# Montezuma Today

February 2018



#### 13th Annual Tenderloin Feast

The 13th annual Montezuma Tenderloin Feast will be on Saturday, February 24th at the Montezuma Hall. As always, there will be an outstanding menu of pork tenderloin and gravy, sweet potatoes, macaroni and cheese, beans, fresh spinach salad, cranberry salad, pickled eggs, pickles, assorted homemade breads and desserts, coffee and tea.

There will be five seating times for the meal: 12:30pm, 2:00pm, 3:30pm, 5:00pm and 6:30pm. Tickets are \$14 for adults and \$7 for children age 3-12. You can purchase tickets on Sunday mornings at church or you may call Stephanie Diehl at 540-879-3567. Tickets for takeout boxes are available, as well.

We will need many volunteers to cook, serve, clean up, etc. and volunteers to provide homemade breads, desserts and pickles. Sign-up sheets are in the entry way at the church.

Proceeds for this event will go towards the Montezuma Church of the Brethren Building Improvement Fund.

#### Lent Begins February 14 – Answering God Ash Wednesday meal and worship planned

It's not very often that Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day kiss (to use a vivid image from the Psalms), and yet that's what's happening this year. Montezuma will embrace Ash Wednesday and the Lenten season not because we are morbid killjoys. Rather, we can face death and the transiency of life because we affirm that "love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave" (Song of Sol. 8:6). Our first reason? Jesus Christ our Lord.

We will mark the beginning of Lent with an Ash Wednesday soup and sandwich meal, beginning at 5:30 p.m., February 14, in the church's fellowship room. That meal will be followed by a brief worship that will conclude in time for choir practice. Sign-up sheets are available to help us plan.

The theme for our Lenten focus this year is Answering God. In recent years the church has published a daily reading guide for Lent and this year will continue that tradition. Please pick up a Daily Readings for Lent 2018 at the church in February.

## **MCOB Constitution Revision Underway**

Following the direction of the Church Board, a small committee has been at work updating and revising the congregation's constitution and by-laws. The committee's chairperson is David Richard; other members are Stephanie Diehl, Helen Shickel, and Pastors Gabe Dodd and David Miller. The revision will not be brought to vote until at least November 2018 and will require a two-thirds majority for any changes made to the current constitution. The committee is working to bring a draft of the revision to the congregation for review and discussion by the spring. There will be several opportunities for the revision committee to explain and discuss proposed changes with the congregation.

#### **Church Events: February**

- 1-3: Jr. High Winter Camp at Brethren Woods
- 2: MYF 6:15pm
- 3: Church Board Meeting 9am-noon
- 5: Bell Choir Practice 7pm
- 6: Golden Lunch Bunch 11:30am
- 7: Choir Practice 7pm
- 8: Salvation Army Meal
- Jr. & Sr. High Snow Tubing at Wintergreen
- 12: Montezuma Support Group 11:30am
- 12: Bell Choir Practice 7pm
- 13: Church Board Meeting 7pm
- 14: Ash Wednesday
- 14: Choir Practice 7pm
- 16: MYF 6:15pm
- 18: Sr. High Youth Night @ Spotswood High School
- 19: Bell Choir Practice 7pm
- 21: Choir Practice 7pm
- 24: Tenderloin Feast
- 26: Bell Choir Practice 7pm
- 28: Choir Practice 7pm

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#### **WORSHIP - February 2018**

Sunday mornings – 9:10 a.m. Gathering Time, 9:30 a.m. Worship Hour, 10:40 a.m. Classes

#### 4: Custom Made

Pastor David

1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39

We live in a world where most clothing is bought off the rack or via the internet. How different when you sit down with a master-tailor for something that fits you. It's nice to have a clothing that fits. Makes all the difference. But it's still the work of a master; that's why it works. Because of the one who makes it. That's what Paul is talking about with the Corinthians.

International S.S. Lesson: Faith without Works is Dead

#### 11: Transfiguration Sunday

The Presence

Pastor David

2 Kings 2:1-12; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

We have two readings on this Transfiguration Sunday. Transfiguration could mean "metamorphosis," or "alteration," or more simply, "change." In our readings disciples watch as their masters are changed before them. One master is taken away; the other ... remains. In both the transforming presence of God alters lives.

\*Adult Choir

International S.S. Lesson: A Disciplined Faith

#### 14: Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalms 51; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

## 18: 1st Sunday of Lent

**Answering God** 

Pastor David

Psalm 25:1-10; Mark 1:9-15

We are under tremendous pressure to live for self. It's both natural and commercially promoted. We may never stop living for ourselves, but does that mean we stop paying attention to the biblical witnesses? That we stop praying, or answering God?

\*Bell Choir

International S.S. Lesson: Faithful Disciples

#### 25: 2nd Sunday of Lent

Though Death, There is Life

Pastor Gabe

Mark 8:31-38; Psalm 22:23-31

Change is a coming - unwanted change, but a change that is in the hands of God - that will strengthen the believers. Though death is upon us, we are blessed with life that is the body of Christ. There are many wonderful things to embrace. So do not be afraid of death, but be invigorated by life.

\*Adult Choir

International S.S. Lesson: The Good Fight of Faith

#### Peace of my mind:

There are a few things on my mind. This year we experience a kind of weird overlap between the church's holy days and secular frivolity. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on Valentine's Day and ends on Easter Sunday, which falls on April 1.

Yeah, that's right. April Fool's. This has not happened in my lifetime – last time was 1956, I think – but it certainly offers us an opportunity for contrast. Some will note the correspondence of April Fool's and Easter and take satisfaction in saying: At last, Easter finally arrives on an appropriate day to describe the poor souls who believe all that nonsense.

Yes, we must be prepared. But do not be afraid. In fact, laugh along. Once you break through the familiarity of resurrection language which we absorb in church, the conviction that Christ is raised and that we will share with him in the resurrection of our bodies is not scientifically provable, much less self-evident. And yet, this is our faith. Early Christians seemed like fools to those who didn't agree with them, and today those who follow Jesus will look like fools in a society that promotes self-aggrandizement and defeating one's enemies. It's not an easy practice.

So, as we reflect upon the transient nature of life with ashes on Ash Wednesday and look ahead to what God does on Easter Sunday through the promise that even our ashes are not forgotten, you might as well admit it can seem ridiculous. We are fools. But we are fools in the hands of God.

A second thing: when we see the correlation between the holidays this year, it reminds me that our praise of God is not an afterthought. It's been said that complaint psalms are the backbone of the Psalter. The psalmists complained. They told God what was on their mind; what was going wrong in their lives. And yet, the Psalms end with a cathedral of praise, Psalms 145-150. Life is full of hardship and trail; we are called to live by commandments that are a challenge to us personally and socially; we have enemies; we fear death. It is a long journey. The psalmists are not dismayed. They end in praise: "Let everything that breathes praise the Lord" (150:6)! Maybe that's the only real praise there can be - the kind that knows what hardship really is. This is the end-goal of our faith. In the middle, it may not seem possible. But this is the end.

Peace to you – and to our world, David

# 2018 Witness Commission Special Offering Schedule

The Witness Commission has set the following schedule for special offerings in 2018. You are invited to support these special ministries above your regular giving to the congregation.

	Davidson and Davidson and Ottodain	
January	Backpack Program at Ottobine	
January	Elementary School	
February	Ministry of Hope	
March	arch One Great Hour of Sharing	
April	South Sudan Human Trafficking	
	Mission	
May Brethren Disaster Fund		
June	Friend-to-Friend Project (local	
	outreach to families in need)	
July	July Bridgewater Food Pantry	
August	Bridge of Hope	
September	Open Doors	
October	Church of the Brethren Global	
	Mission	
November	Blanket Fund	
December	Bridgewater Food Pantry	

The February's special offering is the Ministry of Hope at Commerce Village in Harrisonburg. This community numbers around 30 people. Most are veterans, but not all, and the majority are in their 50s-60s. Commerce Village has a director who supervises the program, and a couple of Montezuma members offer emotional, spiritual and practical support.

Money from this offering supports Ministry of Hope in two ways: first, to help residents with small food items or a bus ticket at the end of the month, and second, by covering costs for a monthly fellowship meal hosted by folks from Montezuma. Following this meal is a time for worship. Not all the residents participate but relationships are established. This is another opportunity for our community of faith to share the love and mercy of our Lord.

## **Discovering God**

Pastor Gabe is presenting a Capstone Integration Project as partial fulfillment for his Masters of Divinity. This project has been a long process of research and thoughtfulness, and he invites the church to attend the presentation on Wednesday, February 14, at 9am. The presentation is 20 minutes, and is about spiritual formation in youth and adolescents.

#### **Christmas Card Project**

Christmas card greetings were received from the following people:

Eddie & Nellie Black; Joyce Rhodes; John, Amy, Heather & Ashley Knott; Vince, Wendy, Walter, Kenley & Corinne Rhodes; David, Carol Lena, Jonas & Zeb Miller; David & Vicki Richard; Brad, Julie, Jared, Nathan & Noah Smith; John & Cathleen Coffman; Carole Hoover; Tom Womble; Mike, Stephanie & Jared Diehl; Mary Frances Heishman; Gloria Horne; Sara & Dustin Atkins; Phil & Ramona Evans; Tom & Barbara Ross; Roger & Barbara Moyer; Gordon & Gail Miller; Melvin & Edith Burger; Pansy Auville; Rick & Libby Kiser; Janet Whetzel; Kenny & Sue Miller; Wade & Catherine Showalter; Fred & Helen Shank; Helen Shickel; Roma Holloway; Carolyn Cline; Jim & Lavonne Rusmisel; Donnie & Mary Jackson; Nelson & Frances Shenk; David & Sheila Skelton; Bobby & Elaine Shank; Dick & Bonnie Ryan; Sharon Layman; Craig, Shari, Chris & Josh Payne; Ethel Hinkle; Meredith & Pat Sine; Gary & Eleanor Payne; Bill & Gloria Heishman; Randy & Mary Lou Glick; Bob, Patty & Ron Black.

Heifer Project International has been sent a check for \$740 from this project, which was sponsored by the Upward Way Sunday School class.

## Birthday Luncheon: March 18th

It is that time of year again! We will soon be celebrating our Annual Birthday Luncheon on Sunday, March 18<sup>th</sup>! The luncheon will be held in the Fellowship Hall following Sunday School. Sign-up sheets will be available in early March to volunteer to decorate tables for each month, so start your creative juices flowing to design your month's table decorations!

## Do You Have Special Talent??

As entertainment for the Annual Birthday Luncheon, we are seeking people with a talent to perform following the luncheon. Can you sing, write or read a special poem, juggle, dance, or play an instrument? We would like to have 8 to 10 people who can perform for 3-4 minutes as part of the Talent Show. There will be special awards, and if it looks as if we have such an abundance of talent that we cannot possible use all comers, we will take first come, first chosen to be part of the entertainment. If you are interested, please sign up on the Talent Show Sheet which will be in the church entryway the first Sunday of March. If you have questions, please contact Neva Clayton, Chair of the Nurture Commission, at 830-5339. Thanks for participating!

#### Youth Events: February 2018

**Feb 1-3**: Jr. High Winter Camp at Brethren Woods

**Feb 10**: Jr. & Sr. High Snow Tubing at Wintergreen (5-10pm)

Feb 11: Jr. High Youth Night @ Church (6-8pm)

**Feb 18**: Sr. High Youth Night: AFTERNOON Musical @ Spotswood High School

Feb 21: Set up for Tenderloin Feast (6pm)

**Feb 24**: Jr. & Sr. High are helping to serve the Tenderloin Feast; clean-up is at 8pm

#### Thank you

I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for your support to my tuition fundraiser. We initiated this fundraiser to support my studies in Conflict Transformation at EMU Center for Justice and Peacebuilding. Willing to be useful for others, I hope the knowledge garnered through this program will allow me to make a positive difference in the community. Supporting me, donating for this cause, sharing love, hope and blessings, is a key support and helps me get one step closer to my goals.

All the rewards are yours because without your support, we would never have this success.

I have to admit that I am overjoyed and thankful for your love and generosity.

- Rodrigue Makelele

## Birthday Wishes for John Clayton

On Monday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, John Clayton will turn 99 years old. Please feel free to send him birthday greetings at

> Bridgewater Retirement Community Gardner Wing 302 North Second Street Bridgewater, VA 22812

I am sure he would love to hear from you!

On Sunday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, we will have a small reception with cookies after worship. I hope you can join us to celebrate my father's birthday.

Thank you, Neva Clayton

### **Turning Pain into Hope**

by Gabe Dodd

Many people might not know that I used to be a huge Batman fan. As a child I collected the toys, read comic books, and watched all the TV shows. Today, I would not consider myself a die-hard fan, but I still really like the character and I do get very excited when a new Batman movie comes out in theaters. Recently I went to watch the new movie, Justice League, and had an epiphany experience. In some dialogue between two characters (the Flash and Cyborg), the observation was made that each of these heroes were "birthed" out of accidents or tragedies. The Flash was struck by lightning, and Bruce Wayne (spoiler: he is Batman...) witnessed his parents get murdered in an alley when he was just a boy. In the Marvel comics, the X-Men and other heroes are mutants that were just born differently than most people through rare genetic mutation. The villains are also mostly from the result of accidents or tragedies: victims of abuse, acid spills (you know... the normal), PTSD, economic problems, etc. Although heroes and villains are born out of accidents and tragedies, there is some factor that determines how they respond to their unique experiences.

As human beings, our lives are individual and unique. After listening to people share their lives with me, I understand that we all experience special moments in life that might be frightening, traumatic, life-altering, or tragic. Think about it. Have you ever had someone close to you die suddenly, or have you suffered a life threatening illness, gotten into an accident, lost a job, been constantly rejected, or failed at something important? Most of the people I have heard from tell me that their faith is the thing that helps them determine what to do with those experiences. In my own understanding of traumatic events, God does not make these things happen. God does not cause us to hurt, to be in pain, to make us suffer. I believe that evil in the world causes these heartaches to happen. However, I believe that God is bigger and stronger than any of these events. Our faith in God's wisdom is far greater than what any individual can do to us. Our hope in Jesus Christ is more promising than medical threats. Our eternal reward is far more rewarding than earthly pains. This is not to say that our relationship heartaches and physical pains are minimal - but the difference between heroes and villains is how we continue to have faith and hope in a God that is good.

Montezuma Today is a monthly publication of Montezuma
Church of the Brethren. Articles and information for publication are appreciated by the 20th of each month.

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# EYN team repairs houses, distributes food

any homes of members of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria

(EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) were destroyed by fire during the Boko Haram insurgency. The EYN Disaster Ministry Response team has been working to re-roof the houses of the most vulnerable.

Once dry season arrived in northeastern Nigeria last fall, housing repairs went into full gear. A total of 57 homes were re-roofed in remote areas in the latter part of 2017.

Food distributions continued during the "lean period" from July through late October, a time in northeast Nigeria when food from the previous year's harvest is almost gone and the new crop is not yet ready. The Boko Haram insurgency compounded this problem with a decreased ability

to even plant crops.

In the last few months of 2017, the EYN team carried out eight food distributions to around 300 families at a time. Food was bought in the local market, loaded on trucks, and taken to the distribution point, often a church. Leaders of the church districts created lists of needy families in their area, and contacted them to convene for the distributions.

## Brethren staff part of meeting with Palestinian president

#### A Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) delegation met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas

on Nov. 2, 2017, the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. The group included Church of the Brethren staff Nathan Hosler, director of the Office of Public Witness, who is serving as board chair for CMEP, and Roy Winter, associate executive director of Global Mission and Service and Brethren Disaster Ministries.

The historic declaration by Lord Balfour of Great Britain "[viewed] with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" and stated "that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."

CMEP executive director Mae Elise Cannon was part of the delegation. During the meeting, President Abbas expressed appreciation to Cannon for CMEP's work.



CMEP delegation at Saint Georges Cathedral in Jerusalem.

## NEWSLINEDIGEST

## Workcamps repair buildings in PR

n November, Church of the Brethren volunteers made repairs to church buildings and

**homes** in Puerto Rico that were damaged in the hurricanes of 2017. Two groups of volunteers, totaling seven people, assisted with the project, which received support from Brethren Disaster Ministries.

The workcamps at Caimito Church and Community Center were organized by Shirley Baker, with Jeff Bruens, disaster project leader, providing construction leadership, and other volunteers coming from churches in the continental US. These teams repaired the roof and ceiling at Segunda Iglesia Cristo Misionera, provided partial repairs to the Caimito

Community Center affiliated with the church, repaired the Brethren House, and worked on two homes in the area.

Additional work projects were being organized and planned for 2018.

Puerto Rico District, led by district executive José Otero, has been organizing a response to Hurricane Maria, with support from Brethren Disaster Ministries. As of November, more than \$28,000 in grant funds had been sent to the district, some coming from special donations received by several districts of the Church of the Brethren, and some through the Emergency Disaster Fund. The money has helped meet emergency needs in the communities around the seven Churches of the Brethren in Puerto Rico.



## **Personnel notes**

Joe Detrick completed an interim assignment as director of the Office of Ministry for the Church of the Brethren Nov. 10. He worked in the position for more than a year, starting June 22, 2016. He is retired from serving the denomination as a pastor and a district executive. He also is former staff for Brethren Volunteer Service.

concluded work with the Church of the Brethren's Congregational Life Ministries Nov. 8. She worked as director of Intergenerational Ministries for almost three years, starting Jan. 15, 2015. Her work included coordinating Inspiration 2017, last year's National Older Adult Conference, as well as

**Debbie Eisenbise** 

serving as staff for the Disabilities Ministry and connecting with the church's spiritual directors, among other responsibilities.

Mark Hartwig has retired as director of Information Technology for the Church of the Brethren, following more than 12 years of service. He began in March 2005 as a computer and applications specialist. In March 2007, he was promoted to the position of director of Information Services.

Patrice Nightingale has retired as manager of production for Brethren Benefit Trust. She joined the BBT staff May 5, 2008, becoming director of communications that October. In late 2011, she became manager of production. She provided lead-

ership in marketing, promotions, publications, electronic media, and copy editing.

Margie Paris is retiring Feb. 8 as program assistant in the Church of the Brethren's Office of Ministry. She has worked at the denomination's General Offices for more than 28 years, beginning in August 1989 as assistant Yearbook coordinator. In 1996 she became the Yearbook coordinator. In August 1999 she began in her current role. A key focus of her work has been facilitating daily operation of the pastoral placement system, working with district staff. She provided administrative support for the director of Ministry and facilitated support for the director's work with the Brethren

Academy for Ministerial Leadership.

Brenda Reish concluded employment as treasurer and executive director of business services at Bethany Theological Seminary Dec. 31, after 19 years of service to the school. When she began in August 1998, she served as business manager for both Earlham School of Religion and Bethany, as well as treasurer for Bethany, until 2002, when a separate business office was established for each school. As treasurer under three Bethany presidents, Reish was responsible for institutional finances as an internal auditor. During her tenure, Bethany received clean audits each year and the endowment grew from \$10 million to \$39 million.

Our Stewardship for December 2017					
	Attendance				
	Worship	Sunday School	For Budget		
December 3	170	73	\$8,427.60		
10	174	84	\$4,181.81		
17	210	106	\$6,559.01		
24	223	93	\$6,101.50		
31	134	77	\$4,820.81		
December average per Sunday	182	87	\$6,018.15		
Last 12 mos. average per Sunday	175	84	\$5,229.95		
Special Giving for December					
Apple Butter	\$48 Mem. Fu	und: Patsy Puffenbarger	\$300		
Backpack Program	\$20 Poinsetti	as	\$337.25		
Bridgewater Food Pantry	\$115 Tenderlo	oin Feast	\$469		
Honoraria Fund	\$250				

Our Stewardship for January 2018						
	Attendance					
	Wo	rship	Sunday School	For Budget		
January 7	1	08	55	\$5,512.00		
14	2	202	78	\$8,044.60		
21	1	65	95	\$5,707.00		
28	]	59	88	\$3,313.80		
January average per Sunday	1	59	80	\$5,554.35		
Last 12 mos. average per Sunday	1	74	81	\$5,262.02		
Special Giving for January						
2¢ Meal Offering	\$6	Memorial:	June Wenger	\$55		
Backpack Program	\$160	Memorial:	Pat Miller	\$100		
Honoraria Fund	\$100	Tenderloir	n Feast	\$1,700		
Memorial: Earl Hartman	\$30	Youth Cod	ok Books	\$8		

Nursery		<u>Ushers</u>	
4	Matt & LeAnne Young	Bob Black	
11	Becky & Hayley Daubert	David Skelton	
18	Sara Atkins & Dawn Kiser	Matt Young	
25	Rhonda Mandeville & Roma Holloway	Randy Glick	

SOUND SYSTEM		VALET PA	VALET PARKING	
4	Chris Payne	4	Brad Smith	
11	Bill Heishman	11	Ralph Rohrer	
18	Ron Shickel	18	Donnie Jackson	
25	Randy Glick	25	Jeff Wine	

<u>SALVATION ARMY:</u> The following people will be preparing and serving the Salvation Army Meal on Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup>: Marsha Shank, Marty Barlow, Mary Frances Heishman, Bonnie Guyer & Doug Tumer.

### February Birthdays & Anniversaries

#### **February Birthdays:**

- 1 Nathan Smith Noah Smith
- 3 Helen Shickel Patty Skelton
- 4 Trey Daubert Jacob Ross
- 5 Piper Brown Mac Rhodes
- 6 Louise Grady Barbara Ross Hunter Shipe
- 7 Kari Ostlund
- 8 Monica Burkholder Ben Hall Scott Miller
- 9 Kim Wyrick
- 10 Amy Vandevander
- 11 Peter Barlow Katy Roche Sam Shickel
- 12 Aaron Brunk Damian Hinkle

- 13 Kenny Miller Annie Wilhelm
- 14 Trevor Barnhart Matthew Miller
- 15 Ron Black
  Dawn Guilloy
  Kenzy Hiner
  Nelson Shenk
  Penelope Smiley
- 16 Justin Berry
- 17 Kayla Kuster
- 18 Garold Shull Ricky Shull
- 19 Rebecca Click Joel Hottel Norlyn Miller
- 21 Mary Jane Cox Bonnie Guyer
- 22 Wanda Wampler
- 23 Don Click

- 24 Ray Coffman Janelle Weaver
- 25 John Knott Rachel Showalter Lisa Tumer
- 26 Glenna Rhodes
- 27 Gordon Miller Juanita Swartz
- 28 John Monger

#### **February Anniversaries:**

- 2 Robbie & Dena Symons
- 18 Garold & Sherry Shull
- 27 Dick & Bonnie Ryan

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