** Baptist Tabernacle **

**Tabernacle Tidings**

**Baptist Tabernacle**

**63 Division Street**

**Wilkes-Barre, PA 18706**

**570 823-3083**

Website: www.wbtabernacle.com

 **February 2021**

Message from Pastor Valerie: 

**WHO ARE YOU?**

As you may know February is Black History Month, which celebrates the history, achievements, ancestry, etc. of people who are of African descent. Due to slavery, most if not all of our African history has been lost or purposefully hidden. In 1926, Dr Carter G. Woodson instituted and fought for Negro History Week, which became Black History Month in 1976. This month I will be sharing on black history. Throughout the year there are other months that celebrate history. I understand that March is Irish-American Heritage Month, May is Asian Pacific Heritage Month and Jewish American Heritage Month, September into October is Hispanic Latino Heritage is recognized and October is Italian American Heritage Month. This year I am asking you all to share some things about your heritage because we as a church family would like to celebrate with you. Please email us and let us know what your ethnicity is so we can set up a schedule throughout the year to celebrate your history.

**If anyone needs pastoral support, please feel free to call or email Pastor Valerie**

**Phone: 570 877-2975**

**Email:** **pastorWBTabernacle@outlook.com**

**John 15:12: This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.**

The month of February reminds us to take time to love one another. On Valentine’s Day we make a special effort to express love to those who are special in our life. As Christians we strive to be more loving. To love others, we need to take time to learn more about each other and to see things from their perspective. Sharing our heritage and stories of our lives will bring us all closer as a church family and help us to appreciate ways we are similar and different.

**Baptist Beliefs**  submitted by Barbara Nanstiel

When I was younger, a Roman Catholic friend of mine asked me why there were so many Protestant churches in her community. In some cases, there were multiple churches on the very same street! There were only a few Catholic churches in her town and she wondered why the small Protestant churches didn’t combine. It would be more efficient and easier for us to have a few larger buildings and congregations. I explained to her that Catholic churches all have the same basic beliefs, form and structure. Non-Catholic Christians share the same basic beliefs as all Christians, such as there being only one God and that Jesus is His son who was sent to save mankind from sin and death. But they differ about other secondary beliefs (Who should be baptized and how? or How should communion be practiced?) and forms of structure (Should churches fall under the authority of a bishop?) or worship (Should we sing the “old timey” hymns or contemporary music?) So those are some of the reasons why there are so many Protestant denominations and churches.

If someone asked you why you belong to Baptist Tabernacle, what would you say about your beliefs and why we are American Baptists?

In this and the next few newsletters, I’m going to try to outline some answers to those questions. These will not be exhaustive and some things are not completely consistent even from one Baptist church to another, but I hope this information will fill in any blanks on what you may not know and help you to better understand our denomination. (All Biblical quotes are from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.)

**Baptism**Probably the most obvious thing that makes us distinctive is what gives us our name. Descriptions of baptism in the New Testament indicate that the practice was by immersion, not pouring or sprinkling. Mark 1:4-5 talks about John baptizing people *in* the Jordan River. In Acts 8:38-9, we read that Philip and the eunuch “went down into…and came up out of the water.” The nature of our practice is not about washing away sins but of our identification with Christ. Death and burial to sin is symbolized when believers are lowered into the water; resurrection to a new life in Christ is symbolized when they are raised from the water. In Romans 6:4 we read that Christians are “buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

Baptists also practice “believers’ baptism”; that is, we believe in baptism only after a person has professed Christ as their Lord and Savior. This is why we don’t practice infant baptism since an infant or young child does not have the understanding to repent and proclaim that faith. Once a person has professed Christ as Savior, he or she is fully immersed in water. While there are New Testament passages that mention “household” baptisms (for example, Acts 10:47-8; Acts 16:34-5 and others), these emphasize the belief and faith of those who were baptized.

Baptists do not believe that baptism is a requirement for salvation but that it is a public profession of faith. Although it is personal, it is not private.

**Communion / The Lord’s Supper**Although the frequency of the practice varies from congregation to congregation, when Baptists celebrate the Lord’s Supper, they are following the command of Jesus who said, “[D]o this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19b). When He partook of the Passover meal with His disciples, the “bread and the cup” (unleavened bread and wine) were part of this traditional celebration. But Jesus created a new meaning for them. He said that the bread was His body, given for us. The wine was His blood, poured out for us. Just as the elements in Passover Meal were symbolic to the Jews, they are now symbolic for us of the sacrifice He made, giving his body and blood on the cross for our salvation from sin.

Unlike some others though, we believe the elements are *strictly* symbolic. Some Christians believe He was speaking literally, that during the taking of Communion, while the bread and wine appear to be unchanged, they actually become Christ’s flesh and blood. Baptists recognize that Jesus often spoke symbolically as He did in the parables or when He said of Peter, “And I tell you that you are Peter [which means Rock], and on this rock I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18). And we also do not see the spilling of His blood each time communion is taken because we believe “[H]e has appeared once for all…to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself…so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many” (Hebrews 9:26-28). His one-time sacrifice was sufficient for all people and all time, and His blood does not need to be repeatedly spilled.

Again, as autonomous churches, we determine how often we partake of Communion but we do it repeatedly to renew our faith, to remember that we are a family, and to remind us of the hope we have that we will eat the bread and drink the wine with Him again in the “kingdom of God” (Luke 22:14-17).

Some denominations and churches practice what is called “closed” communion, meaning that only members of that church may partake of the elements. Baptists practice “open” communion, meaning that anyone who is present and who believes in Jesus as their Lord and Savior may partake in the celebration.

**Communion Concerns:**

Concerns have been raised about the ability to make partaking of communion more accessible for members who are participating in Sunday worship via live-streaming or unable to attend services in person; this includes our shut-ins and those residing in nursing homes. The matter was discussed at the January Official Board meeting and it was decided that we would make the communion elements available to members at home so that they could prayerfully renew their personal faith by partaking communion.

We continue to comply with Covid Guidelines for our Sunday services and feel that live streaming the service is the safest option; but understand that not everyone is able to use the internet and would like to attend the service in person. You are welcome to join us for in-person worship while maintaining covid protocols and safe distancing. Our goal is to provide a safe opportunity for as many people as possible to participate in the Sunday worship service.

**Live Streaming Services:**

Live streaming can be done on any internet device including smart phones; iPads; tablets; or computers. If you have any questions about how to access live streaming, you can call Ron Shandorf at **610 462-8476.**

**To access the live streaming, you can choose one of two options:**

1. **Go to the church website:** **wbtabernacle.com** **and click on the link for live streaming. You can choose the service you would like to view.**
2. **Go to Youtube and search for “Baptist Tabernacle Church-WB”. You can select the service you would like to view.**

**Church Business:**

**Budget Committee: to meet February 8th at 5:30PM at the church**

**Individual Board Meetings: Board of Deacons; Board of Education; and Board of Trustees will meet on Thursday, February 11th at 5:15 PM at the church prior to the Official Board meeting.**

**Official Board Meeting: Thursday, February 11th at 6:00 PM at the church. Participation via ZOOM an be arranged by contacting Ron Shandorf. He will email you an invite.**

**Annual Reports: Due by February 14th. Please drop off at the church so that copies can be made available for members to review. Church members can pick up a copy of the Annual Report at the church on February 21st from 9 - 11AM.**

**Annual Church Business Meeting: Will be held on February 28th after the church service.**

**Missions: The America for Christ Offering will continue through the month of February.**

**Please remember our members who are sick or shut-in by sending greeting cards.**

Note: Mrs. Ebert is still residing at Hampton House.

Arline Ebert Beatrice Murray

Hampton House Nursing Home Timber Ridge

Unit C Bed 12 Rm. #105

1548 San Souci Parkway 1555 East End Blvd

Hanover Township, PA 18706 Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711

**Birthdays and Anniversaries: February**

4 Angelica Saltz 16 Bea Fell

4 Megan Sims 20 Larry Miscavage

9 Antonio Bonavina 26 Wayne Hauer

9 Anna Murray 28 Paula DelPrete

13 Connor Leiby

Matthew and Amy Cannavale welcomed their new baby girl on Thursday, February 4th.

Congratulations and best wishes to all!