

Westgate March, 2022

Witness

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Lancaster, PA 17601
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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

America for Christ Offering this month

March 3 ABW Meeting
March 13 Love Gift
March 15 AB Men's Breakfast
March 21 Board Meeting

Good Friday April 15
Easter April 17



EASTER

On Easter Day Sunday April 17th we will be having an **Outdoor, Dive-In worship service at 11 am** with coffee and donuts preceding the service. It was just two years ago this Easter that our Church had its very first outdoor Drive-In Service in response to the Covid lock-downs. Please consider inviting someone to this very special approach to worship as we celebrate the Risen Savior--at the same time acknowledging the anniversary of our outdoor worship venue.

Sunrise Service at 6:30 a.m. at 196 Fairland Road, Lititz PA. Richard and Nancy Cooks neighbor Dean Ziegler hosts an Ecumenical Outdoor Sunrise Service followed by a breakfast. Bring your own lawn chairs or blankets and dress informally. This service incorporates people from numerous denominations including Amish folk who live nearby. We have been extended an offer and I hope many will plan to attend. Any questions can be clarified by Rev. Cook.

Greetings in the Name of our LORD !

WINTER & SPRING

John 11:25, 38-43, John 12:12-27

We are still in the midst of winter, but this is not just the season of winter—we are in the midst of a circumstantial winter where darkness and cold seem quite prevalent. What do I mean? I mean that on the back end of Covid many of us are thinking we are due for relief and change from a very long period of severe abnormality but the reprieve has not come. We now find ourselves in the midst of an atrocious and unjust invasion of Ukraine. While inspired by the people of Ukraine and how the global community has worked in Solidarity against Putin's aggression and tactics, nonetheless it's been a time of great darkness and evil, dare I call it a "*dark winter*." This coupled with economic realities such as gas prices, the worst inflation in over 40 years, declines in the stocks and financial portfolios, rising crime rates, and cultural unrest—many find themselves in a prolonged "*existential winter*." Some take solace in warmer weather around the corner—perhaps that will bring some reprieve to our stress points.



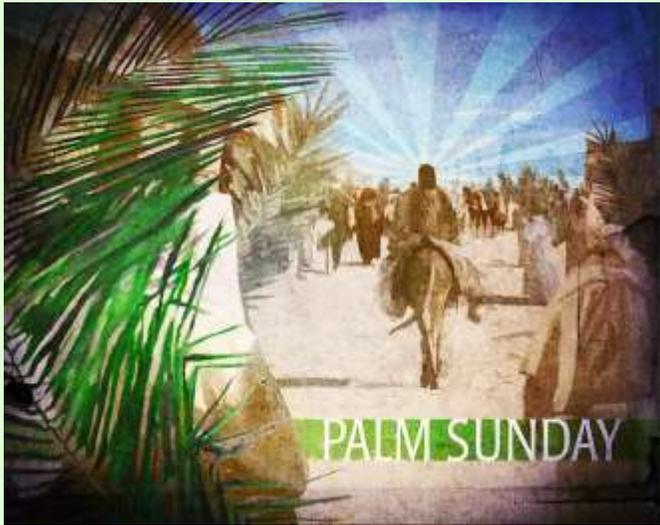
However, the weather is about as unpredictable as the economic and global turmoil these days.... but hey, it's March we should be accustomed to some volatility. I well remember several Marchs ago the weathercasters told us "A Big One" was coming, twelve to twenty inches worth of snow moving our way, unusual for a March. So people trudged off to the grocery store—they stored their bread, eggs, milk and other survival snacks. We prepared to hibernate. Schools cancelled, snow blowers were dusted off, shovels were retrieved from the shed, and I even stayed up late and watched a movie the night before.

After all, the world was shutting down by morning; surely it would be a day off.

What happened? Almost none of what was predicted— only a bit of snow, very little shoveling, and for many, no time off work. In that sense it was a false hope. The Philly weathercasting celebrity, John Bolaris said he receive more irate mail, including threats, than at any time in his weather career. False Reports disappoint people. I have numerous memories of being disappointed by False Springs. Feeling stiff from a long winter of cold, snow, ice and rain. Worn out from struggling with winter coats, scarfs, and gloves, bored with cabin fever, shut up like a chicken in a coop. I look in the garage at my motorcycle, aching to pull the throttle round a turn and feel the warm breeze in my face, ready to take that lawn mower for a walk through some lush green grass, longing to go out on

the deck at night. I just long to say, "Welcome Spring, Hallelujah You Have Arrived! What took you so long?" We yearn for it! We long to see the birth of flowers and leaves forming and the burst of outdoor activity.

We received the groundhog report from Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. Since its shadow has escaped detection we believe spring will come early. And there are to be some warm days, *"unseasonably warm,"* we are told. Buds on trees begin to swell; birds are heard singing early in the morning. Time to clean off the golf clubs, time to wash and wax the car. On a Saturday morning, I have reserved my first Spring outing. I go to bed early, so I can get up rested and enjoy a whole day's worth. When the alarm sounds, looking out, what do I see? An unwelcome guest interrupting my party, a dusting of white snow and ice clinging to trees. And the old timers say: *"We told you. We have lived too long to be surprised by an early Spring!"* Grudgingly, we pull the winter coat from the closet, the pall of winter settles down again. **THE FALSE SPRING HAS DONE ITS WORK!** I don't know about you but I really don't like False Springs. I am in the mood for a long Indian Summer.



On a promising day in spring, Jesus made His way to Jerusalem. A recent event had encouraged His followers to believe the springtime of the Kingdom was budding. One who marched among them at a respectable distance was Lazarus, recently raised from the dead by Jesus. Along the path, crowds shouted praise because of Lazarus' deliverance from the tomb. He was evidence of Jesus' power even over death! *"Hosanna!"* they sang, *"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel."* The people's song stunned

Jerusalem's officials who will soon seek to put Jesus to death, and would love to snuff out Lazarus as well.

Because of what happened we have named that day *"Palm Sunday."* We call it a *"Triumphal Entry."* As parades go, it is no match for a Fourth of July or Mummers day parades. It wouldn't compare to most modern extravaganza. But for those who marched into the city, then, it was a breath of spring. It was a time to celebrate deliverance. Deliverance from Roman oppression and the restoration of the Jewish state would come, they thought. They embraced an earthbound version of Messiah.

Israel's winter wait seemed over. The night-time had passed. Political deliverance was around the corner. Messiah had come! Deliverance from Rome seemed in sight. Israel had been powerful and respected. Such glory had long departed, and its renewal was long overdue. Enough of Cold oppressive

Winter— bring on the warm hope of Spring. Surely Jesus was the Spring Time Hope, but they had false hopes and false expectations. For them it was a FALSE SPRING.

We can all relate at some level—for surely each of us has had our False Hopes—our times of disappointment. But before discouragement sets its course, we must be reminded that a False Spring can be a taste of things to come. Though winter has not had its last hurrah, spring will come again! So take heart! The dancing and festive celebration of "*Palm Sunday*" is a symbol of the great things to come, of resurrection.

The False Spring reminds us we cannot move from Palm Sunday to Easter without passing through the Last Supper, Gethsemane, Golgotha, and through the Tomb. Though winter has not had its last hurrah, spring will come again! So take heart! The dancing and festive celebration of "*Palm Sunday*" is a symbol of the great things to come, of RESURRECTION GLORY!

He told me to tell you!

Faithfully,
Pastor Robert Zimmerman



Irish Blessing~
May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm on your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Easter Flowers

Kay Cameron is organizing the Easter Flower plant sale which will beautify our Sanctuary with an assortment of spring flowers. **Plants will be \$8.00 each.**

Your payment and order sheets should go in the Sunday offering plate marked Easter flowers. Kay will manage the flower orders. More information to follow, check your bulletins and April Newsletter.



Women's Bible Study

Tuesday mornings at 9:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. We have resumed our study on prayer. "Praying the Psalms," now, with an emphasis on Lent.

PRAYER

What is it? Why we pray? How we pray. We will look through various Psalms, and authors including Henri Nouwen and Philip Yancey.



According to an old legend, when God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, Eve took with her a four-leaf clover. Finding a four-leaf clover in a meadow brings a piece of Paradise in that person's life.

PSALM 46:6-11

Nations roar; kingdoms crumble. God utters his voice; the earth melts. The Lord of heavenly forces is with us! The God of Jacob is our place of safety. Selah
Come, see the Lord's deeds, what devastation he has imposed on the earth—bringing wars to an end in every corner of the world breaking the bow and shattering the spear, burning chariots with fire.
Be still and know that I am God!
I am exalted among all nations; I am exalted throughout the world!"
The Lord of heavenly forces is with us! The God of Jacob is our place of safety. Selah



ABW Ministries

**Our next ABW meeting is
Thursday March 3rd, 1:00 pm
in the Fellowship Hall**



ABW will meet on Thursday, March 3rd at 1:00. We will be working on the Luopads and deciding on future projects.

Love Gift has great potential to empower American Baptist mission in this new century. It's an expression of our faith, gratitude and love . . . an offering to God. Sunday, March 13th is your opportunity to give to American Baptist Women's Love Gift.



Let the Walls Fall Down ABW Webinar Series **Identifying and Managing Bullying Behavior**

Thursday, March 3, 2022
8:00 PM Eastern/5:00 PM Pacific

Presenter: Dana Wise Jones,
Counselor, Defining Moments

This interactive webinar will help parents identify if their child is being bullied or if their child exhibits bullying behavior towards others.

Identification is the first step; now, what to do? We will discuss ways to manage the behavior and where to go for help. We will spend time understanding how bullying behavior is developed and the fact that it is a BEHAVIOR, not a person. How do we help children develop empathy and coping skills to avoid bullying behavior? How do we teach children who are being bullied to stand up to the person bullying them?

Participants will be provided with resources to increase their understanding further and support any necessary follow-up

Our Contact Information: American Baptist Women's Ministries

1075 First Ave STE C-210
King of Prussia, PA 19406
(610) 768-2288

<http://www.abwomensministries.org>



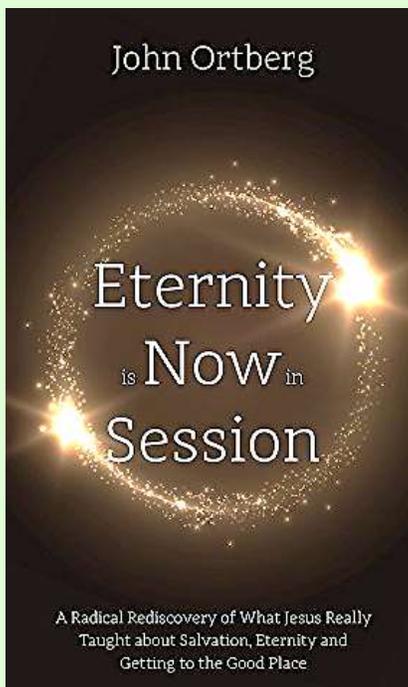
AB Men's Breakfast

Our next Men's Fellowship Breakfast will be on March 15th at 9:00 a.m. We will meet at the **Family Fare Restaurant**, 5921 Main St., East Petersburg, PA 17520 for a casual Christian Men's fellowship time.

Adult Sunday School

**On Sunday March 20th I will begin a New 6 Week Curriculum entitled
"Eternity Is Now in Session."**

Most of us think of eternity as something that begins after we die. However, Jesus doesn't talk about eternity that way. In fact, Jesus defines "eternal life" only once, with great precision, and in a way that has been largely lost in our day. In a five session curriculum we will explore a radical rediscovery of what the Bible really says about salvation and show how to experience the interactive fellowship and joy that exists between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Eternal life here--now, every minute of every day. This curriculum will feature video from the Holy Land with author and teacher John Ortberg and will be accompanied by his book Eternity is Now in Session which can be ordered through Amazon. We will not be dissecting the book but you may wish to purchase it to enrich your experience of the videos and discussions. I



hope you will take advantage of this wonderful opportunity for study and enrichment.

*"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to **life**"*

Birthdays & Anniversaries for March



3/1 Judy Johnsen
 3/4 Mike Pate
 3/6 Ruth Barto
 3/17 Paul Dour
 Elizabeth Kegoya
 3/24 Cynthia Ferris
 3/26 Pat Rust
 3/27 Samwel Ombongi
 3/28 Gordon Tolson
 3/29 Nancy Cook



3/6/2009 Dan & Ivy Sweigart
 3/11/2006 Dave & Marianne Edgell
 3/18/2006 Leroy & Sarah Tebie
 3/21/1959 Jess & Nancy Crookshank



Treasurer's Report

February	
Budget Income	\$13,821.00
Non-budget income	\$338.00



News about The European Baptist Federation (EBF)

The EBF includes in its membership the All-Ukrainian Union of Associations of Evangelical Christians-Baptists and the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Russia—bringing together the more than 2,300 Ukrainian Baptist congregations and the more than 1,600 Russian Baptist congregations along with those from other countries across the region. The EBF "laments and denounces the Russian attacks on Ukraine" while standing "with our Ukrainian brothers and sisters ready to assist in humanitarian outreach in regions affected by the conflict."

The week prior to the Russian invasion, Rev. Dr. Elijah M. Brown, General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance travelled to Ukraine to pray and to stand in solidarity with Baptist leaders as they organized their churches to be centers of sanctuary and humanitarian relief in their communities. BWA is working closely with the EBF to provide relief and assistance in the region. To learn more about how you can support aid and relief efforts, visit baptistworld.org.

The Christian Citizen

Baptist Potpourri

Join us for an Everyday ABC Conversation

We are excited to announce the “Everyday ABC Conversations” series.

Due to the popularity of the recent Mission Summit Conversations in which over 650 American Baptists simultaneously participated in dialogue during the 2021 Biennial Mission Summit, the American Baptist Churches USA is launching this series of dialogues, entitled, “Everyday ABC Conversations.”

Creation Justice and International Women’s Day Join us on Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. EST on Zoom with presenters
Dr. Alan R. Wedgewood
and Rev. Rebecca Driscoll, ABC Creation Justice Network.



Every day we have the opportunity to be in prayerful conversation with God. What is God saying to each of us about how we have cared for God’s creations? Which of God’s children are bearing the greatest injustices caused by our failure to be good caretakers of our Earth? As we gather for this conversation on International Women’s Day, we will reflect on how environmental degradation has disproportionately impacted women, as well as the ways women have been a prophetic voice for creation justice and restoration. How has the cry of God’s creation moved you, your church, and/or your community to respond? Please join members of the Creation Justice Network in conversation as we ponder how we can work together to create a sustainable home for future generations and learn more about the ministry of the Creation Justice Congregations program. **More About Everyday ABC Conversations**

Background and Intent

Since 2013, American Baptists have practiced Mission Summit Conversations at our American Baptist Biennial gatherings. The purpose of these conversations is to provide an opportunity for persons to engage in respectful dialogue about matters of importance. Unlike a traditional conference, the emphasis at the MSC is upon real-time conversation among the meeting’s participants rather than the conference speakers or experts in the room. These conversations are based upon the principle of “fluid expertise” in which everyone in the group is seen as a worthy contributor. As Baptists who hold the beliefs of soul liberty and the priesthood of all believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in a community of believers, these conversations align with our Baptist identity. MSC create the space for American Baptists to talk about matters of mission and ministry on a grand scale at our national gatherings.

The Everyday ABC Conversation Series, offered in this same spirit, is an opportunity to engage in conversations that matter beyond the Mission Summit Biennials.

All conversations take place within a certain time, space, and set of circumstances. The global pandemic that we are currently experiencing will no doubt influence many of our conversations. The pandemic has surfaced enormous stress as well as new opportunities for creativity and innovation. American Baptists and the congregations that we are a part of simply cannot perform some of the familiar functions of pre-pandemic days. Our hope is that whatever topic is on the table, that the conversations moves toward innovation and finding new ways to live out God's mission in our world.

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2022

"I will praise you and testify about what you have done." PSALM 22:22

Consider making a generous gift!

Thanks to America for Christ Offering contributions, American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) supported communities distressed by the devastation of COVID-19 last year, as the pandemic swept our country and Puerto Rico. We also helped families who lost homes to floods, wildfires and storms, along with children living on the edge because of poverty, and seminarians preparing to devote their lives to sharing the Good News. These are just a few of the ways we minister to those in need; there are many more.



American Baptist Home Mission Societies



About Ukraine.....

Non-denominational Prayer for Ukraine

O God of peace, our hearts are heavy and our brains can barely keep up with the breaking news.

We don't know what to say or what to do in a world so wounded.

So we come to you with hearts heavy for

All who sit in the crossfires of violence and acts of war.

O God of peace, be with the people of Ukraine.

With the mothers who carry babies to subway shelters.

With the fathers who hold their heads in their hands.

With the children who absorb the traumas of violent acts of powerful men.

God of peace and love, hear our prayer. Amen

The Ukrainian Baptist Union has evacuated its headquarters in Kyiv as Russian artillery and airstrikes continue to pound the capital city. People aim for the Polish border in Lviv Oblast, western Ukraine, near 13 km before the Polish border. Baptist groups in neighboring countries scramble to accommodate hundreds of thousands of refugees escaping the violence, according to the **European Baptist Federation**. Baptist churches in western Ukraine are cooperating with congregations to the east, where the fighting is most intense, to welcome the refugees. They are supplied with food and aid by a half dozen logistics centers established by the UBU.



Aid for Ukraine

As the attacks on Ukraine continue to unfold, many of us here are looking for ways to help. But, in times of crisis, there are scammers looking to take advantage of the situation. One way to ensure your help will go to the right place is by donating to a reputable organization you're familiar with.

The Salvation Army, which has a [link on its website](#) people can select, ensuring every dollar of what they give goes straight to Ukraine. The organization already had sites set up in Ukraine and its surrounding areas. So far, donations collected have gone to help people with immediate needs like hygiene kits and shelter. They've also been able to transport people to safety. Lescano says they're collecting cash donations, since anything non-monetary is too difficult to send. "It's certainly easy to give blankets or clothing but almost impossible for us to get it there and the cost of shipping to get there is phenomenal," said Lescano.

While the Salvation Army is a good place to start, there's a number of other ways you can give.

The website [charitynavigator.org](#) has a list of nearly [two dozen charities](#) they recommend.

The site evaluates non-profits to ensure people are giving to the right place.

"Well, you want to give with your heart, but you also want to give with your head," said Kevin Scally, the site's Chief Relationship Officer.

Over the past week, Scally says traffic has increased 50% and donations to charities responding to the crisis have gone up 3,000%.

The Ukrainian Church

Even though Russian President Vladimir Putin justified his invasion of Ukraine in part as a defense of the Moscow-oriented Eastern Orthodox Church, leaders of both Ukrainian Orthodox factions are fiercely denouncing the Russian invasion, as is Ukraine's significant Catholic minority. "With prayer on our lips, with love for God,



for Ukraine, for our neighbors, we fight against evil - and we will see victory,” vowed Metropolitan Epifany, head of the Kyiv-based Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

However, the Russian Orthodox Church hopes to reunite with the independent Ukrainian branch under a single patriarch in Moscow that would allow it to control the holiest sites of Orthodoxy in the Slavic world. If Russia wins the war, the Ukrainian church is unlikely to survive inside Ukraine. While Ukraine’s government is calling on every able-bodied male to defend the country against the Russian invasion, the Muscovite archbishop sees things a little differently. Russians and Ukrainians are one people with one religion, he said, the Russian army is not an enemy. Believers in Ukraine should “pray for peace, not for victory.”

Jews in Chernivtsi — a safe haven at the moment for about 80 members of the Conservative movement — were able to speak to friends and family trapped in Kharkiv on Monday afternoon. “The bombing has not stopped. It has gone on every day. They are bombing houses and schools — the whole city,” Ayal said of Kharkiv. He said no one there in the Conservative community, known as Masorti Judaism outside the U.S., is hurt, and noted that they had been able to stockpile food and water. “They are okay and lucky.” The shelter is full of women, children and old men, said Ayal. “There are husbands of women in the community who are now in the army and fighting.” “Many Ukrainians want to fight,” Ayal continued. “The morale level of the people is high.”

Pope Francis ties support for peace in Ukraine to Ash Wednesday’s start of Lent

Pope Francis praised practical and spiritual efforts to promote peace on Wednesday (March 2), encouraging people to dedicate prayers and fasting to ending the conflict in Ukraine as the church season of Lent begins, and thanked countries that are welcoming migrants from the war-torn country.

“Let’s keep the memory of this people in our hearts,” he said.

Ash Wednesday, the opening of Lent, will be commemorated at the Vatican in a day of prayer and fasting for peace in Ukraine.

What are Anonymous actually doing to help Ukraine?

Hacktivist groups are hijacking government websites and news organizations in an attempt to ‘broadcast the truth’ So far, hackers have reportedly targeted government websites, state broadcasters, the site of Russian oil giant Gazprom, and a rail network reportedly used to move troops from Russia to Ukraine. Anonymous has claimed responsibility for 1,500 cyberattacks over the past few days, and said it had hacked TV stations to show footage of a young father saying goodbye to his wife and daughter as they fled, as well as images of bombs and damaged buildings. Russian TV stations were supposedly also broadcasting Ukrainian songs in place of propaganda.

