



The Open Door - August 2024

The Reformed Church of Bushkill
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www.bushkillchurch.org (Website)

"Striving to Do What Christ Tells Us through Scripture"

Reminder:

Communion is now being served using
gluten-free bread only.

The Thursday Community Dinner
has been postponed until further notice.



We will be serving breakfast on Sunday,
August 4th from 8:30-10:00 AM.

Articles for the September *Open Door* are due
by Friday, July 16th.

Please e-mail them directly to the church office,
bshklch@ptd.net, or leave them in the church
office mailbox in the narthex.

New Members Class - August 18

We will hold a New Members Class on Sun-
day, August 18th at 1:00 PM. Elder Bob Craver will
be leading this class in the conference room.

We will answer questions like: What's really
involved in Christianity? What's this church's sto-
ry? Where is this church headed?

The new members experience also includes a
brief meeting with the elders on Sunday, August
25th after worship. Our new members will be
publicly received tentatively on Sunday, Septem-
ber 8th.

Joining a church is more than just coming to
worship. It's really saying, "I want to cast my lot
with these people as we try and follow Christ with
everything we've got."

If you've been coming to our church for sev-
eral months and feel you are ready, please con-
tact Bob Craver, 570-460-3094 or the church
office, 570-588-6773, so he can plan more effec-
tively for that day.

Prayer Retreat - September 21

We will hold a Prayer Retreat, "The Vine" on
Saturday, September 21st in our church from 9:00
-3:00 PM. The fee is \$10 per person with break-
fast and lunch included.

There is a sign-up poster in the narthex;
please sign up so we can plan more effectively.

We will hold a Community Yard Sale on
Saturday, August 31st from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Spaces are \$15.00 each.

There will be food for sale in the church kitchen.

**All proceeds will go to the mission trip for
summer 2025 to a reservation out west.**

***Please only yard sale items

NO businesses, NO exceptions ***

Volunteers are needed for parking and
helping in the kitchen.

For a spot or any questions,
please call Kristen VanWhy 570-994-3056.

Very happy birthday wishes to:

Joe Bush - August 20

Bob Craver - August 28

and a Happy Anniversary to

Wayne & Theresa Taylor on August 29th.



Notes from Seminary -

Bryon Kenne

Email: bkkenne@liberty.edu



Maybe some of you may not know, but I am in my second year of Seminary and working towards earning my Master of Divinity in Theology through Liberty University. My respect for ministers and pastors that have gone through Seminary only increases daily. In one year alone, I have been required to read thousands of pages of religious literature and have written hundreds of pages of reports, sermons, and numerous commentaries and briefs. It is a wonderful journey, but it is extraordinarily demanding.

This will be my first article in the Open Door, and my desire is to communicate with you something I am learning or have recently learned each month, so you too may grow in your faith while learning something you may not have considered or, like me, simply did not know – which I can assure you is daily for me. The vocabulary I use to define our faith is also changing to include words to help define various aspects of Christianity, words like soteriology, Christology, pneumatology, eschatology, exegesis, hermeneutics, etc. etc. I have just finished a course in Greek language tools at the time of this writing and am two weeks into a course on Old Testament studies.

Let's talk about Romans 3:21-26 – but first, take a moment to pause right here, and open your Bibles to read this passage. Romans 3:21-26 is one of the most pivotal passages in the New Testament; it encapsulates, within these six verses, the very essence of Christianity. In its original context, Paul wrote these words to both Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome, addressing the universal sinfulness of humanity and

the availability of God's righteousness *by grace through faith* in Christ Jesus. Paul emphasized that righteousness from God is a gift of grace, not earned by adherence to the Law as he identifies one verse later (see verse 27), and that Christ Jesus' sacrificial death satisfied God's justice from his mercy seat, offering justification to all who believe. What is justification? It comes from the Greek word – *dikaióō* (δικαιούμενοι), justified, used in verse 24 and, at its heart, means *being put into a right relationship with God*. That is what Jesus did for us, and for this, how can we be thankful enough!

Applying this passage to our modern lives directs us to look at several key theological themes. These are: the universality of sin, the grace of God, the role of faith, and the unity of believers. So how should we apply these themes within our Church and in our personal lives? To answer this question, let's take each one, one at a time.

The Universality of Sin

Paul's declaration that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) is as salient for us today as when Paul wrote this letter to the Romans. We have all witnessed that in contemporary society - moral relativism - is increasingly taught as the 'rule of the land', but this very passage defends us from adopting this misguided pursuit and serves as a humbling reminder of our human imperfections and the need for divine intervention, if not wholesale Christian revival. As Christians, we want to continuously remind ourselves of our own sinfulness, which in turn helps instill humility and tame our judgmental attitudes and thoughts towards others. The fruits of these faithful efforts are deeper empathy and compassion, and these God-fostered traits further encourage believers to extend the love of Christ.

The Grace of God

The concept of being "justified freely by his grace" (Romans 3:24) is central to our Christian faith. The world today more often praises people because of their achievements and, moreover, attempts to tie our human worthiness to efforts, whereas Paul's message serves to elevate the importance of grace, not by deeds least

any person can boast (see Ephesians 2: 8-9). We as disciples of Christ, likewise, are called to embody this grace in our interactions, and, even, offering forgiveness and love to those who may seem undeserving. We pray that these Spirit-driven efforts can serve to transform relationships and communities by introducing those in need with the unconditional love of God.

The Role of Faith

Romans 3:22 emphasizes that "righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe." In today's context, faith remains central to Christian life. This faith is not merely intellectual conjecture where we all nod our heads, but rather, a real, trusting relationship with Christ Jesus, thereby allowing a profound transformation as to how we live and interact in the world. This encourages us, as those who believe, to cultivate a vibrant, active faith that informs our daily decisions and activities. This involves sharing the gospel message with others, participating in community life, and making good ethical choices rooted in our faithful reading of God's word. That's right, I am saying it, keep reading God's word. It truly is how God can speak to our hearts.

The Unity of Believers

Paul emphasizes that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, implying that faith in Christ transcends cultural, political and ethnic boundaries. Today, this calls for us to actively work towards racial and cultural reconciliation, thereby promoting strong unity within the body of Christ. Many Churches have fallen by not heeding this common pitfall. The world we live in is clearly divided, which consequently opens for us a unique opportunity to reflect the inclusive love of God, and demonstrating that in Christ Jesus, diverse and polarized communities can discover common ground and shared purpose.

Next month let's talk about the parallels between Moses and Christ Jesus. Until then, God's blessing on us all.

Financial Report - MaryAnn Conza

6/01/24 to 6/30/24	1/01/24 to 6/30/24
Income \$ 28,823.12	Income \$87,793.48
Expenses <u>16,541.02</u>	Expenses <u>107,048.37</u>
(\$ 12,282.10)	(\$19,254.89)

The shortfall was decreased this month because the general fund was reimbursed by the Laurent Fund for the furnace and air conditioning units that were replaced.

"Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord. If a man wishes to redeem some of his tithe, he shall add a fifth to it. And every tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the Lord. One shall not differentiate between good or bad, neither shall he make a substitute for it; and if he does substitute for it, then both it and the substitute shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.

Leviticus 27:30-33

Blessings to you all,
MaryAnn

If you have a mid-week prayer request for our e-mail prayer team please e-mail Jen Schoonover, schoont@ptd.net or call/text her at 570-534-5752.

Please bring in your Mignosi's Foodtown receipts; Mignosi's generously donates 1% of the receipts minus several ineligible items. There is a box in the narthex for the receipts.

Thank you!

The Angel's Closet has been busy making 111 bundles so far this year.

Any and all donations are appreciated, however, they are especially in need of sleepers in newborn and 0-3 months for both boys and girls as well as infant socks, and diapers size 2 and size 4. Quilts for boys or in neutral colors are also needed.