



Mount Gretna UMC

Happenings

August 2021

These past 2 years of living in the midst of a worldwide pandemic have indeed been challenging. Now as we watch the news about the Delta variant of the Covid virus and see the cases of once again increase we continue to worry (will we see another outbreak? Will it propel us back into lockdown?). Of course, there are also other, ever present, struggles (finances, health, housing) that can have us feeling anxious too.

In such times as these, hope can be a tricky thing to hold onto. We see all of kinds of reasons not to hope. Maybe some of the things I mentioned above, but maybe something else. Maybe you had hoped for something (a job, a healing, or transformation) and as time has passed you find yourself simply facing the same issues, without much change. Maybe we've grown cynical, or worse yet, realistic, about our expectations. We grow careful, never daring to hope too much.

The thing about hope is that if everything was the way it should be, we wouldn't need to hope. We hope because there is enough wrong with the world, that we long for something better, more secure, surer. God's people have always had a hard time holding on to hope.

Pastor James Matichuk recently wrote the following concerning Habakkuk:

"The book of Habakkuk describes the suffering of God's people, and their longing for God's deliverance. There was a lot wrong in Habakkuk's day (circa 612 BCE) The Babylonians were becoming a dominant force in the Ancient Near East, visiting Judea with war and hardship. Habakkuk writes:

*Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will be joyful in God my Savior. (Habakkuk 3:17-18)*

Everything in Habakkuk's world mitigated against him holding out hope. The Babylonians were a militant force threatening Judea, the crops failed, and the livestock ran away or were killed. It would have been easy for Habakkuk to give up, grow cynical and resign himself to the destruction of his people, but he chose instead to trust in the LORD.

[Spoiler Alert]: Habakkuk didn't get everything he hoped for. The Babylonian Empire would grow into a larger threat, destroy the Temple and Jerusalem, carrying its inhabitants into exile. But the God who Habakkuk hoped in, would not abandon the children of Israel in their exile but would bring them back home again."

My friends, I don't know how each of our stories will turn out. Disasters, pandemics, and political turmoil happen, and we may be in for a difficult journey ahead. But I do know this, despite what happens, God will not abandon us. Despite war, famine, drought, destruction, difficult diagnoses, grief, despair, God loves each of us; each of us are held within God's loving care.

What are the things that give you hope? How do you hold out hope for God's deliverance amidst the struggles and uncertainty of this life?

Blessings,

Pastor Mike

SUMMER SERVICES IN THE TABERNACLE



Our 10:00 AM worship services currently being held in the Campmeeting Tabernacle. It is a wonderful space and always a fun and enjoyable part of summer in our community.

- Facemasks are not required if you are fully vaccinated. However, if you feel more comfortable continuing to wear a facemask during the service you are welcomed to do so.
- We will be staying in the Tabernacle for worship throughout the month of September.
- Sunday, August 15 - Joint Community Service with the Chautauqua held at the Tabernacle.

Wet'n Wednesdays

Warm weather and bright sunshine can mean only one thing: It will soon be summer again and summer means Wet'n Wacky Wednesdays are here. Wet'n Wacky Wednesdays are simply the best way to have fun at church during the summer if you are a child from K – 6th grade.

This yearly event is our church's way of offering a non-traditional VBS experience for our church and community. It consists of having games and activities that involve making things and people wet, and having as much fun as we can in the process. There are some skill games like Wacky Water Balloon golf, some team games like the Plumber's Nightmare Relay, and some... well just crazy games like the infamous Water Balloon Whack! But that's not all, we also offer children a bible story, craft, and snack each night as a way of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with them.

There is one more Wet'n Wacky Wednesday coming up on August 11 from 6:30 – 8:00 PM. So make your calendars now for summer fun and wackiness!



Each year our church hosts a rest stop for the Hershey Chocolate Tour. The event is a fundraiser for to support cancer research to find the cure at Penn State Hershey Cancer Institute.

This year our church will again host a rest stop. So, as the Chocolate Tour cycling events make their way through the Mount Gretna area on Saturday, August 7th, our members will open our doors and welcome the participants. For this event we are asking for volunteers from the church to bake goodies, help set up, or be on hand August 7th to welcome the cyclist's as they arrive.

If you are interested in helping this very worthwhile cause, please contact the Church Office at: 717-964-3241.



Our annual Church Picnic at Gretna Glen will be held on **Sunday, September 19th**. We will gather at Gretna Glen for the 10:00 AM worship service, with the picnic to follow. Please bring a covered dish to share and place settings with you for the picnic. We do ask that if possible please also bring a \$5.00 per person donation for the use of the camp facilities, which will include boating. Children 12 and under are free.

Please note that there will be an 8:30 AM service at the church.

WEEKLY ZOOM PRAYER MEETINGS THURSDAYS AT 7 PM

You are invited to join Pastor Marilyn and members of our congregation as they come together on Zoom to pray for the joys and concerns of friends and family, our nation and the world. The group was formed during the Covid lockdown and continues to be a time of fellowship and taking our cares to God.

ZOOM can be done on a laptop, tablet or smart phone. If you have email: the church will send you an email every week with the link.

BUT PLEASE NOTE--ZOOM calls can also be made from any cell phone by dialing in to the phone number that is in the weekly email.

Don't forget: We still have an email Prayer Chain that is coordinated by member Sarah Ellis. You may call the office with prayer requests at 717.964.3241 or email them directly to Sarah at stellis999@gmail.com . If you have any questions, feel free to call Pastor Marilyn at 717.269.8613.

MGUMC Financial Snapshot June of 2021

Category	Year-to-Date 2021	Year-to-Date 2020	Dollar Change
Offerings	\$68,847	\$69,523	(\$676)
Contribution from Endowment	\$19,002	\$19,002	\$0
Other Income	\$64,865	\$3,390	\$61,475
Total Operating Income	\$152,714	\$91,915	\$60,799
Total Budgeted Expenses	\$162,216	\$91,253	\$70,963
Budget Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$9,502)	\$662	(\$10,164)
Drendall Endowment Balance	\$2,937,138	\$2,499,891	\$437,247
Endowment Annual Grants	\$62,553	\$0	\$62,553

The table is a snapshot of 2021 year-to-date results compared to the same period in 2020.

Explanation of categories

Offering: Envelopes, Plate, Church School, Beacon and Building fund

Contribution from Endowment: The grant amount received from the endowment for operational expenditures of the MGUMC.

Other income: Miscellaneous, Flowers, Bible study, Endowment grants

Total Disbursements: Budgeted expenses for operation of the church

Surplus/(Deficit): This line states how well the receipts of MGUMC is offsetting the budgeted disbursements.

Drendall Endowment Balance: Period end balance of the assets in the endowment

Endowment Annual Grants: Grants other than the "Contribution from Endowment". Distribution of grants for 2020 did not occur until July of 2020 due to the pandemic.

2021 BIBLE FESTIVAL

The Mount Gretna Bible Festival is in the final planning stages and ready to once again provide: "Christian spiritual renewal in a unique Victorian setting."

Sunday evening Tabernacle programs continue throughout the summer at 7:00 PM. Please refer to the Bible Festival brochures located around the church, or visit www.MtGretnaTabernacle.org for dates and information about specific programs.

FOOD BANK SUNDAY

The first Sunday of each month we collect money, non-perishable food items and paper products for the Lebanon County Christian Ministry Food Bank.

We thank those who have participated in the past and encourage everyone to use the list of suggested items that can be picked up in the church lobby each month to help with purchasing items that are needed.

Mt. Gretna Nursery School

The Mt. Gretna Nursery School is looking forward to welcoming our new class in September! There are still a few spots available to join us. Registration forms are available at the Church.

For information, call 717-964-2208 or 717-964-2218 (Joanne Gingrich).

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Wednesday, August 18 @ 7PM – Administrative Board Meeting (via ZOOM)**
- **Sunday, August 15 @ 10 AM – Community Service in the Tabernacle.**
- **Sunday, September 19 – Church Picnic @ Gretna Glenn.**