

May 2020

The Higher Ground Herald

West Newton United Presbyterian Church

300 S. Third and E. Main Streets in West Newton, PA

From the Pastor's Desk...

May Worship Schedule

Worship will be broadcast on the Church's Facebook page Sunday Mornings at 10 am until further notice.

May 3rd Online Worship
with Virtual Communion

"Revival" (Sermon Series on Jonah)
Jonah, Chapter 3

May 10th Online Worship
"Disturbing Grace"
(Sermon Series on Jonah)

Jonah, Chapter 4

May 17th Ascension Sunday Online
"Never Without Him"
Luke 24: 44-53

May 24th Memorial Day Service

Online Worship
"Fallacy of Patriotic Worship"
Psalm 29:2

May 31st Pentecost Sunday

Online Worship
"Expect the Unexpected"
Acts 2: 1-21

Apart Yet Together

For the last 6 weeks or so (feels like much longer) we as the church family have been apart physically. Perhaps some of you may have enjoyed this separation but judging by the many discussions I've had with members of our church family, we long to be reunited again in worship and other activities. I've tried to be very intentional about what this time of separation means in all aspects. I believe I've learned some things. My questions for all of you is, "What has this time of isolation/separation taught you?"

Well, first of all, distance had made many of us more intentional about connection. And technology helped that connection become personal. I have thanked God repeatedly for the technology that allows us to see each other and engage in conversations almost as if we were truly next to one another. This truth contains lessons for the many people, many churches, that have closed down in-person services. With decades of personal long-distance, internet-aided family communication under my belt, I am assured them that not only is it possible to stay connected with those we call family when we don't see each other in person, but there are opportunities in times like these for even deeper and richer connection than we had before.

Secondly, social media really does have the power to be social again. Sharing memes, pictures of pets, and community encouragement, personal struggles, verses of Scripture, etc. can take the place of arguments and advertising. In other words, social media CAN BE a positive social aspect of life if we so choose to use it that way.

Third, online connection can often reach further than in-person connections ever could. People who may not have visited our church in person have been joining online for Sunday worship. Through the effort of learning some technology, we've had more than triple the number of views on Facebook than we'd had for regular in-person attendance. That's a great thing! It's the modern-day version of fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). Who knows how God might choose to include those who are far off into his family through this?

Fourth, we're calling/texting/etc one another more. For many people, this is the first time they've had a longer-than-two-minute conversation with someone from church in a long time, and it makes us wonder why we've fallen out of the habit of really sharing our lives. We are seeing one another more attentively again. We're meeting in small groups via Zoom for Bible study and while it has a bit of a learning curve, there's something great, personally rewarding about actually seeing one another's faces, rather than worshipping with everyone's eyes toward the front, at least from the perspective of the Pastor.

(Continued...)

Fifth, while it is possible to stay connected and even grow in our relationships while we're apart, the fact is that it's hard. The longings the Apostle Paul expressed in Thessalonians have a new purpose as I read them: his longing to be reunited, his concern for how the church is doing while they're separated from him. In all this, there is a gift to be found. The desire to be united as a family shows that church is not just a weekly routine, not just a necessary chore, not just an obligation. The reason, I believe we desire to be together is because it matters. Our family of faith is more than a holy habit; it's a holy home, where our family is. Not being together is a reminder that there are people we belong to. Although church can be complicated, frustrating, even contentious at times, as all relationships are, we are reminded in these days that we love one another after all.

Sixth, church family is real family. I've preached and proclaimed this since the first day I was in West Newton and now I believe it more than ever. The biblical truth is that when we speak of church family, we are describing a personal, heart-felt reality. Scripture describes our relationship to God and one another in many ways: He is the vine, we are the branches. He is the rock, and we are stones in the temple. Yet, when the Bible speaks of God being our Father and us being his children, it is describing something profoundly true. "Oh, how great the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God, and that is what we are!" says the Gospel of John. We are really and truly adopted into his family, which makes us real and true brothers and sisters of one another. The New Testament addresses us this way some 135 times: It is central to the way we are to see ourselves.

In this time of separation, we are ourselves a family in Christ, brothers and sisters who are together-while-apart, and the invitation for us to connect and grow is ours for the taking. I hope you have taken advantage of staying connected in some way or another. Until the day we are united in our beautiful sanctuary, worshiping and praising God as one (we need a big celebration for this day), know that I continue to pray for you daily and thank God for our family!

Grace and Peace,

Pastor John

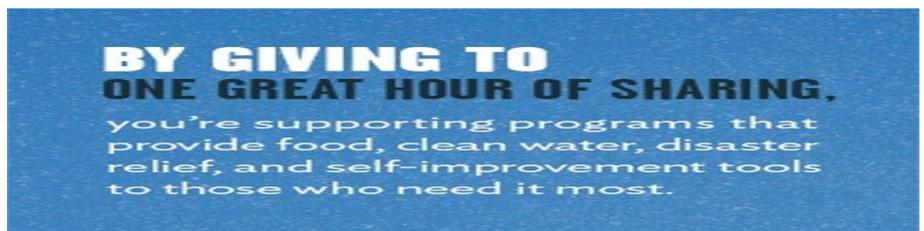
We want your photos!

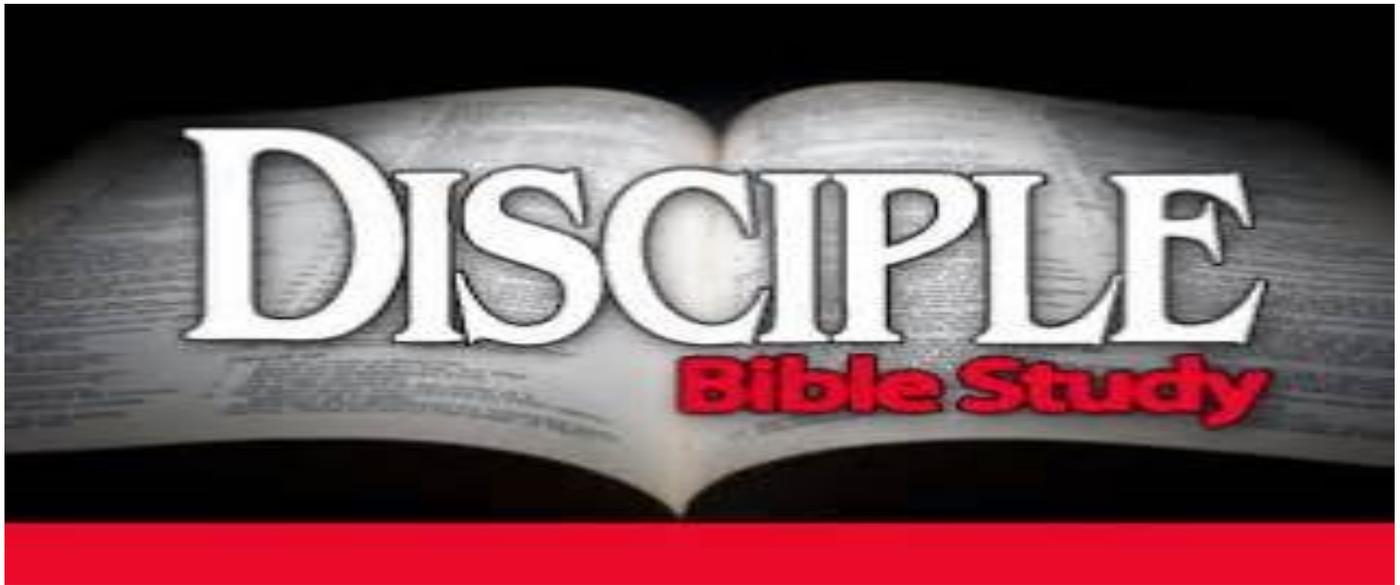


If you take any photos throughout the year at church activities please share them with us. They can be emailed to the office at any time. Thank You!

One Great Hour of Sharing.

Fish banks will be collected at a later date.





Disciples Bible Study

In May we will be studying the book of Jude. This a very short New Testament book (only 25 verses) but it is filled with a timely message for today. In this book we find warnings about false teachers, who are the same false teachers, that Peter wrote about in his second letter. The issue for Jude is that such teachers are leading believers of the early church into a state of apostasy.

With this, we will end our weekly Bible study for the summer months, as is our normal routine. We will pick back up on Wednesday, September 2 at 6pm.

Until further notice Disciples Bible will be held online via Zoom on Wednesdays at 6pm.

May 6 – Introduction and Comparison to 2 Peter

May 13 – Verses 1-10

May 20 – Verses 11-19

May 27 – Verses 20-25



PW Birthday Offering will be collected in **May**. The recipients for this year are:

Center for Social Assistance to the Disabled, Family, and Children, Assisted Living Facility, Davydovo, Russia
GAP Ministries of Augusta, Georgia to Expand Access and Service Space, Northeast Georgia Presbytery
Community Presbyterian Child Learning Center in Payson, Arizona, Childcare and Pre kindergarten Facility
Liberty Community Church in Minneapolis, MN, Northside Healing Space Expansion, Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

This offering can be sent in with your regular offering. Make checks payable to WNUPC.

PW CT (Coordinating Team) will **not** meet on **Tuesday, May 12**.

PW United Circle will **not** meet on **Wednesday, May 20**.

PW Sewing will not meet until September. If you would like to sew at home, please see Jo Lynn Lowanse for supplies.

Redstone PW Retreat at Pine Springs Camp to be held on **Tuesday, May 26** has been cancelled.

2020 High School Graduates – The following High School Graduates from our congregation will be honored by PW on **May 31st if we are worshipping in person**: Steven Manon, Cody Ulander, and Alexis Yuhas. If you know of any other names, please give them to Winnie Davis.

~~~~~  
**Financial News**

Contribution Envelopes are available to anyone regularly attending our services, even if you are not a member. Linda Blick, Financial Secretary, will be glad to fill your request.

As Financial Secretary I urge you to continue with your weekly or monthly giving to our church. We must pay the monthly utility bills and continue support of all our personnel. Several special offerings which are taken in the Spring are the **One Great Hour of Sharing** and the **PW Birthday Offering**. Also the monthly **Food Basket** is still being collected. All of these offerings can be combined on one check, just list the amounts for each one on the memo line. Thank you for your on-going support of our church and missions.

Blessings,  
Linda Blick



**Chancel Choir**

Chancel Choir is canceled until further notice. Once they are able to return, they will rehearse on Thursday nights at 7pm. We are always looking for more voices!

**Bell Choir**

Bell choir is on leave for the remainder of the spring and summer. They will return in the fall. Please contact Joyce Pawlik for more information or to become involved..



**First Tuesday Fellowship Dinner**

First Tuesday Fellowship Dinners will return again in September.



**Men's Breakfast**

Men's Breakfast is held on the third Saturday of the month at Gary's Chuckwagon at 9 a.m. Men's Breakfast will resume in September.



Coffee Fellowship Hour usually takes place following worship, on the second Sunday of every month, in our social room. Coffee Hour for April is canceled.

Many people in our community often struggle to provide food for their families. The second Sunday of each month, we will be collecting money in support of the Westmoreland County Food Pantry now located at our church the second Friday of each month. There will be labeled envelopes in the bulletins the weeks that we are collecting. Thank you in advance for your generosity. The next collection will be



# Westmoreland County Food Bank, Inc.

The Westmoreland County Food Pantry will be located at our church going forward. This takes place the second Friday of every month.

The next Food Pantry pick up will be May 8. Until further notice we only need a minimum number of people helping. However, if you would like to help with this important mission in the future please contact the church office (724-872-7414) or Linda Shoaf (724-872-7857).

### Our Session

Clerk of Session: Kris Edwards

#### Class of 2020

Annetta Carney

Michele Coleman

Anne Hustwit

Becky Moran

#### Class of 2021

Clark Detman

Ron Chamberlain

Colleen Martinelli

Harry Hepler

#### Class of 2022

Deb King

Joyce Pawlik

Pete Pritchard

Karen Murray



### May Birthdays

|                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| Jo Lynn Lowanse    | 1st  |
| Lloyd Mauk         | 1st  |
| Fran Ritchie       | 1st  |
| Belinda Derr       | 2nd  |
| Wally Ritchie      | 4th  |
| Vi Pore            | 4th  |
| Cathy Hall         | 9th  |
| Alyssa Brown       | 11th |
| Edward Landini     | 12th |
| Brandon Martini    | 12th |
| Avery Mesher       | 13th |
| Nadia Lewis        | 14th |
| Rainey Craig       | 15th |
| Kathy Sandy        | 15th |
| Rick Coleman       | 18th |
| Christian Bojarski | 19th |
| Jane Medsger       | 19th |
| Terri Day          | 20th |
| George Harvey      | 22nd |
| Kim Puskar         | 25th |
| Steven Burkett     | 26th |
| Marcia Harris      | 30th |



happy anniversary

### May Anniversaries

|                            |      |
|----------------------------|------|
| Jack & Amy Kuiphoff        | 3rd  |
| Shawn & Colleen Martinelli | 6th  |
| Allen & Cheryl Barozzie    | 11th |
| Paul & Alice Kurzdorfer    | 18th |
| Greg & Monica Moody        | 19th |
| Dennis & Diane Koget       | 20th |
| Ed & Joyce Pawlik          | 20th |
| Bob & Kim Mesher           | 27th |

We would love to announce and  
celebrate your birthday and wedding  
anniversary. Please let us know when it  
is...

# May 2020

| Sun                                                         | Mon | Tue | Wed                             | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|---------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
|                                                             |     |     |                                 |     | 1   | 2   |
| 3<br>10 Worship w<br>virtual com-<br>munion via<br>Facebook | 4   | 5   | 6<br>6 Bible Study<br>via ZOOM  | 7   | 8   | 9   |
| 10<br>10 Worship<br>via Facebook                            | 11  | 12  | 13<br>6 Bible Study<br>via ZOOM | 14  | 15  | 16  |
| 17<br>10 Worship<br>via Facebook<br>Session<br>mtg.via zoom | 18  | 19  | 20<br>6 Bible Study<br>via ZOOM | 21  | 22  | 23  |
| 24/31<br>10 Worship<br>via Facebook                         | 25  | 26  | 27<br>6 Bible Study<br>via ZOOM | 28  | 29  | 30  |

## Bulletin/Prayer List Changes

Please submit any announcements for the bulletin or changes to the prayer list by the **end of the day on Wednesdays each week.**

Deadline for updates and notices for the June publication of *The Higher Ground Herald* will be

**Wednesday, May 27 .**

Contact the church office by phone at 724-872-7414 or email at [wnupc1@gmail.com](mailto:wnupc1@gmail.com)

Office hours are Monday—Friday 9 a.m.—2 p.m.

## Would you like a visit from Pastor John?

Or, do you know someone who would?

Please contact him at 724-872-7414 (office) or 606-261-0232 (cell).

Email: [wnupc1@gmail.com](mailto:wnupc1@gmail.com)

Website [WNUPC.com](http://WNUPC.com)

