

May 2017 Newsletter



Children's Church

CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WORSHIP 10:45 AM

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From the Pastor's Study May 2017

Another Easter Sunday has come and gone and if the focus of Easter for you was a celebration of Jesus' victory over death I hope the day filled you with renewed hope for the future. Sadly for many people who could use some good news and hope for the future, Easter Sunday was just another secular holiday; a day to have a cook out and mow the grass. Yes, there were people mowing the grass even on Easter Sunday.

People who belong to a church know that many churches today have a difficult time filling their pews even on Christmas and Easter. Secular activities such as sports events, craft shows, charity races, auctions and yes now even yard sales are planned for Sunday mornings. It is clear that a religious service that takes place on Sunday mornings is not taken into consideration when planning such events. That indicates how little importance much of the world puts on attending a Sunday worship service.

No one is more frustrated over this modern trend than pastors. That is because our life, our commitment, and our passion is the church. We love the church, we know its value, we want to see it survive and grow. We want to see people's lives changed for the better in ways only the church and what it has to offer can change them. We have made a commitment to God to serve the church and its people to the best of our ability in spite of everything that works against us succeeding.

Last week there was a message on the church answering machine from the Gettysburg Hospital saying that one of our church members was having surgery. The name of the man having surgery was unfamiliar to me so I called the hospital to tell them they had the wrong church. The man who answered my call said that the church he was trying to contact must be another church in Waynesboro with the name Apostle in it. I suggested the Catholic Church in town.

I don't know what I said to him next, but he was prompted to say, *"People today are only interested in the church when they're sick, there is a crisis in their life or a death. They aren't interested anymore in Sunday services."* I didn't ask him, but I got the feeling from the sincerity of his words he was an elderly chaplain or perhaps a retired minister who volunteered at the hospital. Clearly he was frustrated over the current state of the church.

Sadly, I had to agree with his feelings about the church because that is how I often feel as a pastor. Although I have only been in this business for less than ten years I can understand what it must feel like for a minister who has been serving the church for a lifetime; frustrating, exasperating, infuriating at

times, and yet still rewarding and satisfying. The occasional rewards and personal satisfaction in knowing that we have actually succeeded in some way must surely be through God's grace to keep us going. It is only through God's grace, our love for the church, our strong desire to see it succeed, our commitment to God and God's people that pastors continue serving the church from decade to decade without becoming so discouraged we give up.

It is easy for people to forget that pastors are not super human individuals who are socially well adjusted, confident in all they say and do; good writers and accomplished speakers. Most of us are not. In fact most of us are very broken people who often wonder why we were ever called to ministry. We too suffer from depression and times of loneliness. We are on call 24/7. But that seems to be how God does things; chooses those who are broken to represent a God who is perfect in every way. Perhaps because in our flaws we find ourselves having to cling to God more than if we were full of self-confidence.

A minister I knew who had been in ministry for 50 years said that people have no idea what goes on in the life of a minister. He said that even his wife of 50 years didn't entirely know what was going on in his mind as a pastor. That is because pastor's lives encompass far more than the average person's life. Not only are we expected to successfully run and grow a church, we are also expected to be mindful of what is going on in the lives of an entire congregation and often even the lives of their relatives. That burden becomes even heavier as many of us carry in our hearts the lives of people we don't even know; the lives of humankind. Many a morning I have sat down in front of the television and wept over the latest news; another shooting, another suicide, a bomb has been dropped in the Middle East killing 70 people, most of them children. These events weigh heavy on pastor's hearts.

Many pastors are in constant communion with God. Throughout the day we are in a silent conversation with God, praying silently for people, asking God for guidance, bringing our frustration to God. We are often expected to say a prayer publicly upon request. As one minister recently said, these are often "*prayer speeches*." They are words spoken before people on demand who expect a minister to say something spiritual for an event or before a meal. Often we are put on the spot without any time to gather our thoughts before saying a prayer publicly. That is very difficult for me, a person who must gather my thoughts and write them down before they are spoken.

I ask you to be mindful of the lives of all pastors and remember that most of us are working hard to do a job that sometimes seems impossible; keeping the church of Jesus Christ alive in a world who for the most part is no

longer interested in the church. On the way to the church this morning, a father letting his young daughter off to catch the bus looked at me waiting behind the bus and gave me a big smile. It was a smile from someone I didn't know yet it lifted my spirit for a moment. I realized that sometimes all a pastor needs, all many of us need; is simply a smile from a stranger.

In Christian Love,
Pastor Michael

*"...honor the officers of your church who work hard among you and warn you against all that is wrong. Think highly of them and give them your wholehearted love because they are straining to help you. And remember, no quarreling among yourselves."
-1 Thessalonians 5:12-13*



Summer Sermon Topics

During the summer months you are invited to offer topics you would like Pastor Michael to speak on as his Sunday sermon. Any suggestions will be appreciated. Call him or talk to him personally with your request.



Pastor on Vacation

I will be away from the office from May15 - May 22. I will not be going away so you may still call me if there is a crisis. Donna Hale from First UCC church in Carlisle will supply for me on Sunday May 21. She has supplied for me in the past and always enjoys her time with Apostles.



Poor Attendance at Holy Week Services a Concern

Attendance at this year's Holy Week services was again low as they were for many churches. **8** people from the congregation attended the Maundy Thursday service, **7** attended the Good Friday service. Such low attendance perhaps may indicate that these services are no longer meaningful and should be discontinued in the future. Attendance for this year's Christian/Jewish Seder was **12**. Attendance in the past has been as high as 35. This low attendance may also indicate this special Palm Sunday event is no longer meaningful and may be discontinued. Thank you to those who did attend these events.

Easter Thank You's

Thanks to everyone who attended the Easter Sunday service, especially the children who as always contributed their own special gifts to the service. Thanks to those of you who helped prepare the church and for our celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. A special thank you to the ladies who wore an Easter hat; you made a lot of people smile as they recalled the days when a special hat for Easter was essential.



***Birthdays
&
Anniversaries
in
May***



9 Linda & Dan Ritchey
17 Nancy Piper
18 Pastor Michael
19 Mark and Katie Lux
27 Jean High
28 Mark Lux
30 Nicole Leidig
30 Ty and Holly Berkey

**Calendar of Events
May**

7	Worship	10:45 AM
8	Buchanan Trail Quilters	5:30 PM
14	Worship	10:45 AM
16	Silver Express Delivery	1:30 PM
20	Buchanan Trail Quilters	9 - 3PM
21	Worship	10:45 AM
21	Consistory	12 Noon
28	Worship	10:45 AM



Weight Watchers meets every
Tuesday at 5 PM
and Wednesday at 9 AM

AI Anon meets every Thursday
from 8-9 PM

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

in May



Ushers & Greeters

May 7: Tony & Donna Haugh

May 14: Nevin & Sondra Monn

May 21: Bob Benchoff & Bob Stum

May 28: Donna Levick & Judy Fitz



Communion Assistants

May 7: Tony & Donna Haugh

CONSISTORY MEMBERS



Julia Cramer

Jean High

Mary Lou Misner

Martha Smith



Donna Levick

Sondra Monn

Nevin Monn

Brian Jacobs



Hoffman Homes Youth Find Hope, Healing Through Music

April 5, 2017 | By Barb Powell

“Music is therapy. Music moves people. It connects people in ways that no other medium can. It pulls heart strings. It acts as medicine.” — Award-winning musician Macklemore

The medicinal benefits of music are quickly becoming evident throughout United Church of Christ-related Hoffman Homes for Youth in Littlestown, Pa. Already possessing a strong creative arts therapy program, Hoffman Homes just expanded to include music therapy.

“Having a music therapy program offers our children an additional path to healing, and provides a meaningful means of stress relief and the development of anger management skills,” says Jennifer Sepic, supervisor for creative therapies. “It can also serve as a life-long coping skill and a form of safe, productive and healthy self-expression. Our goal is to use music — in addition to art, pet, and horse therapies — as a medicine, to make our kids’ lives better: socially, cognitively, physically, emotionally and developmentally.”

Thanks to some generous donors, the program began last fall. In addition to other improvements, the music studio was painted and renovated to include soundproofing, plus new technology for writing, playing, and listening to music. A GoFundMe campaign in 2016 brought in the needed monies for musical instruments.

Hoffman Homes is a CHHSM-member ministry providing residential treatment services for emotionally and behaviorally troubled children and teens. It also is a Sanctuary-Certified Organization, meaning that it centers on a therapeutic approach toward children who’ve suffered trauma that asks, “What’s happened to you?” instead of “What’s wrong with you?” The creative arts therapies at Hoffman Homes are a key ingredient in reaching and helping the most vulnerable children.

“We firmly believe that by providing children with safe and creative outlets, in addition to traditional talk therapy, they are better supported on their journey of recovery from traumatic experience,” says Sepic.

Music therapist Eric Fisak concurs. “Using techniques [also] used in talk therapy — such as self-talk and deep breathing — music therapy will reinforce and complement the important work the children’s primary therapists do,” he says.

And how do the residents of Hoffman Homes feel? “Music is life!” says one. Music “helps me get motivated,” says another.

“Music often plays a significant role in our lives. I believe this to be particularly true with adolescents,” says Fisak. “Music therapy serves as a creative outlet that these children may not otherwise have. It offers another way to help our children develop socialization skills ... enhance self-esteem, process past trauma, and contemplate the future.”

“Our goal was to build a healing and constructive therapeutic program using music,” Sepic says. “Virtually all of our children expressed a desire for a music therapy program.”

In the wise words of two young persons receiving life-saving healing through Hoffman Homes:

“Music enlightens the heart ... [and] carries joy and comfort through our spirits, to let ourselves get through whatever we are facing.”

“Songs teach us that we can survive hard times. They allow us to hope for a better future and try to get there.”

Social Seniors

Social Seniors will be held on Monday May 8,
2 - 4 PM at Trinity State Line.



“Silver Express” Food Bank

Thank you for your help to fill their
bowls!



Donations for this month
will be delivered **May 16.**



All canned/boxed food on the shelves will be delivered
each month to ensure freshness.

Caring for the Church Grounds

The time has come when we will be spending more time caring for the church grounds. That includes watering planters and hanging baskets, weeding, and mulching. The church receives many compliments during the summer months on the beauty of its property. Everyone who is a member of the church and physically capable should be sharing in the maintenance of the grounds. We should all take as much pride in our church home as we do our own homes.



Community Gardens

This is the 7th year for the churches community garden ministry. All 15 garden plots are spoken for. Take time during the growing season to walk out and look at the gardens, talk to the folks who might be working on their plot. The community gardens are an extension of this churches ministry to the public.



Tuesday Morning Movies

Tuesday morning movies will continue to be shown as long as there is continued interest. Please let Pastor Michael know ahead of time if you are interested in attending the next film so he can plan accordingly. Last month we watched The Robe and Ben Hur.

Free Tuesday Morning Movies



50th Anniversary Award

Church of the Apostles will be acknowledged at the Penn Central Conference for its 50th anniversary. Pastor Michael will represent the church while he attends the conference in early June.

Trinity House Guest Speaker

A few weeks ago Joan Amsley, the director of Trinity House spoke during our worship service. She expressed words of appreciation and gratitude for the churches Silver Express food bank ministry. I know that those who participate in this ministry were moved by the sincerity of her words spoken on behalf of the many residents of Trinity House who receive assistance from the church each month in the way of food.

GUEST
SPEAKER



Hoffman Homes for Youth

A Psychiatric Residential Treatment Program for Children
815 Orphanage Road, Littlestown, PA 17340
717-359-7148 • Fax 717-359-2600
www.hoffmanhomes.com

C. Mitchell Snider, MBA, Chief Executive Officer

March 24, 2017

Church of the Apostles
Attn: Pastor Michael Cromer
1592 Walnut Bottom Rd.
Newville, PA 17241-9521

Dear Pastor Cromer,

At Hoffman Homes for Youth, our children's success tells a story...It tells of our century-old commitment to serving children in need.

Your ongoing support helps ensure that we can continue to provide our children with the essentials necessary for a better life:

- **Ongoing creative therapy.** Our art, seasonal horticulture, music, pet and horse therapy programs help us reach the most hurt and vulnerable children in ways that make them feel safe, productive and happy. Often, these therapies are our kids' first step to healing.
- **Moral development.** Our optional weekly bible study serves as a beacon to children who are seeking spiritual insight, and our range of all-inclusive support groups gives all of our children the chance to feel accepted, and a part of something larger than themselves.
- **A safe, comfortable home environment.** For decades, our residences have been a safe haven for children in crisis, kids who need and crave the sense of home that comes with being cared for in a structured, supportive and nurturing setting.
- **An education that is focused on their future.** Hoffman Academy, our onsite day school, provides a challenging and progressive education for students with respect to their unique mental health and emotional needs. Our growing focus on technology and vocational and character development helps prepare our kids for a better life.

Hoffman Homes for Youth serves children with mental health diagnoses and behavioral issues who are coping with the crippling effects of trauma, abuse, neglect and loss. **Each day, we invest an additional \$30 per child beyond what is covered by insurance, in order to provide exceptional care and treatment to our children.** This investment—nearly \$1 million each year—represents our unwavering commitment to their futures.

Please consider supporting us in creating brighter, healthier futures for kids like Jen—children who are struggling to find the strength to trust, the strength to stand strong, and the strength to thrive in a scary and very uncertain world.

Your faith keeps us strong in our mission. Your kindness changes lives.

In gratitude,

Kris Roeder
VP of Marketing & Development
kroeder@hoffmanhomes.com
717-359-7148, ext. 4500

Blessings and thanks to you all
—you are a gift to us!

P.S. Please contact me to arrange a visit to our campus and school, to see firsthand how your donation is giving hope and healing to kids who desperately need a chance at a better life. Thank you for caring.



“Strength.”

Jen’s Story



THIS IS WHAT WE MEAN to her: “Strength.” Jen, a smart, funny, articulate 16-year-old, has grown unexpectedly fond of Hoffman Homes, her ninth placement in under three years. She started running away at 13 and the habit stuck, throughout her time at a handful of other treatment programs and a placement in a psychiatric hospital—until she was referred to Hoffman Homes for Youth.

Jen’s path to Hoffman Homes is not unlike many of our young girls in care. Last year, she began talking with a boy on Facebook and, after several months of online communication, they agreed to meet. The “boy” turned out to be much older than she was led to believe, and their time together turned harrowing when, after a trip to a nearby park, he abducted her for a heart-rending 12 hours.

Using her wits, she managed to access her cell phone and text for help—rescuing herself from immediate danger, but not from the emotional damage that followed. Her time at Hoffman Homes helped change that. “This is a safe environment for kids struggling to get treatment that they need,” Jen says. She particularly found the creative therapies helpful, and loved horse therapy, because it gave her the chance to connect with Mona, a beautiful therapy horse, whose manner and

personality made Jen feel safe and carefree again. “I felt at home here right away,” she says, “because of the structure, the staffing and the sense of freedom” she found at Hoffman Homes. Jen especially appreciated the fact that, unlike some other facilities, the care team at Hoffman Homes honored her wish to stay off medications. “From our perspective, Jen’s history of running away didn’t warrant her needing to be on meds,” says Ms. Nicole, her therapist. Using a full complement of therapies, “we worked with her to help understand why she felt she needed to run, and began to build coping skills that would enable her to stay put and thrive.”

“I learned not to run away from my problems,” Jen says simply. “My time at Hoffman Homes has made me stronger.” Ms. Nicole wholeheartedly agrees: “I’m proud of her. Jen is stronger in knowing that, ultimately, she only has herself to rely on...and, at the end of the day, she can rely on that person.”

Jen is decidedly bittersweet about leaving Hoffman Homes, but eager to pursue a future that will make a difference to others who are struggling. She hopes to become a state trooper, or maybe join the military one day. “To protect people,” she says with conviction. “To try to set an example.” An example of strength.



Our story

FOUNDED IN 1910, Hoffman Homes for Youth is a not-for-profit residential treatment facility in Littlestown, Pennsylvania, providing comprehensive psychiatric care, treatment and education to emotionally and behaviorally troubled children. Your partnership ensures that we can continue to offer vital, life-affirming help and healing for these most vulnerable of kids, giving them a chance at a brighter future.

How you can help

NEW for Businesses—EITC Program at Hoffman!

Hoffman Homes' Hoffman Academy, our on-site special education school, has been designated an Educational Improvement Organization (EIO) by the state of PA, approved for funding through the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program. *On or about July 1 of each year, for a minimal investment of time, qualifying businesses can take their state tax dollars and invest them in the education of our Hoffman Academy students.*

Pennsylvania business owners can direct 75% or 90% of their state tax liability to be donated to Hoffman Homes, Inc. and benefit from a qualifying charitable contribution at the same time. **At no cost to your business, you can help rewrite our children's stories.**

Financial Contributions

Sponsorship of our ongoing fundraising events—including our annual "Run for a Reason" Family 5K Fun Run/Walk, our annual Golf Benefit and our annual gala—as well as planned and direct gifts to Hoffman Homes support our ongoing operations

to ensure that our full range of therapeutic services, including our innovative art, music, pet and horse therapy programs, continues uninterrupted.



In-kind Donations

Throughout the year, we welcome donations of self-care products (shampoo, soap, hair brushes, combs, hair accessories, etc.) for the children in our care. Donations of creative therapy supplies—pet and horse food and care products; art supplies; and gardening tools and materials, as well as school supplies—are also appreciated.

Rite Aid's KidCents Program

This program allows customers to "round up" their purchases to the nearest dollar and donate change to Hoffman Homes by using their free wellness card. Visit KidCents.com to select Hoffman Homes as your "round up" beneficiary and, if needed, register for a free card.

Share in our story & change lives

Your support offers hope and healing—and a new future—for the children in our care. To meet with our CFO to discuss EITC participation, to learn more about our program needs, or to arrange a personalized tour, please call our Development Office at 717-359-7148, ext. 4502. **Make a difference: visit us online at HoffmanHomes.com.**

Hoffman Homes for Youth & Hoffman Academy
815 Orphanage Road
Littlestown, PA 17340

**THE CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES
336 BARNETT AVENUE
WAYNESBORO, PA 17268-0288**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Please forward an address change to the Church office.



May 2017

MISSION STATEMENT

We are called together to worship God, united by the Holy Spirit, and chosen as instruments of our Lord's purpose to teach, support and serve all people. We witness to the church, the community and the world by showing joy in the faith and using our talents to praise God.