



The Carillon

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The monthly newsletter of
St. Mark's United Church of Christ
426 North Eighth Street
Lebanon, PA 17046
(717) 273-0151

E-mail: st.marks426@verizon.net

www.saintmarksucc.com

Office Hours – 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM – Monday through Friday

Staff

Rev. David A. Jones, Pastor
Sam Brandt, Sexton
Gayle A. Olden, Secretary
Cindy Johnson, Organist
Kathy Follett - Consistory President
Ron Follett – Church Treasurer
Dawn Shultz – Consistorial Secretary
Pine Acres – (717) 272-5011

EVANGELISM MESSAGE

Look to the Sun

& Shadows will fall behind.

The Journey Continues...

Lately, I've experienced a feeling of hopefulness. Are you feeling it, too? The pendulum finally feels like it is swinging in a positive direction as the weather is getting warmer, there are signs of spring everywhere, vaccines are going into people's arms, the economy is starting to ramp up, and life at St. Mark's is slowly getting back to normal again. We are able to safely sing hymns during worship again, plans are being made to start up Children's Church and Sunday School, the youth folded over 300 Palm Crosses and mailed them out to the members of our congregation, and others are finding creative ways for us to "be the church" once again.

We are exceptionally blessed at St. Mark's with many creative, hard working, and faithful people in our congregation who have made it possible for us to worship in person safely since Father's Day last June. Did you know, that of the 4,852 churches in the UCC across the nation, only 20% have been conducting in-person worship services? Even in the Penn Central Conference, only 50% of the churches are conducting in-person worship services. It's hard to imagine, but the vast majority of UCC churches haven't held in-person worship services since March of last year. Some of those churches are planning to hold their first in-person services soon, and some realize their sanctuaries are too small to keep good social distance, so they will be using a sanctuary from another church to hold their services.

For the churches that are planning to meet for the first time, hearing their plans to safely gather together makes me smile because they are putting in place the same mitigation efforts we utilized last year. I smile because hearing their plans reminds me of how far we've come, how much we have learned, how hard we have worked, and how blessed we have been along the way. We have been singing in the sanctuary for the past few weeks now (and it sounds SO GOOD! ☺), but the churches that are finally planning to worship in person are not singing yet. Sadly for them, they don't have people like Tim Brown or Ken Shultz who are willing and able to lead the singing of the hymns, so their music will be from organ or piano only.

Even when we weren't able to meet for worship for a period of 13 weeks last spring, we were able to broadcast our services on Facebook Live and on a Conference Call telephone line. Did you know there are churches in rural areas of the Penn Central Conference who aren't meeting in-person and they don't have the technology to broadcast their services to their members? For over a year, their worship services have been conducted through the Post Office as they mail out bulletins and typed sermons to their members every week.

Believe me, I admire the tenacity of these congregations to continue worshipping and supporting their church throughout this pandemic. Their faithfulness and dedication is a testament to their love of God and their church. But I'm also thankful to serve a congregation that has members willing to step up and step out in faith like we have at St. Mark's. We are a faithful and dedicated congregation. And because we strive to keep our members safe, we are doing a great job of following the path of our Savior. So as the pendulum continues to swing in a positive direction, let us give God our thanks and praise for the opportunities we have in the life of our church. The storm clouds haven't completely gone away, but there is hope on the horizon. We are doing the work we are called to do. Thanks be to God.

The Journey Continues...

Pastor Dave

What's happening at St. Mark's

Palm Crosses

As with all of us, the Youth were looking for something to do where they could be together so the Palm Cross tradition was dusted off. Over 300 palm crosses were made and were mailed to 180 homes throughout the United States. Hopefully the cross (s) made it to your home as all envelopes were put in four mailboxes throughout Lebanon County on Saturday March 20th.

Holy Week services

April 1st – Maundy Thursday – 7:30

April 2nd – Tenebrae Service – 7:30

April 4th – Easter Service – 9:00

All Holy Week services will have the option of In Person, FaceBook Live and Conference Call. If you are watching the live stream or listening on the Conference Call for the Maundy Thursday and Easter Service, please have your Communion elements available.

For Easter morning, the only in person service is 9:00 AM. In addition to the normal seating in the Sanctuary, we will have some seating available in the choir loft and the narthex if needed. If chairs are needed in the narthex, they will be placed appropriately for social distancing.

Egg Hunt

The Kid's Team will be hosting an Egg Hunt at South Hills on Saturday April 3rd. It will start promptly at 10:00 AM. Enter off the Klein Ave entrance and we are the first pavilion on the right. Masks are required. Unfortunately, the Easter Bunny got Phillies spring training tickets so will be out of town for the Egg Hunt.

These Days/Upper Room

These Days and Upper Rooms continue to be ordered. If you are a reader of one of these meditational devotions, they are available in the church office. If you are able to swing by the church office, Gayle would be happy to give you a copy. If you are not able to stop by the church office, contact Gayle and we will either drop one off or put it in the mail.

Mulching the Church

We hope to mulch the church property this year. The plan is to do it a Saturday or Sunday in April. The day will depend upon when people are available to help. If you are interested in helping in this project, please contact Kathy. Masks are required.

Women's Retreat

The Spring Women's Retreat will be held in Fellowship Hall with socially distant seating. The date for the women's retreat is April 24th from 8:30 – 12:15. The current guidelines of the church do require that a mask be worn at all times while in the building. Feel free to bring your own beverage and snack - food and drink will not be provided at this event.

Our topic is "Friendships of Faith" and the sessions will be led by Becky Colban and Dawn Shultz.

Social time is scheduled from 8:30 am to 9:00 am with the retreat beginning right after 9:00 am. A voluntary offering will be taken and all the money will be used to buy items from the wish list of the Lebanon Rescue Mission.

Kathy

Union Canal, Pennsylvania

By Jim Schucker

(Author's Note: For the last several months, I have been including articles about the Union Canal, as it was this construction which created the need for homes, schools and churches here on what is now the north side of Lebanon. Perhaps I should have started with a brief history of the canal itself. Below is that history.)

In 1690 William Penn traveled through the Lebanon Valley (walking, following the Indian trails) in the exploration of his new colony. His goal at the time was to establish a community in the wilderness located along the Susquehanna River (probably where Middletown is today). To be successful in this venture, Penn knew he needed a good means of "communication" (or method of transportation) to move people into the new settlement along with good which would be needed, and once the community became successful, a means of transportation would again be needed to move their raw products to market in the east. Penn suggested connecting the Schuylkill and Susquehanna Rivers with a canal. Those around him, talked him out of beginning the project, but he did note his ideas in his journal.

Years later, after reading the writings of Penn, a group in Philadelphia known as the American Philosophical Society under the leadership of the famous astronomer, David Rittenhouse, surveyed Penn's proposed route for a canal beginning in 1762 in order to determine whether a canal could actually be constructed from river to river and passing through the Lebanon Valley. This survey was the first survey of a canal route in the new world. By this time, however, the colonies were preparing for war with England and so little thought was given to the construction of a canal.

After the war, Robert Morris, the financier of the Revolutionary War, organized a group of men and obtained a charter from the State to build a canal from Reading to Middletown through the Lebanon Valley. Thus, began the S. & S. Canal Co. A year later, another charter was obtained by the same investors to construct a canal from the Delaware River at Philadelphia to the Schuylkill and up the river to the Reading area (the D. & S. Canal Co.).

The S. & S. Canal Co. began construction in 1792 on Tulpehocken Manor Plantation which extended from Ramona Rd. near Myerstown to east of Fifteenth Avenue. Five locks were constructed of brick (they didn't hold water very well) and about ten miles of canal. Upon approaching Lebanon, the workers hit a course of limestone (Calcite Quarry) which was very deep and difficult to cut. In their attempt to do so, they spent the last of the \$400,000 which was the capital to complete the canal. All work came to a standstill. Later on, this section of the canal through the limestone was built just wide enough for the passage of one boat at a time and became known as "The Narrows". (Narrows Drive gets its name from this section of the canal.)

A year after construction began, President Washington who had been the president of a canal company himself, visited this canal and stayed at Tulpehocken Manor. He was much impressed with what he saw. He returned a year later (1793) for another reason, however. There had been a skirmish between the Germans of the area and the newly arrived Irish. A clash of cultures. The incident had caught the attention of the President of the United States, and he came here personally to investigate the "Myerstown Riot" as it was later called.

From the beginning, the local Germans were opposed to the construction of a canal. Their land was being taken even though they were justly compensated for it. They were busy farmers and did not take part in the construction of the canal. To obtain labors, the company went to Boston and New York and hired the Irish immigrants who were migrating to the New World at this time. They were shipped to Philadelphia, brought into the Lebanon Valley in wagons, put up in barracks of about 40 men each, and fed. For their 12-hour days, six days a week, they were compensated with a wage of 6 or 7 dollars a month or a dollar, fifty a week. They did have a fringe benefit, however. The company usually hired an older teenager known as a jigger man. It was his job to give the Irishman a shot of whiskey once an hour to keep them happy and working.

In order to generate money to begin construction again on the canal, the S. & S. Canal Company went to the state of Pennsylvania and asked if they could run a lottery to raise funds. The State granted them permission to raise a total of \$400,000, 2/3 to go to the S. & S. Canal and 1/3 to the Delaware and Schuylkill Canal Co. But at this time in PA history, there were so many lotteries in operation that no one was making any money. During the early 1800's over \$33,000,000 in prizes were awarded, but little money came back to the canal company. They had anticipated a return of 15% on the lottery money but received less than 5%. The unfinished canal continued to deteriorate.

By 1811 the State was becoming concerned that this canal was not going to be finished. All during colonial days, Philadelphia had been the leading seaport in the New World. If the port did not receive the raw products from the interior of the new nation, this status would change. In order to "start-jump" this lagging enterprise, the State required the Schuylkill and Susquehanna Canal Co. to unite with the Delaware and Schuylkill Canal Co. (coming from Philadelphia to Reading), and the Union Canal Navigation Co. was formed. Its first president was Samuel Mifflin for whom Mifflin Street in Lebanon is named. Unfortunately, the new company still didn't have the finances to complete the canal.

By 1819 the Erie Canal was being constructed across New York State and the Tidewater Canal was coming up from Baltimore. The handwriting was on the wall; raw products were starting to be shipped either north or south rather than east. At this point the Pennsylvania Legislature passed an act which guaranteed new investor in the company a 6% return per year until the new canal company was up and running and could pay returns to its investors. This interest was to come from earning of a Union Canal lottery, the only lottery which was allowed in the state by this time. With this act, money came in and the canal was finally finished, the tunnel being the last construction.

The original plans for a canal through the Lebanon Valley, had the canal following the Tulpehocken Creek from Reading, and then jumping to the waters of the Quittapahilla as it flowed through Lebanon and on to join the Swatara back of Palmyra. William Weston, the first engineer (of 1792) wanted to take the canal to the Swatara a shorter route. His idea was to turn north where WalMart is today and then west along the north side of the ridge which creates Maple Street and Tunnel Hill Rd. The route, which was finally chosen, however, went through North Lebanon Borough just north of the city of Lebanon (which ended at Church St.) This route is 32 feet higher in elevation than the Quittapahilla, the natural drainage area of the Valley. As a result, water introduced into the canal was hard to contain for two reasons. Lebanon has limestone soil which does not hold water very well, and the water would naturally want to seep down to the Quittapahilla. When the canal was finished and water was introduced through Lebanon, the canal indeed would not retain water! William Lehman, the first superintendent of the Union Canal and a master carpenter by trade, had the canal lined from the South Portal of the tunnel to Prescott - a distance of 6 miles - with two inch thick oak, tongue-and-groove planking. This task was completed in just 4 months' time and thus created a large leaky tub which held enough water for navigation. The problem, however, was that every 7 or 8 years the wood had to be replaced. Late in the mid 1850's, the canal was "puddled", that is, during the winter months when there was no water in the canal, a mixture of clay and lime was placed on the bottom of the canal and mules run back and forth to stomp the mixture into the cracks. This is probably what is holding the water in sections of the canal today.

Lebanon is also the summit between the Schuylkill and the Susquehanna Rivers. From Lebanon to Reading there is a drop of 300 feet in elevation and from Lebanon to the Susquehanna, a drop of 200 feet. This meant that 92 locks had to be built to lift the boats from Reading through Lebanon to Middletown, the end of the canal on the west. Besides having water seep through the limestone bottom, every time a lock gate was opened, water escaped. Therefore, water had to be continually run into the summit in Lebanon. Stoevers Dam Reservoir was thus created, followed by Stracks Dam and much later, Cattail Run Reservoir or Lions Lake . All these just to keep the summit watered. There even was

a forty-foot water wheel placed in the Quittapahilla (the stream which runs through Lebanon) to lift the water to a 45 foot high trough which ran north along Front Street (Lincoln Ave.) to the canal.

In order to tap the waters of the Swatara, a tunnel had to be built through Gravel Hill to reach the waters of Cattail Run or Clark's Run. The year was 1825, and a young engineer named Simeon Guilford was placed in charge of the project. Two contractors were hired to do the job, one to start on the south side of the hill and the other on the north side. Working with only hand-held star drills, sledgehammers, gun powder, picks, shovels, and wheelbarrows, the teams began to dig. Unfortunately, four Irishmen lost their lives when the initial excavation was done on the south portal. The men worked two twelve-hour shifts, round the clock, six days a week for over two years before the teams met in the tunnel. When they were finished, they had a tunnel 729 feet long, 18 feet wide as it is today, but only 15 feet high (three feet less than it is today). About 30 years after the canal opened, it was enlarged to accommodate larger boats from other canals. At that time another 3 feet was taken off the ceiling of the tunnel which shortened the tunnel to its present 621 feet. Thirty-foot retaining walls were built on the north side to hold back the shaley banks. These walls collapsed sometime after the canal closed in 1885. They, along with both portals, were rebuilt in 1934 by the CWA. Unfortunately, the retaining walls to the west began to collapse again within two months of their reconstruction.

The tunnel is today just as it was drilled in the 1800's. It was constructed through solid rock so there was no need to brick-line the inside. The drill marks can still be plainly seen. The tunnel is the oldest existing transportation tunnel in the U.S. today. It is a National Historic Landmark, a National Historic Engineering Landmark, and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

When the canal reached the Swatara, a pumping station was built. After going through the Union Canal Tunnel, the canal following Cattail Run or Clark's Run as it is known today, till it reached the Swatara. Clark's Run was then dammed and the water from it pumped to a 90 foot hill. From here water flowed by gravity back to the area west of the tunnel through a wooden and brick pipe 3 1/2 feet in diameter. The pumping station became known locally as the Water Works.

Why was so much effort and expense invested into this means of transportation? Simply put, it is much easier to move heavy good over water than it is by land. If William Penn had a heavy object to move with him as he explored his new colony, he had to use a pack animal to carry it. This limited the size of the object to be moved. By the late 1700's there were dirt roads into the wilderness, but the tractor trailers of the day, the Conestoga wagons, could only carry a maximum of 5 ton at a time, and they needed six animals to pull a loaded wagon. When the Union Canal opened it used small canal boats pulled by only one mule. That one mule was pulling a boat loaded with 25 ton of goods. In the 1850's the total canal was enlarged allowing larger boats on the Union Canal with two or three mules pulling 75 to 80 tons.

With the opening of the Union Canal, goods began to flow more easily to Philadelphia and towns to the east. Lumber and farm products were shipped via the canal. The boats stopped at Tenth and the canal in Lebanon to load iron ore or pig iron from Cornwall. Sandstone was hauled from Mt. Gretna and Hummelstown and shipped. About the time the construction of the canal was about complete, coal was discovered in Schuylkill County, north of Lebanon Co. and a branch canal was dug from the Water Works 22 miles to Pine Grove. This branch canal followed the Swatara as it flows from the north. To "save" the waters of the Swatara for the dry months of the year, huge dams were erected across the Swatara to hold the water until it was needed. It was then allowed to flow into the branch canal and follow that to the Water Works where it was pumped back to the summit level.

The boats returning from Philadelphia carried goods which the pioneers in the interior of the state could not make for themselves. Such items as salt, gun powder, "fancy" cloth for the women, and the like were all welcomed by those of the Lebanon area. Even a church bell for the Moravian Church in Lebanon was shipped from Philadelphia on the canal.

When the canal was finished, not many people lived in the borough north of Lebanon. (The city ended on the north at Church St.) With good transportation to ship goods, many small business and

shops began locating along the canal. Across the street from the former Northwest School to the east where Leffler's Service Station is now located, there was a large canal basin where boats could lay over for a day or two until they were unloaded or loaded again. Across Maple Street from Leffler's, the canal company build a large structure for its office and as the residence of the superintendent. What can't be seen today is the fact that the house was built from the bricks that were used to build the first 5 locks back in the 1790's. Recycling was a practice even in those days.

With the many shops located along the canal which were producing products to be shipped on the canal, families began to move to this section of the county. Besides homes, schools and churches were soon erected; a new community began to develop. Many fine large homes stood along Maple Street near the canal as it moved westward. G. Dawson Coleman (summer home was Coleman Park) located his new furnace, North Lebanon Furnace, along the canal at 16th and Lehman Streets.

A family usually operated a canal boat. They moved on to the boat in March and lived on it until close to Christmas when the water froze. Children who were old enough became the mule drivers, walking his or her mules towing the boats. Mom sat on the stern and steered the boat along with doing whatever chores she could (including boat-schooling the children), while father was on the bow to make sure there were no unsafe items in the water. Small children were tied to the center of the boat so they would not fall overboard. A trip from the Susquehanna to Philadelphia lasted about six days. The speed limit for the boats was four miles an hour so as not to wash out the banks.

Many of the citizens of the "north side" were members of Tabor Reformed Church of Lebanon. Since it would have been a hike from home to Tabor, they began to look for closer places of worship. To keep its members, Tabor established a mission in their neighborhood known as St. Mark's Sunday School in 1885. It became a congregation two years later, and here we still are today!

CHURCH IN COMMUNITY REPORT

St. Mark's members are a loving, caring and giving group of people. Church in Community is a committee that has been organized over fifty years ago and in charge of the Good Samaritan Fund. This fund is used for anyone, people from church or the community, in general, who are in need of assistance. The name of the fund originated from the story of the Good Samaritan in the bible. At one time, the committee was given a chest freezer for the perishables and had shelves for other foods located in the kitchen of the church office which was at 8th & Monument Streets in what was D. Paine's home. They also had clothing in an upstairs room.

To give some idea of what the Church in Community has either led the congregation in collecting or using the Good Samaritan Fund in assisting people in their needs this list will give you an idea.

In the past thirteen months \$3,289 has been spent helping others. As of February 1, 2021, the Church in Community Committee Good Samaritan Fund has a balance of \$1219. At the recent congregational meeting, a member mentioned that times are hard and there has been an increase in requests for help.

What happens when the "well goes dry"? The church treasurer replied that it would be up to the consistory to replenish it and depend on how much church members contribute. Money can be given by marking the envelopes members use with their weekly envelopes. Are you concerned about helping people in need? Do you realize our need?

Things Supplied:

Lodging, rent, utility bills, transportation (gas, bus tickets for doctor appointments, food; donated money after a fire; a team of volunteers supplying meals for a family; collected food for Agape; gave money to Coleman's Park for maintenance; collected blankets, bibs and booties for WIC, gave money to Susquehanna Valley Pregnancy Services, heating bills. Collected shoe boxes with gifts for Operation Christmas Child; Souper Bowl Sunday (cans of soup); donated to Bridge of Hope's Mother's Day Treat and Treasures (it is a faith based non-profit organization where mission is to end homelessness among women and children); dental needs, eyeglasses. Supported St. Mark's Boy Scout Troop; heating bills (oil). Donated to golf course at Colemans (church name was placed on one of the hole's.)

Food for families at Thanksgiving

Suspenders for men at Wernersville State Hospital

Health kits for Church World Service; collected food week for food pantry

This list gives you an idea of what things were done over many years.