

Food for the Flock



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“ . . . for I flooded out, and you rescued me, helped me salvage what I could, and helped me rebuild . . . ” -Matthew 25:36 (Schwenk paraphrase)

Some might look at what I did with that Scripture and say, “That’s not what that verse says!” Technically, you would be right, but consider what Jesus did say. “I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.” If Jesus were living in Houston, Texas today, and if He was inspiring someone to write a Gospel similar to Matthew’s, I’m pretty sure the new “Matthew 25:36” would look a whole lot like the one I’ve paraphrased above.

Twelve years ago this month, I sat in my office at Evangelical Seminary and wept as I watched what was happening to my favorite city, New Orleans. I watched as desperate people crowded into the Superdome, the Morial Convention Center, and the “flyovers” (we would call them highway overpasses) to get above water and hopefully, some of life’s basic necessities. I watched the already economically depressed 9th Ward become a wasteland. I wondered if New Orleans would ever recover. I wanted to drop everything, pack a bag, and head south to “do what I could.” We prayed. We kept in contact with our friends in Louisiana who we knew were a part of the rebuilding efforts. Short of these efforts and collecting some money from the Seminary community, there was not a whole lot we could do.

Now, twelve years later, I find myself in a similar situation. The names of the cities have changed, but it’s the same Gulf Coast. There will never be another Hurricane Katrina – that name has been retired. This one is named Harvey. No doubt that name will be retired too. While it’s hard for me to fathom, the devastation from this hurricane will prove to be greater, more widespread, and more expensive than any other natural disaster in American history. Many will get some relief from flood insurance. Those whose houses and businesses were damaged but not flooded will also get insurance help from their underwriters. What of the tens of thousands who were already poor? What of those who worked for businesses that will never reopen? What of those who have lost so much, but have no way to rebuild?

That’s where the “M & M’s” come in. The delicious candy covered chocolate treats, with or without almonds? No, not those M & M’s the other M & M’s, the Mennonites and Methodists. We and our Methodist brothers and sisters have a reputation, a really good reputation. Not only are we often the first on the scene in times of disaster, but we have the reputation of being the very last ones to leave. We stay until the job is done. We see the needs and we stick around until the needs are met. Thank you for being part of a tradition that has that kind of positive reputation.

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Later this year, Lore and I have volunteered to add our small contribution to the rebuilding efforts in southwestern Louisiana. We are volunteering for a mid-December trip with Mennonite Disaster Service. I've included an article about our trip later in this newsletter. Please pray for us as we prepare, watch for God's provision for the trip, and as we work with the good people of Acadiana. PLEASE . . . pray for your involvement. We would love to take a few of you along with us. Participants are only responsible for their travel expenses to and from Lafayette, LA. Do you hear what I hear? It seems I hear Jesus saying, "I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me." Pastor Jim

Rabbit Room

After a brief summer break, the Rabbit Room is open for business this fall. Each meeting is held at the Lebanon Valley Council on the Arts at 770 Cumberland Street, Lebanon and starts at 7:00 p.m. Spread the word. Invite your friends, and join us at the Rabbit Room. Here is the schedule for the coming months:

On Monday September 25 at 7:00 p.m., meddle in the affairs of wizards, dragons, and hobbits as we discuss J.R.R. Tolkien's classic, *The Hobbit*. Copies are available for free at the church while supplies last.

On Monday October 23 at 7:00 p.m. we will begin a two-month journey into the theme of "Joy." What is joy? What is the relationship of joy to happiness? Can we experience joy in a world that seems to always be in turmoil? This month we will discuss *The Book of Joy*, written jointly by two of the world's respected religious leaders: Bishop Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama.

But that's only half of our exploration of joy. On November 27 at 7:00 p.m. we will explore joy from the perspective of Christian apologist C.S. Lewis in his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*.

We will wrap up the year and celebrate "A Rabbit Room Christmas" on Monday December 18 at 7:00 p.m. (due to Christmas, we will meet on the 3rd Monday this month only). We will discuss Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Read the story that gave birth to all the wonderful movie adaptations of this Christmas classic

We hope you can join us each month in the Rabbit Room. Good books. Good conversation. Good tea.

Bunny Burrow

We haven't forgotten about our bunnies! Bunny Burrow is back for the fall, too. Here are the upcoming dates for our children's reading group. We meet in the library at Gingrichs Mennonite Church.

On Saturday September 9 at 10:00 a.m. we will meet at the church and read *Bunny's Book Club* together. This book by Annie Slivestro tells the story of Bunny's adventure in sneaking into the library. But what will happen when he gets caught by the librarian? Find out at the Bunny Burrow on September 9.

Our October meeting will be on Saturday October 14 as part of our All Creatures Great and Small Weekend. We will meet at the church at 10:00 a.m. right after the 5k race and 1 mile fun run/walk. We will be reading *A Brave Big Sister: A Bible Story about Miriam*. Details are still being worked out, but we may have a very special visitor as a guest reader! Keep watching your bulletin for more details about our special mystery guest. Or will it be guests? Come to Bunny Burrow on October 14 to find out!

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No Longer Alone Ministry

Every 4th Sunday of the month No Longer Alone Family Support Group meets at Rossmere Mennonite Church, Lancaster at 3:00pm. The next meeting is September 24, presented by Sue Tushingam, a Peer Advocate of MHA (Mental Health America) titled "Spread the Word, NOT the Stigma." Following the presentation at 4:10 is Share and Prayer time. Everyone is welcome.

Artists of All Ages:

The art board is in need of some new artwork. Do you have anything you'd like to share? A sketch, a doodle, a photograph, a masterpiece?!? Bring it in so we can enjoy it together. You can post it yourself or leave it on Ashlea's desk in the Library.

It's Parade Season . . . We Need You!

We've all watched parades. Have you ever wanted to be in one or maybe two? We would love to bring some Light to Schaefferstown's Halloween Parade scheduled for the evening of October 28. We would also like to use the same float we build in Lebanon's Holiday Parade scheduled for the morning of November 18. Here's where we all come in. We need lots of help to make this happen. How can you help, glad you asked! We need:

- *A trailer on which to build the float
- *A truck (tractor, or team of horses) to pull it
- *Creative idea people and decorators
- *Riders for the float in each parade (can be the same folks or a different group)
- *Walkers to walk the route and hand our brochures

The plan is to advertise the Rabbit Room, Bunny Burrow, and our church service schedule. We have already enlisted the help of a "rabbit of unusual size" to ride in each parade with us, but we still need you to make this happen! Interested? Intrigued? Mildly curious? Stay after church on Sunday September 17 for a brief brainstorming meeting. Don't let the parades pass you by!

Mennonite Disaster Service Opportunity

Hurricane Harvey has devastated parts of Texas and Louisiana. Mennonite Disaster Service is in the process of evaluating the need and its response in East Texas as this is written. Thanks to their ongoing work in the Acadiana region of southwest Louisiana, near Lafayette, we have the opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus. In August 2016, over the course of 15 hours, 31 inches of rain fell in Lafayette and Baton Rouge. The remnants of Hurricane Harvey are only compounding the problems left behind. The remodeling and rebuilding needs will only increase. Pastor Jim and Lore are making plans to head to Lafayette, Louisiana December 10-16th. They would like to take a few more people with them. Participants would only be responsible for their own travel expenses, which, according to Travelocity, are running around \$450-\$500 round trip from Harrisburg, Philadelphia, or Baltimore. If you are interested, please see Pastor Jim as soon as possible for more information. You can also check out the MDS website for more details.

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Roof Project Update

In the Fall of 2016, our congregation voted to replace a major section of the roof. The project was completed in the Spring of 2017 and we are very pleased with the workmanship and the appearance. The total cost for the project was \$36,256. We used \$8,000 from the Rohrer Fund and received additional donations and gifts to bring the total to \$17,600. That leaves a remaining balance of \$10,656. We are grateful for the congregation's response and would gladly accept any additional gifts to pay the remaining balance. Thank you! The Deacon Team

Ever Wonder.....

What was it like for people in Alaska during the gold rush? What was life like for people of Ireland during the potato famine, when many of them came to the US? What was it like to live in Russia during the last years of the Tsar's rule? We can find these answers and live these events through good books, and our library is full of them. Alaska gold rush – read Tracie Peterson's Yukon Quest and then the Alaskan Quest book series. Ireland – read B. J. Hoff's 5 book series An Emerald Ballad. Russia – read The Russians, a 6 book series by Judith Pella and Michael Phillips. These are just a few examples of reading available in the library. There are inspirational books, love stories, adventure books, biographies and many more types of books. We do not schedule people to be in the library every Sunday but you are welcome to check books out. Just be sure to put your name on the card in the back of the book, and lay the card on the counter by the sign that says "Return Library Books Here." If you have questions or need assistance please feel free to search out Ruth Slear or Maggi Freed.

MCC Relief Kit Bag Construction

Again, this year during our Camp Hebron weekend retreat (October 20-22, 2017), you will have the opportunity to have fun by participating in a service project to help those in need. Everyone (sewers and non-sewers) are invited to help construct MCC relief kit bags. The bags will already be cut to size and ready for construction. Everyone can help to measure, pin, sew, cut strings, and string the bags. I will supply all that is needed to construct the bags. If you want to sew, bring your sewing machine. If you wish to use one of my sewing machines, please let me know, as I will be bringing three.

Since stringing the bags seems to be a popular part of the bag construction, I will bring extra completed bags, ready for stringing. This should boost our final number of completed bags. We completed 150 last year. Let us beat that number this year.

Additionally, MCC is always in need of filled Hygiene Kit Bags. If you want to help with this, bring good quality nail clippers and toothbrushes (1 per pack) in their original packaging and bright colored hand towels. Bars of soap will be available to add to the bag. Barb Turley will be working with the children Saturday afternoon to fill the bags.

For additional information contact, Ruth Runion-Slear, 717-533-9423 or singchorale@hotmail.com

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Operation Christmas Child 2017

It's time to start thinking about Christmas shopping . . . at least for all those Operation Christmas Child boxes you are going to fill! We have shoe boxes available for you to pick up at church and start filling with all kinds of goodies for children around the world. Collection dates for this year are November 13-20. Here is the schedule:

Monday November 13	9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.
Tuesday November 14	6:00 p.m.- 8:00p.m.
Wednesday November 15	6:00 p.m.- 8:00p.m.
Thursday November 16	6:00 p.m.- 8:00p.m.
Friday November 17	6:00 p.m.- 8:00p.m.
Saturday November 18	9:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.
Sunday November 19	12:00 Noon- 3:00 p.m.
Monday November 20	8:00 a.m.- 10:00 a.m.

November 20 is also "load the tractor trailer day," so we will need some strong people to help get those cartons in the trailers! We will also need volunteers each day during collection week to greet people, collect boxes, pray over the boxes, and share some Christmas cheer with the folks who come to drop off boxes. I will post a sign up sheet in October for you to register to help. I can use all the help you can give this year, as my energy level is pretty low. Please ask me how you can help even now.

Please pray with me, as I will be going to meet with the manager of the East Lebanon WalMart to see if they will allow us to set up a table in the lobby to hand out empty boxes and encourage shoppers to fill them. I'm hoping to set up that table on October 28 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. If you are free to help me that day, please let me know.

Let's pray that we will have a record year for the number of boxes collected. Each box represents a child who will hear the good news about Jesus . . . maybe for the first time. With love and thanks, Lore Schwenk

All Creatures Great and Small Weekend

Our annual All Creatures Great and Small Weekend will be held Oct 14 and 15th. Saturday our 5k race will begin at 8:30 a.m. and the 1 mile run/walk will begin at 9:30 a.m. Well behaved dogs are welcome to run or walk. All proceeds benefit Jubilee and the Lebanon Humane League. Registration forms are attached to your newsletter. If you need additional forms they can be picked up on the table in the lobby. Sunday we will again host an outdoor pet friendly worship service. All creatures great and small are welcome!