



gCorner of Beaver & Burrowes



From Pastor Paul's Desk.....

A-B NEWSLETTER

• ALBRIGHT-BETHUNE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH •

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Blannie Bowen, Editor; Volume 28, Number 4, April 2021

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, the Healer of the Soul, and our everlasting Redeemer. I am so excited about what the Lord has in store for us at Albright-Bethune. We have an amazing opportunity to be a bridge in the community by mending their souls with the word. Engaging their hearts in stewardship and prayer. All of this is done by a Beloved Community engaging in planting the seeds of Jesus Christ our Hope. Building Bridges of connections throughout the community. (Matthew 25:34-36, Luke 4:18-19)

Family, I pray all is well with you and your families. Easter has arrived and now we are in celebration mode of Jesus conquering death. I want to share 3 keys as we move from Easter and move toward Pentecost. We must have Joy! We must be Fearless! We must see with new Vision! Joy resides deep within us, a gladness that cannot be stripped or stolen from us, even in the midst of sorrow. The Passion and Resurrection of our savior Jesus teach us that suffering is transformed through faith in the Risen Christ. With a faith that grounds us, we are able to stay connected to an everlasting sense of joy even in the midst of the pain, and grief we experience. I am reassured because I have a savior who understands my struggles and is the lifter of my bowed down head.

Furthermore, The [Resurrection](#) teaches us that God can overcome anything, even death. When the Risen Lord Jesus appears to Mary at the tomb and later to his disciples, his first words are, "Do not be afraid!" These words speak comfort to our aching hearts, helping us cope with the fear from the loss of a loved one, a serious illness, or experiencing the hate of racism. Our faith allows us to trust that God can overcome our most serious problems.

Finally, Easter means that we are to live with a sense of newness(Rebirth). Just as the return of spring lifts our hearts and spirits. Spring is the season of flowers, rebirth, and BBQs. This time of year makes us feel like the whole world is new, the Resurrection of Jesus makes "all things new." The spirit of Easter is a spirit of rebirth that enables each of us to show up in daily life with a positive attitude, to renew relationships that have been taken for granted, and to express appreciation and affection to those closest to us. It means to see the world through new eyes - God's eyes.

I know that we are all watching and listening to all these developments that are happening around us. From the Jim Crow 2.0 being implemented in Georgia to the Trial of Derek Chauvin. We are in a moment where the beloved community must stand together and stand strong in the face of this intolerance and greed. We are God's chosen -- let's share the love and hope of Christ.

Closing Prayer: Draw us forth, God of all creation. Draw us forward and away from limited certainty into the immense world of your love. Give us the capacity to even for a moment taste the richness of the feast you give us. Give us the peace to live with uncertainty, with questions, with doubts. Help us to experience the resurrection anew with open wonder and an increasing ability to see you in the people of Easter. Amen. - **Pastor Paul Ryan McReynolds**

- **EASTER WORSHIP SERVICE** - Our Easter worship service will be held **at 11 am** on April 4 and Park Forest will have a separate outdoor service at 9:15. Also, as more worshippers in both congregations become fully vaccinated, the plan is to return to separate services at 9:15 for Park Forest and 11 am for Albright-Bethune. Specifics will be provided each week in the email that is sent from our church. Please contact Pastor McReynolds if you have questions.

- **BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES** - Congratulations to these individuals who celebrate special days this month: April 1 - **Marcus Bowen's** Birthday; April 4 - **Courtlyn Roser-Jones'** Birthday; April 13 – **Rev. Paul Amara's** Birthday; April 14 – **Deborah Atwater Asbury's** Birthday; April 17 - **Donald & Josephine Ferrell's** Wedding Anniversary; April 25 – **Tobin Wilson's** Birthday; April 26 - **Blannie Bowen's** Birthday; and April 29 – **Andrew Amara's** Birthday. Give Blannie your special dates (call/text 814-777-6550 or email blanniebowen@gmail.com) so we can honor you on your special dates.

- **SPECIAL CHARGE CONFERENCE** - On March 30, District Superintendent Brenda Leigey held a special church charge conference to discuss the future of our church including in person worship and developing a stronger online presence. Rev. Gary Shockley, the Director of Equipping Vital Congregations for our UMC Susquehanna Conference, was also on the Zoom conference. Several of our leaders, members, and worshippers participated. The specifics about plans for moving forward will be released when they are finalized.

- **VACCINATIONS & IN-PERSON WORSHIP** - Given the age of our congregation and because so many members and worshippers have underlying health conditions, getting a vaccine is critical for our church to resume in-person worship and activities. If you have not already received a vaccine, please do so when you become eligible, and one is available. Our church is tracking how many have been vaccinated or plan to get a vaccine to decide when to resume in-person activities. If you have already been fully vaccinated or are scheduled to get a vaccine, please send Blannie Bowen an email (blanniebowen@gmail.com) or a text/call (814-777-6550).

- **THE BLACK CHURCH PANEL** - On March 11, Pastor Paul McReynolds was a member of a 4-person Zoom panel that provided a local perspective on **The Black Church** special that PBS aired recently. The panelists discussed three areas of the documentary including the formation of the Black church after the abolition of slavery, the rise of the Black church and its importance to major historical events, and the relationship between the religious and secular worlds. You can watch the documentary and get more information about it at [The Black Church \(pbs.org\)](https://www.pbs.org).

- **SPRING GRADUATES** - If you are graduating from high school or college in May or June, we want to honor you and celebrate your accomplishment. Please contact **Blannie Bowen** at 237-5131 or by email at blanniebowen@gmail.com with your information. Remember your congregation if you are moving away. Be sure to worship with us when you return for a visit. If you are staying in the area, continue to worship regularly with us.

- **ANNUAL CONFERENCE** - Bishop Jeremiah Park announced recently that the Susquehanna Conference 2021 Annual Conference has been rescheduled for June 18-19 and will be held virtually. Bishop Park said that they will worship and conduct only essential business out of an abundance of caution for what is best for clergy and lay members.

- **HUMOR MONTH** - April is National Humor Month. Enrich the life of someone by doing an activity or something humorous. Send a humorous thinking about you card or watch a funny movie or program. Do an act of kindness for a friend or family member. Humor is frequently shown to reduce stress and enrich the lives of individuals.
- **FEMA TO COVER FUNERAL EXPENSES** - The COVID relief acts that President Biden signed earlier this year include a provision that allows families who lost relatives to COVID-19 to apply for funds to help cover funeral expenses incurred after January 20. The funds will be managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that will soon have a toll-free number that you can call to get specifics on the program and how to apply. The program will cover up to \$7,000 per funeral for expenses not covered by insurance and other means. Contact the FEMA website for more details on the program: [COVID-19 Funeral Assistance | FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov/covid-19-funeral-assistance).
- **EQUIPPING VITAL CONGREGATIONS** - Rev. Gary Alan Shockley, the Director of Equipping Vital Congregations for our UMC Susquehanna Conference, wrote an article entitled **Becoming a Vital and Thriving Post-Pandemic Church** for the March issue of the *Susquehanna Link* newsletter. In the article, Rev. Shockley indicates that churches which thrive in the post-pandemic era should focus on six key points. (#1) Churches should get clear about and stay focused on why they exist. (#2) Rather than focusing on information, churches should focus on formation because discipleship is less about knowing who Jesus is and more about doing the things that Jesus did. (#3) Churches should recapture a sense of being a neighborhood church and know why it exists within the community. (#4) A church should move more fully into the digital world. (#5) Churches need to learn how to pivot more quickly as the world around us changes at a dizzying pace. (#6) Take seriously a call to prayer and pray for your church, the pastor, the staff, the leaders, and the community. Rev. Shockley's article can be found at [Mar LINK 2021 web.pdf \(susumc.org\)](https://www.susumc.org/web/pdf/Mar_LINK_2021_web.pdf).
- **SERVICES WITH MENNONITE CHURCH** – Albright-Bethune and the University Mennonite Church hold a joint worship service during Black History Month. This year our 21st annual service included two virtual services. Rev. McReynolds delivered the sermon for the March 14 service and Pastor Kate Heinzl of University Mennonite delivered the sermon on March 21.
- **MOTHER'S DAY** – Greece gave birth to Mother's Day, but the mother of Mother's Day in the US was Ann Marie Reeves Jarvis, the wife of a West Virginia Methodist pastor. Her daughter, Anna, led a campaign to have Mother's Day become a national holiday. Anna heard her mother express hope that a memorial would be established for mothers, living and dead. After her father's death in 1902, Anna, her mother, and sister moved to Philadelphia. After Ann's death in 1905, Anna began a drive to fulfill her mother's wish. On May 10, 1908, a program was held at Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church in Grafton and in Philadelphia, launching a memorial day for mothers. The church later observed Mother's Day on the 2nd Sunday each year making Andrews the mother church of Mother's Day. The church, no longer an active Methodist congregation, was incorporated as an international shrine in 1962. Mother's Day will be celebrated in 2021 on May 9 (From UM News Service).
- **ASCENSION DAY** - Did you know that, as promised, Jesus appeared to His disciples 40 days after his crucifixion? Christians traditionally celebrate His ascension into heaven on the 40th day of Easter (May 13 in 2021). This event is followed by the Day of Pentecost to celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit in whose power this happens.

- **FINANCE CORNER** - Each month the amount our church collects via offerings is posted in this section of the newsletter. Our March collections totaled \$4,764.00. See Cathy Bowen if you have questions about our church's finances. Here are two items that might be of interest.

AmazonSmile

Albright-Bethune is a recognized charity with AmazonSmile Foundation. If you make purchases using Amazon, you can also benefit Albright-Bethune by designating it as your charity of choice through Amazon Smile. All you need to do is use the AmazonSmile link when making a purchase through Amazon. (The products and prices are the same. All AmazonSmile does is give you a voice in how Amazon distributes its charitable donations). Each time an Amazon customer makes a purchase using AmazonSmile, a portion of eligible items purchased will generate a 0.5% donation for the charity selected. Below is the designated link for Albright-Bethune. I suggest you bookmark the church's link on your computer or device. You can also Google AmazonSmile and select Albright-Bethune from the list of charities.

Smile Link for Albright-Bethune Church: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/25-1711251>

For each quarter when at least \$5 in donations is generated, AmazonSmile will report to us the amount of donations generated for Albright-Bethune and that information will be reported in this newsletter. **Our collective impact can make a difference.** For example, suppose 15 people collectively spent \$5,000 on AmazonSmile purchase, that would generate \$25 in a donation to the church.

Penn State VITA-Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

If you need help completing your 2020 tax return and your total income is \$56,000 or less, you can get the return completed and filed electronically for free at Penn State VITA. Because of the pandemic, the site is totally drop-off/pick-up. In short, you will leave your tax documents and return at a later date to pick up your file copy and grant permission to file it electronically. You can schedule your appointment at www.psuvida.org or call (814) 863-4147. The site is located at 325 Boucke Building on the Penn State Campus. **Submitted by Cathy Bowen**

Calendar

April 2	Good Friday, Service at 7 pm on Facebook
April 4	Easter Sunday, Service at 11 am on Facebook
April 6	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
April 18	Native American Ministries Sunday
April 30	Penn State Classes End
May 4	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
May 6	National Day of Prayer
May 7-9	Penn State Commencement Exercises
May 9	Mother's Day
May 13	Day of Ascension
May 23	Day of Pentecost
May 30	Peace With Justice Sunday
May 31	Memorial Day