dennis Boop, Jr.
Carol Graham
Shirley Heasley
Amy Orren
- 16 Kendrah Beiler
Paige Hosterman
Janice Wagner
- 17 Sally Kline
Lee Spangler
- 19 Katie Alexander
Gwen Hull
Andy Long
- 22 Jaiden Beiler
- 25 Aaron Hackenburg
Natalie Harvey
- 26 Paige Bartlett
Taylor Montesinos
- 27 Shelly Orren
- 29 Rick Endy
- 31 Mark Alexander
Rebecca Dunkle
Marla Hicks

February

- 1 Jeff Hackenburg
- 2 Alice Reitz
Addalynn Zimmerman
- 3 Owen Libhart
Nate McBryan
- 4 Ethel Musser
Kim Wagner
- 5 Jamie Bartlett
- 7 Jim Beckley
Carol Mensch
- 8 Barbara Clouser
Sheryl Fetter
- 9 Nichole Ammon
Drew Christy
- 10 Cher Gorton
Teresa Shuck
- 11 Gailyn Baker
- 12 MaryLib Dunkle
- 14 Lucas Flickinger
Ed Libhart
- 15 Kenneth Emery
Pat Stees
Ronald Ulrich
- 16 Jeffrey Wenrich
- 19 Linn Mensch
Glenn Spangler
- 21 Kim Sawers
Dotty Seebold
- 22 Caroline Herman
- 23 Andrew Clouser
Max Miller
Madison Reed
Wayne Shively
- 24 Scott Sampsell
- 25 Lisa Woodring
- 26 Clayton Gemberling
Mahayla Gemberling
Cory Harvey
- 27 Cindy Harvey
Collin Krout
Rose Wenrich
- 28 Alicia Zimmerman

Jim & Florence Boop	01/07/1955	66 yrs
DuFrane & Barb Reed	01/12/1990	31 yrs
Nathan & Kortney McBryan	01/15/2011	10 yrs
Mike & Janet Shoemaker	01/29/1972	49 yrs
Doug & Stacey Gemberling	01/30/2013	8 yrs
Duane & Carol Miller	02/13/1988	33 yrs

Our condolences....

Sterling Crone - We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the family of Sterling Crone, a former member of Christ's United. Sterling, 88, died on Friday, December 25, 2020. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Audrey; daughters, Kathy Eberly, Sandy Murphy, Sue Kucharik and Marti Sanclemente; 12 grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren and his brother, Glenn Crone. A service will be held at a later date. Burial will be in Mount Zion Cemetery.

The following was received from Sterling's daughter, Sandy: My mom is still living at the Village at Sprenkle Drive, in the memory care unit. Any mail to her should be sent in care of my sister and she will see that my mom gets it Kathy Eberly, 50 Glen Avenue, Dallastown PA 17313

Because of the COVID lockdown, we have been unable to visit our parents, however when our dad was put in Hospice care, they allowed me and my 3 sisters in to visit our parents. One at a time, we each spent about 2 hours with them. Kathy also was allowed to go in on Christmas morning to be with our mom after our dad had died. Please pray for our mom, Audrey Crone, as she will miss her husband of 68 years.

Myron Shuck - We extend our sincere sympathy to Janice & Lance Wagner, Dianne Shuck, and Greg & Teresa Shuck, as well as the entire Shuck family, following the death of their beloved father, grandfather, husband and brother, Myron Shuck. Myron died on January 12 at the age of 86. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

CULC Altar Flowers

The 2021 Altar Flower chart at CULC is on the bulletin board outside of the sanctuary. The cost of weekly flowers, which is payable to the church, is \$40.00.



CULC Indoor Yard Sale

At this time we will be postponing the Indoor Yard Sale until a later date. We are thinking maybe April-ish when the doors can be open or outside even. This virus has us very concerned. Contact Idella Zimmerman at 570-966-1340 for more information.

CULC Easter Eggs

Lent begins February 17, which means it's time to start thinking about making our Easter eggs again. This year we are planning to make eggs for five (5) Mondays beginning the first Monday in Lent. We will be making them on February 22, March 1, March 8, March 15 and March 22 provided we have enough help.

Eggs will be mixed and shaped starting at 9:00 am each Monday morning and coating and packaging will begin each Monday evening at 6:00 pm. This is a great fundraiser for the Church and much help will be needed both at 9:00 am and at 6:00 pm to make this project successful.

In order for this fundraiser to be successful, EVERY week 8 - 10 helpers are needed in the morning and 12 - 15 helpers are needed in the evening. Please let Pearl know that you can help, and when, so that we know if we have enough help to make eggs each week. The more help we have, the quicker we will get done.

Everything will be done with the current CDC guidelines being enforced; masks, social distancing, sanitation, etc.

Mark your calendars NOW and please plan to come out and help make these popular treats.

Easter Eggs are going to be made by Pre Order Only. Information on ordering and picking up Easter Eggs will be available soon. Please watch for more information on the CULC Website at www.4bellschurch.com or contact Pearl Gemberling at 570-716-4336 or email eggs@4bellschurch.com.

CULC Annual Meeting

The meeting will be held on Sunday, February 7th, immediately following worship. Agenda items include: 1. Approval of 2019 Congregational Meeting minutes 2. Council elections 3. 2021 Congregational budget 4. vote on agreement between CULC and Union County West End Fair Association.

Lenten Activities

Devotionals: Pastor John will be creating Lenten daily devotional similar to the Advent daily devotional he wrote recently. Please contact either church office for more information.

Breakfasts: Due to COVID, there will be no Easter breakfasts served this year; this also includes the pancake supper normally served on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday.

Thrivent Choice Dollars

Please remember to direct your Choice Dollars to the church. Disbursements are now being made yearly so it is important to ensure your money is directly appropriately.

Meals for Polly Horning

Dear Prayer Warriors,
Please lift Polly Hornig in prayer and keep her hemmed in your prayers. If you have had the opportunity to know Polly as a friend, through church functions, or through all the school activities & events w/her boys that she faithfully attended as a truly devoted mother, you know what a very special person she is. As one who always helps others, she has never wanted recognition. Polly was forced to retire due to her MS. She has no mobility in her legs, whatsoever. Despite her limitations, her attitude remains amazingly positive. A 2 day a week meal plan for her is in the making.

Here is the link to sign up for meals:

<https://www.takethemameal.com/BHYH1253>

She is now researching home health care and needs prayer for her health, her family and to find excellent health care providers.

Her address if anyone wants to send her encouragement cards is: 196 Shelly Lane, Mifflinburg.

FEBRUARY 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 10AM:Hope's Haven-CULC 7PM: Council	4 FELC 10-2	5	6
7 8:30 AM: Wor- ship/HC-CULC 9:45AM: SS- CULC	8	9	10 FELC 10-2 10AM:Hope's Haven-CULC	11 FELC 10-2	12	13
14 8:30 AM: Wor- ship/HC-CULC 9:45AM: SS- CULC	15	16 FELC 10-2	17 10AM:Hope's Haven-CULC 7PM: Ashe Wednesday- CULC	18 FELC 10-2	19	20
21 8:30 AM: Wor- ship/HC-CULC 9:45AM: SS- CULC	22 9AM: Egg mixing 6PM: Egg dipping	23 FELC 10-2	24 10AM:Hope's Haven-CULC	25 FELC 10-2	26	27
28 8:30 AM: Wor- ship/HC-CULC 9:45AM: SS- CULC						

FELC Office Hours

The days that the office is open may vary from time to time. It will be published as far in advance as possible via the newsletter. If late changes occur, an email will be sent. Please refer to the calendar in the newsletter for the current schedule. Please remember that the office is closed during inclement weather.

CULC Altar Guild

February - Maurice & Barb Clouser