

January 2021



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## ***Greetings in the Name of our LORD !***

### **The Gift of Today!**

There were a few days just before Christmas when I experienced a period of melancholy. I know from my experience and the experience of others that this is not at all uncommon around holidays for a whole complexity of reasons, and if you add to those reasons the effects of Covid concerns, lockdowns, isolation, fears, and changes in lifestyle norms etc, etc—then you have a whole host of forces that can impact the mood of any individual. I am not writing to simplify the complex or in any way to anesthetize or numb the hurt that is probably part of all of us. However, a thought came to me rather simply but profoundly in the midst of a particular melancholy day. And that thought was ***“Today is an un-lived gift—a fresh piece of canvas—a day never lived—therefore make of this day some beautiful artwork.”*** In other words live within the awareness and mindfulness of this moment, this minute, this hour, this day, in all its fullness.

This is otherwise known as accepting life—the life that we are neck deep in. The life that is only mine to live. Complete with summers and winters, gray skies, tears, and moments of exuberant celebration. I didn't request this life, but I was given it. No one else has my version of it. I will never bump into myself on the sidewalk. I will never meet anyone else with my exact lineage, loves, longings or life experiences. No one else can live my life—it is the Canvas I have been given to paint on. It's all a gift—whether given 50 years or 100. I did nothing to earn or deserve or merit the gift, and oh how these days can race by. If I am not careful, my life could pass by without really appreciating and living fully within it. I could get so caught up in survival—that I lose the perspective of it being a Gift to be unpacked with gratitude, celebration, and humility.

Now I realize some people do not receive their lives as a gift to be unwrapped one day at a time. Many do not bother with such thoughts. They find themselves grinding through surviving storm after storm without really looking up—or looking out—or for that matter

looking within. **They live, and die, and barely ask why!** But I choose a long time ago to not be among them—though from time to time I slip-up and lose my perspective. When I come to God, often with an empty or at least half full cup—I come with a desire to not only live well—but to live a life that matters. I want to live in such a way that makes the world glad I did.

I think of the story I have often read at funeral and memorial services called “**The Dash.**”

**THE DASH** *a poem by Linda Ellis*

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend.

He referred to the dates on the tombstone from the beginning... to the end.

He noted that first came the date of birth and spoke of the following date with tears, but he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time they spent alive on earth and now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own, the cars... the house... the cash.

What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.

So think about this long and hard; are there things you'd like to change?

For you never know how much time is left that still can be rearranged.

To be less quick to anger and show appreciation more and love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile... remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.

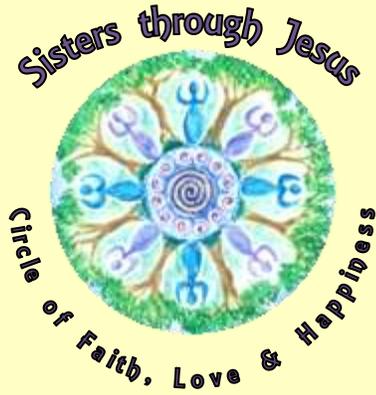
So when your eulogy is being read, with your life's actions to rehash, would you be proud of the things they say about how you lived your dash?

The living of my Dash, the seeking to live well has brought me to embrace again and again the great words of Ephesians 2:10 ***“We are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”*** On those days where life has me by the veritable tail—and melancholy sets in—I often have conversation with the emotion. I remind myself that I am given a choice—an opportunity to receive each day as an unmerited undeserved gift that I never did a thing to deserve. And that I can choose to live fully, mindfully and gratefully in it—even choosing to make a difference in the world around me. I can choose to Rock this world with hope, love, and a God centered perspective. I am after all created by a great God and can do great works through His amazing grace! And when speaking these truths to my heart quite often the melancholy will lift.

He told me to tell you!

*Faithfully,*  
*Pastor Robert Zimmerman*





## ABW Ministries

Our next ABW meeting is  
February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 pm  
No meeting in January

### ABW projects report:

**Luopads:** we have delivered 388 luopads in November

Without access to feminine hygiene supplies, women in developing countries can't leave their homes. In many of these cultures, women are shunned during this sensitive time each month and most girls are forced to miss 20% of the school year.

### **Teddy Bear project:**

15 handmade Teddy bears arrived in Alaska for the Cordova **Bidarki Holiday Bazaar**

One of a kind gifts for friends and family; support local businesses and fundraising organizations;

5 bears were given to the East Hempfield Police Department for children in distress.

And some to House of His Creation.

**Samaritan Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes**

29 were sent this month

Blessings,

Pat Rust and the Ladies of ABW

## COMMUNION SUNDAY

**We will continue to celebrate Communion on the first Sunday of the month.**

You will be given the elements (uniquely packaged) along with the bulletin when you arrive  
Sunday morning.



**Kairos Spiritual Direction Training** is a two-year contemplative program that teaches the art and practice of spiritual direction – deep listening, walking alongside others, and recognizing God in your own life and the lives around you. SDT is designed not only for spiritual directors, but for all those who offer spiritual care and companionship. Training in spiritual companionship provides effective tools for interpersonal relationships, especially when working with those different than yourself.

Who is a Kairos SDT student? A college chaplain, a church admin, a therapist, a factory worker, a retired nurse, a pastor. Apply today to join them; only a few spots left,

<https://parishresourcecenter.org/kairos-school-for-spiritual-formation-at-the-parish-resource-center/kairos-spiritual-direction-training/> or contact [janae@parishresourcecenter.org](mailto:janae@parishresourcecenter.org).



### Birthdays & Anniversaries for January



- 1/2 Rev. Robert Zimmerman
- 1/4 Robert Rushemeza
- 1/6 Joe Faith
- 1/8 Sarah Tebie  
Dottie Jones
- 1/12 Shiloh Tebie
- 1/13 Margaret Rogers
- 1/14 Rev. Richard Cook
- 1/18 Sally Williams
- 1/20 Susan Miller
- 1/24 Jack Stockdale
- 1/29 Patrick Rushemeza
- 1/30 Nancy Crookshank  
Timothy Ferris
- 1/31 Mary Stockdale



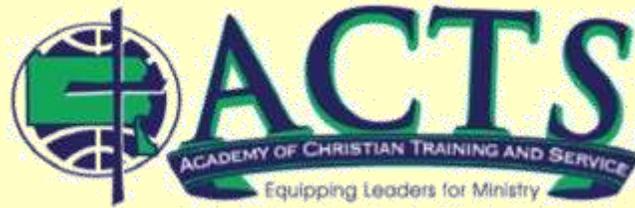
If you have an anniversary in January please let Elisa know.



### Treasurer's Report-

Month Total	December
Budget Income	\$8,065.00
Non-budget income	\$4,638.28

# Baptist Potpourri



***Address God's Call in Your Life!***

***Baptist History & Polity***  
***Starting Friday January 8 & 22nd 6-10:00 p.m.***  
***Saturday January 9 & 23rd 10-6:00 p.m.***  
***(Intense Course).***

This course explores the origins, development and basic beliefs of Baptists, emphasizing an appreciation for the importance of knowing our rich Baptist heritage. There will be an examination of the association, regional and national structures of ABC-USA and of the typical organization styles and policies of the local church. As opportunity presents itself, concepts of congregational transformation and spiritual formation will be incorporated in the course.



**Meet your Professor, Reverend Dr. David Laubach in the virtual class room.**

**Classes are completely on-line by using your computer or SMART device from the comfort of your own home.**

**Dr. Laubach has been a Pastor in Pennsylvania and New Jersey for 15 years. A Commissioned ABC Missionary serving with ABHMS for 27 years. Retired Associate Executive Director ABHMS since 2013. and he is a former Adjunct professor at Palmer Theological Seminary teaching evangelism and church renewal.**

**Dr. Laubach is the author of Twelve Steps to Congregational Transformation (Judson Press) and two booklets on ABHMS history. He is the writer of the 2019 curriculum for Judson Journeys adult series. He served on the Evangelism and Education executive committee, on the board of the American Baptist Historical Society for two terms, and concluded eight years as moderator of Aldenville Baptist Church in 2018.**

**Currently Dr. Laubach and his wife of 48 years divide their time between NE Pennsylvania and Southern California where their son and daughter and five grandchildren live.**

**Dr. Laubach is a graduate of Temple University, Eastern Baptist Theological**

Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Northern Baptist Theological Seminary. His hobbies include gardening, genealogy and stamp collecting. He describes his fun experiences in the past year as attending a live taping of Jeopardy in LA and lecturing on Martin Luther dressed as Luther for a high school assembly.



### **ABCOPAD SMILES - Thank You!**

The ABCOPAD Foundation received an Amazon Smile donation of \$49.72 during the last quarter. Thanks to customers shopping at Amazon Smile, the Foundation has received over \$600! When you designate the ABCOPAD Foundation as your charity of choice, Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible Amazon Smile purchases to ABCOPAD. **Click below and sign up today!**  
<https://www.abcopad.org/AMAZON-SMILE-ABCOPAD/>

### **NOEL! NOEL!**

With so much seasonal music to enjoy (*and little opportunity to gather*), the Baptist Church of West Chester recruited some of their vocalists and musicians to create an online Christmas album! Eleven Christmas tracks are available.

You can listen to it [HERE!](#)

Or copy and paste <https://soundcloud.com/user-134944789>

### **Visit our [ABCOPAD](#) YouTube video channel**

Watch many devotional, inspirational and holiday videos from Reverends Frank Frischkorn, and Jeff Johnson and others.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ABCOPADVideo>



*The Westgate staff wishes to thank everyone for their holiday cards, gifts, goodies and generous Christmas bonuses.*

*Pastor Grace Shirk thanks everyone for the wonderful birthday cards and Christmas greetings.*

*Westgate's Christmas Tree Project needed monetary contributions for Water Street Rescue Mission's food drive.*

*We delivered a check for \$1,042.00 to the Mission! Your generous support, helped the Mission feed the homeless, unemployed and those living in poverty during the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons.*

*Thanks for your abundant giving,  
American Baptist Women*