



# THE PANORAMA

## The Newsletter of The Lewistown Presbyterian Church



Greetings!

The month of October, from a spiritual perspective, doesn't quite hold the delight of Advent, Christmas or Easter, but we do prepare our hearts and minds to experience opportunities to celebrate our stewardship, to give thanks for our blessings, and to commit ourselves to leading God's church as we respond to the needs of our church nominating committee.

There is always something to be grateful for in our church, especially when we compare our blessings to the challenges of this COVID-19 pandemic. Maybe you're like me, praying for a clear end to the pandemic when we can go back to what was normal to us. Unfortunately, I don't believe we will be returning to what life was like pre-COVID, and in some ways that is difficult to embrace.

On the other hand, we can trust in our God who has guided us through many challenges personally and corporately that God will continue to give us new meaning and purpose as a church. Holding on to our trust in God will help us to embrace the new change and opportunities for service we never thought possible before we heard the word, "pandemic."

I'm especially grateful to serve along-side a wonderful group of Ruling Elders, Deacons and staff who have continually "shown up" in more ways than one to lead our church through some unplanned experiences, such as a pandemic.

I've witnessed their ability to adapt how they serve, discuss how we remain faithful to the commandment we've been given to, "love God and our neighbors." Despite a world-wide pandemic, we have been able to continue to provide our Community Luncheons, our Preschool, our music ministries, our support to several area Mission Partners, and even our International Mission Partners.

Our ability to do so can be contributed to the church members and friends who attend meetings, participate in small groups or Sunday School, who volunteer to serve at a Community Luncheon, or bring in items for our church Blessing Box. Those aren't even all the ways, but a few I know happen.

We need to acknowledge that the mission of the church works best when we are all contributing in some way. Even just ONE way. Although the Apostle Paul reminds us that, "We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us," the reality is that God also desires us to be working together to share the good news of the Gospel.

Just as I give thanks for the women and men leading our church in a variety of ways, I'm also worried that we have created an expectation of service that will lead them to get burned out.

I have Session members sharing their ideas with me, but acknowledging they need help. I watch our Ruling Elders lead committees with few folks showing up to help and I pray that God would help us discern how we can invite more folks to share their gifts and skills.

I've got all sorts of creative ideas on how we might connect with our church family, neighbors and community organizations, but my prayer is always that God would help me identify the gifts and abilities of those connected to our church who can help.

The ongoing concern of engaging church members and friends was the same concern we had prior to the pandemic and the pandemic hasn't taken the concern away. We are a blessed congregational community, but like many other congregations we need to engage more people in our ministries and mission work.

So here is a two-part message: For those of you serving in a multitude of ways in our church, I

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# GYPSIES

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Rev. Robert L. Zorn, Pastor Emeritus

After reading this story you will know that I really am as old as I look. Some of the details are a little fuzzy, but this is a very close approximation of what happened nearly every summer when I was a boy on our farm.

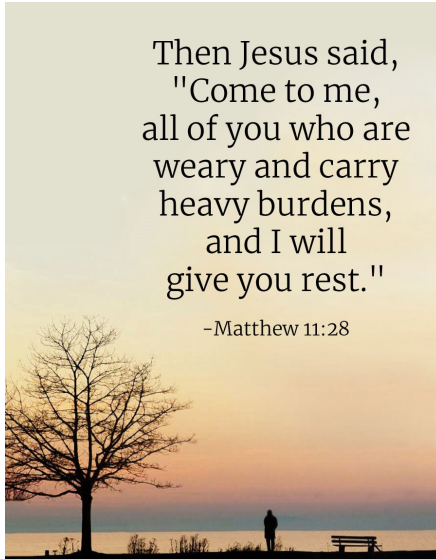
The first hint would come when our team of horses, Duke and Dan, would pause mid row in the cornfield they were cultivating. They would cock their ears and turn their heads toward our neighbor's woods. Soon there would be smell of burning wood and the sound of axe and hammer blows. Then we would know that the gypsies had arrived and had set up camp in a grove of maple trees just across the road from our south pasture.

The gypsies I remember traveled by horse and wagon and seldom stayed more than one night before moving on. Local legend had it that gypsies had strange mysterious powers. Some old women were said to have the ability to predict the future and tell fortunes. Others were suspected of having the power to cast spells on people. The worst horror story was that they would steal children from their parents and carry them off to be child slaves or worse. None of these malicious rumors were ever proven true by our nomadic visitors.

By chore time in the evening a delegation

Then Jesus said,  
"Come to me,  
all of you who are  
weary and carry  
heavy burdens,  
and I will  
give you rest."

-Matthew 11:28



consisting of a man and two children, all barefooted, would appear at our gate and offer to work for food. Especially needed, according to the man, was a little milk for the baby. Soon, a half-gallon jar was filled with milk. A box of eggs was fetched from the cellar and a generous slab of "side meat" was pulled from the pantry. If Mamma had baked recently, a loaf of bread was included in the fare. Garden and orchard produce was also shared. Daddy always decline their offer to work, stating that his seven healthy children could handle everything that needed done. The man and his children went back to their camp. But before leaving, he pronounced God's blessing upon our whole family. As darkness fell we could hear the plinking of a mandolin and singing in a language we did not know. The next day there were gone.

Bare foot beggars seldom show up at our doors these days; but today's gypsies are among us still. They are the weary wanderers through emotional distress; they are the captives of cruel addiction; they are the abused, the infirm, and old; they are the innocent victims of senseless warfare; they are our brothers, our sisters, our kin. You and I can help—we can still help.

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## THANKS FOR GIVING MONTH!

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**The Mission and Evangelism team** is planning some really neat activities during the month of November so that we all can have opportunities to shower our community with our presence as an offering of thanks to God who has showered us with blessings. There would be nothing better during the month of November than joining together in several service projects throughout the month. The committee knows that we may not all be able to do EVERYTHING scheduled for our month of "thanks for giving," but they challenge us to find at least one or two activities to participate in.

Here is a sneak peek...a more detailed calendar will be sent out during October so that you and your family can make plans to participate!

- ◇ Serving & Eating Dinner @ Shelter Services
- ◇ Baking Pumpkin Bread for Backyard Ministries
- ◇ A Neighbor's Table Night
- ◇ A TBA activity at The Lumina Center
- ◇ Preparing items for the LPC Blessing Box
- ◇ Sending Operation Christmas Child boxes
- ◇ A bus trip to Baltimore!
- ◇ Prayer Walks and other mission-related activities you can do from home!

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# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

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Ginny Westover, Christian Education Director

The question wasn't new. The same question had been asked many times over the course of thousands of years. It's a question that continues to be asked. Each time the question is posed, the answer can be a game changer...or not. This same question was the title of one of Pastor Sarah's (not too long ago) sermons. If you heard it, then you have also thought about the answer. Maybe for a brief second. Maybe for days afterward. It's a question that can be answered with the head or with the heart. It's a question that keeps on asking.

I've been re-visiting this question almost every day since I read it again about three weeks ago. It's the first sentence in that day's entry in my journal. (Ready? You already know it, right?) "Who do you say I am?" Jesus first asked this question to his disciples after they had witnessed him giving sight to blind eyes, feeding a huge crowd of people with scant provisions, telling enigmatic stories, going toe to toe with the religious leaders of Judaism, and commanding raging waves to be calm. That would seem like enough eye witness material to use to formulate an answer.

I very clearly remember the setting for one of the most poignant times I was asked the very same question. I was in Banias, Israel, at the foot of Mt. Hermon, next to the spring of water that was the source of the Banias River (one of the main tributaries of the Jordan River). Our guide said that many biblical scholars thought that this place was near the location where Jesus asked, "Who do you say I am?" When our guide read those words he wasn't looking for a verbal answer; but my Sunday School self, ever wanting to have the right answer, was internally shouting, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!" Two points for the blue team!

Later that week, after a particularly stressful relational situation, Jesus' question came again, not in a quiz master's voice, but in the quiet, pressing whisper of the Holy Spirit. "Who do you say I am?" My answer was not immediate. It would take many more months to process and assimilate. My idea of who Jesus was needed an overhaul. Who was this Jesus I quickly claimed to know and follow? Was the way I was living my life evidence that I had traded in the Jesus of the Bible for, in

the words of C.S. Lewis, a "tamer" version? Was Jesus central to my life? Did he matter more to me than anything? Was he important enough, did I regard him enough, to surrender my wants in obedience to his demands? Did I really know what following him demanded? And was following Jesus worth it?

That soul-searching period of my life was twenty some years ago. The questions I wrestled with during those months are still questions the Spirit of God brings me to regularly. They are questions that fan the flame of desire to know Jesus deeper; to move beyond the safety of "right answers" and comfortable settings and into the unknown but sure next pages of tasting and seeing that God is good.

This is the desire of my heart for you, my brothers and sisters here at Lewistown Presbyterian Church. In the next couple of months that lead us to the season of Advent there will be a number of opportunities to pursue this longing. The best vehicle I know to make this journey is a small group. I wish I knew how to be more convincing on this one.

About three weeks ago, the Tuesday night small group was finishing one study and needing another. We had talked together about some options and I had been pondering which one to choose for a while. Then the summary of a New Testament book study stood out and seemed to drill into my heart. I couldn't get around it. So, in we plunged to the book of Colossians, and a deep look into "the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ". Come and join us! There's always room for more – 6:30 – 8 PM Tuesday nights. We've been meeting on Zoom and also in person. To be sure where we'll meet, give the church office a call.

At Youth, we've just finished a look at the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's role in revealing Jesus to us. During the months of October and November we will dive into the book of John, seeking to experience the answer to Jesus' question: "Who do you say I am?"

And, now, once again, the question is right here. Whether two words or twenty-two, the answer makes all the difference.

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# **PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL UPDATE**

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Ginny Westover, Preschool Director

Beginnings are replete with a mix of conflicting emotions. Remember day one of a new job? Buying your first home? Moving into a new neighborhood? Welcoming a baby into the family? Lots of “both/and” moments; feeling both nervous and excited, confident and apprehensive, overjoyed and overwhelmed. It was no different for the four and five year olds that walked into the Pre-K classroom for the first day of school on September 7. Some were all smiles, more than ready to dive into the world of preschool learning with just a few anxious thoughts. Others were trying hard to smile, doing their best to be brave but feeling pretty scared. Many were excited and unsure at the same time. Most were a little surprised to learn that even their teachers felt a bit nervous on the first day. Our Frogstreet puppets, Fanny and Fernando, helped put words to the jitters and butterflies we were experiencing. A walk around the classroom helped, especially when Rex, the turtle, was so happy to see everyone! There were songs to sing and dance to (or just listen to and observe), name games to play (everyone liked rolling the ball to a friend), and bins of new toys to play with. Time for a snack, time for a story, then time to go home! Already?! And just like that, day number one was in the books!

Now, nearly a month later, our “seasoned” preschoolers have learned the daily routine of lining up, hanging up backpacks, putting folders in the bin, washing hands, and finding their name to sit on during circle time. We’ve still got a way to go to master the art of center rotation, but transitions from one center to the next are looking less like rush hour traffic snarls and more like a well-oiled machine (with just a few squeaks).

Our kiddos are well on their way to understanding that everyone is responsible for “making our classroom a safe and happy place.” We repeat that phrase every day, and every day each child chooses one specific way to bring that goal to fruition. Our Kindness Tree is filling up with examples of the ways the kiddos use “helping hands,” “kind words,” “listening ears” and a “confident voice;” and the joy filled atmosphere in the classroom reflects that.

We’ve learned a lot during this first month of school! There’s been lots of practice with names—you’ll see our kiddos’ names everywhere in the

classroom and along the hallways! We’ve written our names in sand, spelled them with clothespins and magnetic letters, and pressed the letters into playdoh. One day we combined small motor skills with letter recognition and made mosaics of our names from small pieces of colored paper. The results were beautiful!

Not only have we learned how important our names are, we have also discovered the wonderful ways God has created us to explore the world He’s made. We’ve talked about words such as “symmetry” and “attributes” while drawing faces and describing objects. Learning about our five senses was great fun! Whether the kiddos were walking on a sensory pathway (“You mean we get to take our shoes and socks off?!”), writing with scented markers, finger painting, or experimenting with kinetic sand, they were using their senses to discover and grow.

Everyone had a great time putting their senses to work on our Scavenger Hunt! We headed over to the grassy areas near the library playground and scoured the ground for nature objects. Our bags were nearly bursting with treasures from God’s world... and with the treat that Wood Fairy left for us at her tree house (your kiddo may want to take you to see it). It was wonderful to see the children looking out for each other and helping each other find the items they were looking for. When we returned to the classroom to empty our bags and look closely at our collections, the children were eager to show each other what they had discovered. One of our friends uncovered a teeny tiny snail hidden inside of the stick he had found! “Ooohs,” “aaahs,” and smiles all around!

One of the greatest joys of teaching is watching each class develop friendships and grow into a caring school family. Just last week the morning class welcomed a new friend into the daily routine. We were so encouraged and so proud of these kiddos for the kindnesses they showed to Skylar! She had many special friends “showing her the ropes”.

To be sure, we’ve had our challenging moments these first weeks of school, but overall, it’s been a wonderful month! The best part? This is only the beginning!







want to say, “thank you,” and remind you that your most important “work” is your relationship with Jesus Christ. Find Sabbath time. Don’t be afraid to cancel a beloved church activity if its hard to find volunteer help. Call and ask your church

**FAMILY** to help you serve.

For those of you who have stepped away from involvement at Lewistown Presbyterian Church, but consider yourselves members, I’m inviting you to join us again. Attend online or in person worship services. Let me help you find a small group, a ministry team, or event you can participate in. The gifts and skills God created you to hold were meant to be shared in a way that blesses the kingdom of God.

If you’ve been hurt in any way through an experience you’ve had at our church or by someone in the church, then I’m truly sorry. I may not have been around when that experience happened, but I am available to help you resolve your hurt feelings, and perhaps, help you find forgiveness. The truth is, we need the enthusiasm, energy, intelligence, and love of all those who have committed to be a part of God’s church.

I don’t know all of you well, but I’m working to plan moments we can meet. Come meet me at a church activity or worship service, too! We have all been going through the challenges of a pandemic, including myself and my family, and that doesn’t account for all the difficulties we may have experienced that have nothing to do with a pandemic.

I’m always telling myself and others that in our earthly lives we hold both joy and junk at the same time. Some days are really good, and some days are not so good. I think about all those days and can’t imagine celebrating the good or enduring the not so good without a church community around me.

I’m raising a teenager who I pray won’t lose her desire to know Jesus, but even Jim and I can’t teach her everything. We need you. We need McKenzie meeting as many disciples of Christ as possible so that in you she can understand how beautiful she is in God’s eyes.

We have children in our church who need to know they are surrounded by people who love them, who pray for them, and who can show them what it looks like to grow older and proclaim their faith in an ever-changing world.

We have young adults who have begun college or have graduated from college and need wise, Biblical advice from you reminding them that they should orient their lives around their relationship with Christ, first and foremost. All the other things of the world will fall into place around them.

We have wise, older saints of our church who have given years to church leadership and would gladly share the responsibilities of committee work with some “younger” church members. I pray that they can find joy in mentoring someone new to take on some of the church activities they have enjoyed throughout the years.

With all my heart, I believe God called us to come together for a specific purpose. . . and it wasn’t for a pandemic! Ha! That purpose is yet to be revealed, but I see glimpses of what church might look like for all of us when we serve together to discern God’s hand upon the life of our church community. Not because we must to earn God’s love, but because we want to express our gratitude for God in the way we serve through God’s church.

Come see us at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Brown Streets. Come tell me what brings you joy and let me help you get re-connected to the church God has invited all of us to call, “home.”

*Peace be with you,  
Pastor Sarah*



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**The Neighbor’s Table** is “popping up” again at our church on Thursday, November 4, from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM. Everyone is invited to learn more about the mission of Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard and of course, enjoy a tasty meal provided by the Mission and Evangelism team. RSVP to the church office – it’s that easy! There is a seat for you at our tables!

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## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

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God has blessed our church family in many ways. In March we started meeting again for in person church and adult Sunday School. Anyone can still take advantage of Zoom and YouTube for those that are not able to attend church or church activities in person.

Preschool is back and has 24 students in a four-day week program. Along with children in Rainbow Summer and Vacation Bible School, the Preschool is taking advantage of the new fenced-in yard. All the teachers and volunteers thank the church for adding the safety of a closed in area for the children to play and learn.

Thank you for your support and patience through these interesting times. Cole Cullen has provided so much in allowing us to continue to reach all of you in a meaningful way. We are truly blessed to have his creative talent in bringing worship to us in our homes. We would also like to thank the rest of the staff for stepping up to keep us safe and connected.

For many years, the members of our church have given generously to our church's ministry both for individuals and families in our congregation and to people in our community and around the world. We are blessed with investment income from various trusts that help cover the ever increasing costs of maintaining our buildings. Your gifts and pledges support the ministry of the church through the salaries of the minister and the staff, benevolence (mission giving), and the supplies needed for the programs.

On October 25 Susan will be mailing the Stewardship letter and pledge cards for 2022.



Lewistown Presbyterian Church is asking you to prayerfully consider what God has given to you, and in turn how you can share what you have been given through our church's ministry to others in 2022. ***Pledges can be returned to the church by mail or at the dedication of pledges at the November 14<sup>th</sup> worship service.***

Thank you for your stewardship,

*Ed Curry, Ruth Fisher and Susan Ferguson*  
Stewardship Committee

***"Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."*** (2 Corinthians 9:7-8)

Your Stewardship Pledge will help plan for building projects identified by the Session that need to be done over the next few years including:

- Replacing Church roof
- Replacing Manse roof
- Refurbish front sanctuary doors
- Repoint the steeple
- Air conditioning replacement on the second floor of the manse

These projects will more than deplete our Capital Reserve. It is important that we continue to save for ongoing upkeep that arise due to the age of our building.

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**LEWISTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH BLESSING BOX:** We are collecting **cold care items** to supply the outdoor blessing box on Third Street. During October, please add these donated items to the Blessing Box basket in the narthex: **TRAVEL** size tissue packets, cough drops, Chapstick, thermometers, and anything else that might give someone some comfort when sick.



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