



# 'Till We Meet Again!

Week of October 10 and 11, 2020

## REFLECTION FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2020:

<sup>23</sup>*But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way.*  
<sup>24</sup>*For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”*

**John 4:23-24**

Greetings my friends!

As our community of faith prepares to return to “in person, indoor worship” I desired to share with you a piece of fiction. I imagined myself to be a participant at this coming weekend’s worship celebration. I imagined how I might feel leaving that worship celebration, particularly if my dreams and expectations for the day were unfulfilled. I imagined a letter that I might write to the local newspaper sharing my thoughts and opinions. Please remember... This is a work of fiction and the thoughts conveyed only belong to my imagination. Also, I would like to implore once again those with high risk factors associated with COVID 19 to please stay at home and not place yourself at risk by attending our indoor worship celebrations.

Dear editor,  
I never would have thought that I would write a letter to you sharing my experience at what should be a very simple and straight forward church worship! On Sunday I arrived at church, like I have every Sunday of my life, dressed and ready for worship. I pulled into the parking lot and immediately knew something was amiss because only two doors were open to the building.



When I finally found where I was supposed to enter church, a person met me at the door and told me I needed to wear a facemask! Me, imagine that! Who has the right to tell me to wear a facemask! I’m not sick! I’m not even all that worried about getting sick! The person at the door told me this was **NON-NEGOTIABLE** and so I begrudgingly complied.

As I walked through the door, nobody was there to hand me my bulletin and shake my hand! Instead on a table I saw worship bulletins, and a little glass of grape juice that was sealed. I was told to pick up those items before I headed to the sanctuary.

When I got to the narthex (space behind sanctuary) I saw three baskets, one for each congregation who has come together during this time of pandemic. I could not believe they wanted me to place my offerings in the baskets BEFORE worship even began! What if I did not like the pastor’s sermon? What if the hymns that we were going to sing did not meet my approval? And then... I still cannot get over this... The person who met me as I was about to go into the sanctuary asked me my name and my phone number!

“You’ve GOT to be kidding!” I thought! “I’ve been coming to this church for 50 years! You don’t know who I am?”

Instead of making a fuss, I simply gave in! I shared my name and my phone number and began to head to “my seat” in the sanctuary when suddenly I was told I had to follow the directions of the usher in front of the sanctuary. I could not believe it! I was not able to sit in the seat that I have been sitting in for 50+ years! What lunacy is this?

Reluctantly I followed the direction of

the usher in front of the sanctuary. I was in a pew, all by myself! Nobody sat directly in front of me and nobody sat directly behind me. Seemed to me like this was a waste of space rather than any kind of social distancing.

As I sat, the organ which I have come to love hearing played was in full glory! The cross, the altar, the paint on the walls, were all the same and suddenly I began to feel a little bit more comfortable because once again I was worshipping God!

Everyone was wearing those darn face-masks, even the pastors! The pastor shared with us that we were to always keep our face-masks on, that we were not allowed to sing any of the hymns, and that at the time of passing the peace we couldn't leave our spaces for fear of violating social distancing. UGH!!!!

When the worship began, it felt a little awkward, but also strangely comforting. The prayers, the music, being in the presence of my friends even though I could not see their faces behind their masks or get close to them, gave me a good feeling.

The prayers, the Holy Scripture, and surprisingly even the sermon seemed to be filled with God's presence among us.

When it came time for Holy Communion, it was challenging to open those little cups of grape juice with a wafer on top of them... yet, ironically, Communion still felt "holy." I guess God can get into those elements even within the midst of this pandemic.

Following worship, the usher began to dismiss the congregation from the back of the sanctuary to the front in order that we would not walk past people on our way out of the building. We were told that we should not stay inside the building and that if we stopped to talk to our friends outside that we should remain masked and still practice social distancing!

As I got into my car to head home, I began to reflect on what I just experienced. Yes, it was almost like going to worship in a foreign land and experiencing worship in a completely

strange way. Yet... God was there!

God was there among the scattered people across the pews. God was there with all the people who were adorned in facemasks. God was there in God's Holy Word, the prayers, the sermons, and the music. God was there in the "breaking of the bread and the cup!"

As different as the worship celebration was, I truly enjoyed what has always been constant!

Yes, Jesus once said, "true worshippers will worship in spirit and in truth!" and that's exactly what we did.

Until next time,  
Keep trusting God, keep washing those hands,  
and be at peace with one another!

PJ

#### **REFLECTION FOR TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2020**

This past weekend's "Blessing of the Animals" got me to thinking about all the wonderful things that animals can teach us about God and faith. Allow me to share with you some fun animal facts I discovered.



**Squirrels** can drive us totally nuts by digging up our gardens and flower beds. They uproot flower bulbs and either eat them or rebury the red tulip bulbs in the yellow tulip section of the flower bed! Or they bury acorns or other nuts where we don't want them. But consider this...because squirrels bury nuts by simply doing what squirrels do, millions of new trees grow every year! As disciples of Christ, when we share our faith through our actions (and sometimes even with words), we plant seeds of faith in others. Just as God created tiny acorns that can grow into tall and majestic oak trees, God nurtures and grows the seeds of faith that we often unknowingly plant in others.



**Sea Otters** hold onto each other's paws when they sleep so they don't drift apart. We can learn

a lot from sea otters! Imagine what the world would look like if we all held onto each other so that those on the fringes of society were not in danger of drifting away, alone. Imagine that by holding on to them, we showed them they are part of the community and welcome! God holds us close in this way. God won't ever let us drift so far away that we are outside of God's reach.



**Elephants** show great empathy for others, even for different species. An elephant will respond to another ele-

phant's distress by acting the same exact way. Researchers have witnessed elephants moving to stand beside a distressed elephant and touching it with their trunk in order to provide comfort. Human beings have, to an extent, become numb to the suffering of others. We have only to turn on the nightly news to hear story after story of violence, death and destruction. We hear it and see it so frequently that it often doesn't faze us – it's more of the same of what we heard the day before, and the day before that, and so on. But what if, instead of tuning it out, we took action and stood shoulder to shoulder with those that are suffering? Standing strong beside one another, hand in hand (or trunk to trunk!), we work towards ending violence, we hold up those affected by violence until they are once again are strong enough to join the fight?

It's easy to simply look at the many creatures of God's creation that we share the planet with and enjoy their beauty or uniqueness. It takes more intentional effort to get to know more about those different creatures. In the same way, it's easy to judge those around us simply by what we see – the car in their driveway, the color or style of their hair, the clothes that they wear, the job they have – or don't have, the political signs in their yard. But to really know about an animal or our neighbor, we have to know what lies beneath the visual trap-

pings. We have to take the time to get to know them for who they are. On the surface, polar bears are beautiful to look at and make for a cute, cuddly stuffed animal, but when you learn more about them, you'll find out that they are the only animal that will stalk a human being for miles and eat them. Not so cute and cuddly after all! Elephants, while incredibly empathetic, are also easily agitated. With their incredible size and the ability to simply trample whatever is agitating them, this makes them very dangerous. Not quite the gentle giant portrayed by the character Dumbo! Like the old adage says, you can't judge a book by its cover – or an animal by its cuteness, or our neighbor by their appearance. We must first open the book and get to know them. Now, more than ever it seems, this is so important.

**Prayer:** God of creation, we give you thanks for all creatures, great and small. Open our eyes and our hearts to, not only the beauty of your creation, but to the wonderful things your creation can teach us about you, others, and ourselves. Help us to plant seeds of faith in others; to hold on to each other so that no one drifts apart from the community, especially those most vulnerable; to stand in empathy and strength beside our distressed neighbors. Help us to always remember to really get to know our neighbors and not to come to conclusions based on that which we can only see on the surface. All these things we ask in your Holy Name, Amen.

Vicar Jamie

#### GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS

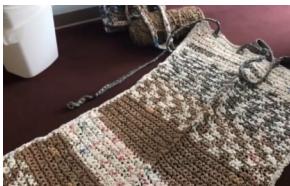


Please read these important updates on UPG Outreach from God's Work. Our Hands and Stewards, Angels in Ministry.

**"Days" of Service** - That's correct - this fall there will be several "Days" of Service instead of one specific day. When conditions are safe, we will schedule the Youth Car Wash (Josh

Gulotta) and the Ft. Hill Cemetery Clean-up (Cindy Kemp). The same will be true of the intergenerational rock painting (Lois Ritchie). Dates to be announced later.

During the summer, Louise Fielding, Jean Finn, Elizabeth Elterich, Kathy Stephen and Helga Rimonneau have sewn and filled twenty-five bags with school supplies for Lutheran World Relief (funded by a Thrivent Action Team).



**Mat Ministry - SOS!!** We need many more hands to turn the plastic bags we've collected into plarn for those who are cro-

cheting mats. The process is quite easy - take each bag, smooth it out lengthwise, fold it several times upon itself until you have a narrow strip, cut off the handles at the top (making sure to cut off any curved edges), cut off the seam at the bottom, fold the strip in half and cut at the folded edge, fold again in half and cut again at the folded edge. You should now have 4 strips that can be fastened together by looping the ends of the strips over each other and pulling gently to keep the knot as small as possible. Keep knotting strips together until they can be rolled up into a ball. Please save your plastic scraps and any bags that were not usable and bring them and your balls of plarn to the back porch of Light of Christ. You will see where to put them. Additional bags for making plarn are available on the porch at Light of Christ. PLEASE HELP - thank you!

### CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR THE MILITARY

The Bleier family is collecting *Not Everyone Will Be Home For Christmas*  
Christmas cards to be sent to the *Support Our Troops*  
U.S. active duty military. The cards  
may be purchased or handmade  
with a personal greeting  
addressed to Dear Warrior  
and signed only with your  
first name, city, and state. Homemade cards  
should not be larger than and 8x11 sheet folded in half.  
Cards do not need to be in an envelope, if enclosed in



an envelope, do not seal envelope. Please keep in mind that our military troops are diverse in their holiday practices and beliefs. Contact Joe by email or cell at bleier.joe.amy@gmail.com or (610) 737-6613 to arrange pick up. We are hoping to have all the cards collected by October 25, 2020. For more information feel free to contact us or visit [www.militaryholidaycardchallenge.com](http://www.militaryholidaycardchallenge.com).

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School will be held indoors 9:30-10:30 AM on our LOC Campus. Wearing masks is required.



Classes are held for children ages three by October 1<sup>st</sup> through adults. We welcome all!!! Please call or email Lynn Terry with any questions about our safety procedures [lynnjt680@verizon.net](mailto:lynnjt680@verizon.net) 610-554-4090.

Confirmation class will be held on October 11<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-7:00 PM on our LOC Campus in the fellowship hall. We are looking forward to resuming these classes in-person with our young people!

### NOW VIRTUAL...THE 5TH ANNUAL MONOCACY FARM FOOD FEST HAS A NEW DATE!



Visit [Monocacyfarmproject.org](http://Monocacyfarmproject.org), Facebook, or Instagram for more details or updates about our Online Auction which will Begin on Oct. 19 at 11:00 AM and end on Oct. 24 at 5:00 PM. Our popular goodie bags will be available for sale and go to all auction winners! There will be online info sessions and demos. All proceeds benefit the Monocacy Farm Project in Bethlehem, PA.

We're extremely grateful for your support. Thank you for helping to make our annual fundraising festival a success.

### CLOTHING DRIVE

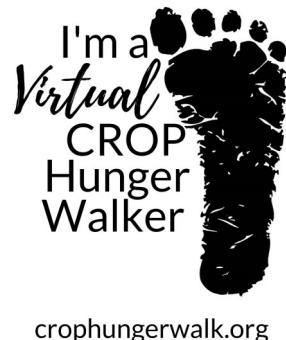
The **Drop Off Deadline** for the clothing drive was **October 5, 2020**. Thank you for your generous donations!

## CROP WALK

The CROP Hunger Walk will kick off at 1:00 PM, Sunday, October 11. This year's event will be very different from past years due to restrictions and concerns of the pandemic. We will not walk as one large group, rather small groups from the participating churches will plan their own routes and individuals may walk their own route separately. For information, e-mail [bethcropwalk@att.net](mailto:bethcropwalk@att.net) or call 610-216-3567.

Our three campuses each have a representative you can speak with: Donna Mackaravitz (Light of Christ), Penny Weiss (St. John's Windish) or Cindy Kemp (St. Peter's). You can also register or donate online now. Go to the Bethlehem webpage, <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/bethlehempa>. From there you can donate to our UPG team or a specific walker or even register yourself to join us.

Looking forward to seeing you on October 11.



[crophungerwalk.org](http://crophungerwalk.org)

[www.unangst-treefarm.com](http://www.unangst-treefarm.com) for more information. No raindate scheduled. To sign up, please contact Tracy Haas at 610-533-9145.

## FROM THE MAILROOM



September 29, 2020

Dear Friends of Northeast Community Center,

On behalf of the Staff of Northeast Community Center, we want to extend our sincerest gratitude to you for your very generous gift in the amount of \$500.00 on 8/8/2020 towards our 2020 Summer Appeal.

NECC has remained open during the entire COVID-19 Pandemic, and we continue to be proud to serve our community during this difficult time. Now more than ever, we're so grateful for individuals such as you who have volunteered, donated to, and advocated for NECC through the years. At a time when everything feels uncertain, we find comfort and encouragement knowing that you care about our cause.

Your gift is greatly appreciated and will directly support the struggling families impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Because of your generosity, we can continue our food pantry operations and implement new ways to serve our community as we adapt to ever-changing circumstances due to COVID-19.

Thank you for believing in our mission and the children and families of the Marvine-Pembroke community. We wish you and your family health, safety, and happiness and want you to know that together, we can overcome all things.

With Sincere Gratitude,  
Grace Young



Please join us for an all age youth group and family event at the Unangst Tree Farms Pumpkin Patch on Saturday, October 10, 2020.

Plan to arrive/meet at 10:00 AM at Unangst Tree Farm, 7317 Beth Bath Pike, Bath, PA 18014. Masks required! No corn shed this year! At 10:15 AM we will be taking a group photo and hayride to the pumpkin patch with group discounts on pumpkins at checkout under UPG. At 11:00 AM families can enjoy the following items on their own: Petting Zoo, Farm Market, Snack Stand, Large Maze (discounts may apply) 1 hour, Small Maze (discounts may apply) 15 minutes. Depart at your convenience. Please visit

**THIS WEEK IN THE UPG**  
**OCTOBER 10—OCTOBER 18**

**Saturday October 10**

4:45 PM      Worship (Facebook)

**Sunday October 11**

8:00 AM      Worship (LoC)  
9:30 AM      Sunday School (LoC)  
11:00 AM      Worship (LoC)

**Monday October 12**

**Columbus Day—Church Offices Closed**

7:00 PM      Coffee & Conversation (Zoom)

**Tuesday October 13**

**Wednesday October 14**

**Thursday October 15**

6:30 PM      Bible Study (Zoom)

**Friday October 16**

**Saturday October 17**

4:45 PM      Worship (Facebook)

**Sunday October 18**

8:00 AM      Worship (St. John's Windish)  
9:30 AM      Sunday School (LoC)  
11:00 AM      Worship (St. John's Windish)