

## Newsletter May/August 2023



I knew it was coming. It was still a serious case of sticker shock when I finally heard the news. My car needed a ton of money to repair.

The worst part about it. It was all maintenance—brakes, tires, basic needs for safe reliable transportation. I probably paid double for waiting until now, rather than taking care of it sooner. I already knew what was needed. I just didn't want to pay. I suffered from a case *deferred maintenance*.

Here's the reality. Maintenance is simply a part of life. It joins death and taxes as inevitable. It's written in the laws of Creation. All things mechanical. All things material. All things are subject to dust and decay. All things need care and maintenance.

Our bodies require a certain amount of maintenance to remain happy, healthy, and hygienic. Daily habits help. Feeding ourselves, brushing our teeth, getting the proper amount of sleep. Sometimes more investment is needed. A doctor's visit warns how deferred maintenance can be hazardous to our health.

I'm constantly reminded how relationships need a healthy amount of maintenance. There are daily and weekly habits of connecting and caring for others in our lives. Deeper investments of time and attention are often necessary. Deferred maintenance can cause big problems in our relational health.

Our spiritual lives require a certain amount of maintenance, too. Nothing quite replaces regular time and attention. It might seem obvious a pastor would write about habits of prayer, contemplation, or going to church. I find those habits are more like feeding yourself, brushing your teeth (hopefully, not falling asleep in church). Different habits work for different people. A deeper investment could be to find practices to help connect and care for your spiritual health.

I even find the life of the church needs regular maintenance. The obvious current need is our siding project—with extreme gratitude for the gifts already given and those still needed. Beyond that, we know everything else is subject to decay. The church is more than physical space. It's the way we treat each another, our work together, our sense of spiritual community requiring constant attention and careful maintenance.

Funny how a costly car repair presented me an important life lesson. I learned best kind of maintenance is rarely deferred. "Getting around to it someday," usually means 'someday' never comes. I invite you to join me considering what needs more attention this season? Is there an area in your life being deferred, and could use a little more care? You can always contact me to talk about such things.

I understand timing is everything. Some things can use a Band-Aid. What other things are just too important to wait?

In this together,

Chris

### MAINTAINING THE CHURCH BUILDING

The General Committee has been working hard for the past 17 months looking for a contractor to side our - church building. We wanted to find the best for the job for an affordable price. We started the process ~~with~~ wanting to wrap the entire structure, but the cost was too much, and the loss of detail of the building was more than we could support. After much negotiating, the General Committee finalized a contract with Graves Brothers to install vinyl siding and aluminum detail on two sides and rear ~~back~~ of the building (which excludes the front and steeple). This contract is for approximately \$63,000. The work should begin in July and be completed in August, barring any problems. And hopefully there will not be any significant add-ons to the project. **NOW IS THE TIME TO DONATE TO THIS PROJECT!!!!**

We are in the process of looking for a contractor to paint the front of the church and steeple and the fascia & soffits of the building since Graves Brothers lost their painting subcontractor. If you know of someone, contact Doug Mayen.

*Fundraising is continuing and we thank all of you who have generously given so far. Remember you can always donate thru the Giving Button on our website.*

We appreciate the continued support to the running of our church.



## **CHOIR**

It's hard to believe but our regular choir is coming to a close the end of May. Our last regular Sunday will be May 28th which is PENTECOST.

During the month of June we meet at 8:55 Sunday morning to rehearsal a previously chosen golden oldie.

There will be a sign up sheet on the piano for anyone for July and August for special music. This can be a song on a CD/video you'd like played or a piece you would like to perform.

Our regular choir will begin again the second week in September.

Our choir also had the special privilege of singing together with members of the Immaculate Conception Church. We sang together to honor the memory of a former church member Cynthia Pease Braley who many years ago sung in the church choir. It was wonderful to put our ecumenical music talents together for this special memorial service.

## **WORSHIP COMMITTEE**

We have been working on a few changes beginning on the first Sunday of June. This first Sunday is communion and we will be adding the Apostles Creed and the Gloria Patri each Communion Sunday.

Come and join us on PENTECOST Sunday. There will be a special celebration that day which is May 28th. Find and wear your red finery for that day. Choir is all set since they have the red robes.

During June, July and August we will only have screen Sundays the first and third weeks.

Website continues during the summer...

As you make plans for the summer our plan is to continue with the recording of the Sunday morning worship each week. They are available each week if you go on vacation. Just go to [www.stephentownfederatedchurch.org](http://www.stephentownfederatedchurch.org) and find the Sunday you are looking to watch. There is also a Giving Button where you can continue to donate online with your support of our church during the summer months.

## **HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

---

May	3	Betty Whipple
	5	Andrew Eckhardt
	7	Anthony Williams
	9	Everett Madden
	11	Larry Eckhardt
	11	Adrienne Gundrum
	12	Lillian Dette

	17	Stephen Sparkawk
	29	Jonathan A. Koepf
	29	Doug Mayen
June	3	Joann Williams
	7	Skip Densing
	8	Keith Westfall
	14	Matthew Eckhardt
	14	Paul McMillan
July	5	Heather Eckhardt
	11	Patience Westfall
	18	Don Leab
	24	Joe Leland
August	1	Tammy Madden
	7	Don Lewandoski
	17	Maureen Saxby
	19	Kate Beach
	26	Bev Westfall

### **The Community Breakfast Group News** (Formerly “Men’s Breakfast”)

The CBG extends a very heartfelt “Thank you” to everyone in the community and the church for their help and gracious support of the Turkey Dinner held on February 25<sup>th</sup>. We served over 130 meals including 50 takeout dinners. The donations were very generous and welcomed for Group and Church activities. A great time of fellowship, hard work and gratification for our community and church members.



We have had very well attended breakfast meetings in March, April and May – averaging 25-30 hungry people each time to enjoy the cooking expertise of Brian McMillan, Malcolm Beal and Matt Eckhardt. Thanks to everyone who helps setting up and cleaning to make it special.

Our next breakfast, June 4<sup>th</sup>, will be the last before our summer break. The monthly breakfast meetings resume on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Additional dates for breakfast are November 5<sup>th</sup> and December 3<sup>rd</sup>, always at 8:00am sharp.

On September 16<sup>th</sup>, we plan on having our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual End-o-summer BBQ in conjunction with the SonShiners. Last year was a great beginning of what may be an annual event. Come, visit with those who make their way to warmer climates during the winter months. Details in future newsletters. More great food and fellowship!!

If you’d like to be on our e-mail list, please reach out to Paul McMillan, Larry Eckhardt or Ted Bears. Everyone is invited to join us –come one, come all. Hope to see you at the June 4<sup>th</sup> breakfast. We eat at 8:00am.

## SonShiners

### Meeting dates:

May 21st @ 8am  
June 18th @ 8am (Father's Day) TBD  
July 16th @ 8am Finalize Garden/Bake Sale  
Aug 20th @ 8am Finalize Community BBQ  
Sept 17th @ 8am Finalize Italian Dinner  
Oct 15th @ 8am Finalize Election Day Luncheon  
Nov 19th @ 8am Discuss Year End donations  
Dec 17th @ 8am Enjoy the Season

### Event Dates:



Aug 13th (Rain date Aug 20) Garden/Bake Sale at Historical Society Car Wash  
Sept 16th Community BBQ  
Oct 14th Italian Dinner  
Nov 7th Election Day Luncheon

Please consider donating time to these events.



Long – term Prayer Concerns:

*Please let Joanne know if someone should come off the list at [joannehennig@gmail.com](mailto:joannehennig@gmail.com)*

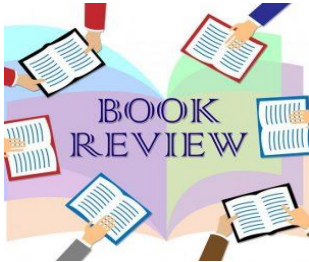
Holly Wheeler, Carol, June Ross, Rusty Melancon, Makayla & Julie, Kathy Carringer, Sean Northrup, Georgie, Peggy, Mike, & Greg, Lance, Kelly, James & his family, Garrett, Brenda & Bob, Mathew, Emma Richardson & her son Mike, Connie (FL), Pat Sample, Del Wise and his sister Vicki, John L., Bev & Jerry, Bob Vincent, John & Danielle, Julie Burdick-Snow, Melaney, Colleen P., Norm, Tanya Joyes, Tasha-Chris & family, Sal, Karen, Christina, Linda Lee, John Anello, Mary Martin, Sherry Ciliberti, Carolee, Toby, Kelly, Kevin, Angelica, Jim & Ann Peck, Radley family, Jenny, Rick Newton, Jim Chambers, Michael Monyahan, Judy & Joe Leland, Geralyn, Pat B., Joy, Bob & Ben Lowenthal, Susan G., Peter, Samantha, Owen McGinnis, Shannon W., Pattie Lewis, Sahara, Cindy Hennig, Hal, Don Leab, Frank, Janice, Donnie, Sue, Bob & Deb, Dorothy Zuckerman, Tom Foody, Sally Guimarra, Jerry (AZ), Stephanie & Devin, Dan & Nancy, Dennis L., Eckhardt's friend going through depression, Jennie O., Terrienne Koepf, Lori, Trygve Tomlinson, Nancy & Malcom Beal, Linda P., Heidi L., Adrienne & family, Sandy & John, Tracy & family, Wanda, Kay Sessor, Isabella, Carter & family, Molly & family, Mary's brother and his family, Sue Freihoffer & Hanley Palmer, Debbie Knapp, Bonnie & Rick, Barbara (Leland's daughter), Dottie Meppan, Larry Eckardt's cousins in NM, Gene Sawin, Joe Longo, Tony Longo & his partner Dana (praying for the blessing of a baby), Liane, Liam (Beal's grandson), Sal, those from the Ukraine and all who are helping them, Shannon & Scott Adams, Perry, JoAnn (Pastor Chris' mom), Joan (Ellie's grandma) & Brittany (Ellie's mom), Laurelyn & Doug's daughter-in-law's mom, Beth, Lou Eckhardt, Kathy, Zack Hanson, Gladys (Nancy Beal's sister), Buggy & Josie Bates and family, Carol Baker, Edna May, Peter Hamilton, Tom & family, Leo & family, Karen, Peter, Jackie Eckhardt, the LGBTQ Community, Navirre Mazzeo

As always . . .we pray for:

Our farmers, Pastor Chris & family, those with emotional/mental/physical illnesses, the unknown addict, those being cared for & the caregiver, those in transition, those suffering from addiction(s), Emergency Responders, youth of today, those in weather ravaged places, those who don't get where they are going who are cold/alone, the Military and their families, our Veterans, & our elected leaders, those imprisoned, Citizens of Lesotho & the student we sponsor, organ donors, those who mourn, those persecuted for their faith, those who have no one to pray for them, those not mentioned out loud, the unemployed, all refugees and the nations locked in conflict

## Apportionments

We thank each person who have provided their part of our Apportionments for the Presbyterians and Methodists. They have been paid in full for 2022. That's the good news. Now the bad news is they are now due for 2023! We start all over again. The Methodist apportionment is \$94 per Methodist member for 2023. The Presbyterian apportionment is \$46 per registered Presbyterian for 2023. We so appreciate your help in paying our apportionments for both denominations.



### ***Godbreathed* by Zack Hunt** As reviewed by Helen Wallbank, Stephentown, NY

One thing I love about our Federated Church, is that anyone who walks through our door is on their own spiritual path. Most of us have been traveling this road a while.

It is that curiosity which led me to a progressive, funny, blogger named Zach Hunt. I was invited to, and joined the launch team for his newest book, *Godbreathed: What it Really Means for the Bible to be Divinely Inspired*.

Here is the review I wrote. Welcome to a bit of my journey.

My advice: Don't ignore this book just because it's about the Bible! For those of us who seek a spiritual life, it just may reignite our passion for this collection of maddening, yet endearing, poetry and prose.

*Godbreathed*, authored by Zack Hunt, reintroduces us to a source many have felt the need to leave behind thanks to decades of "Christian" teachings.

Zack Hunt is no slouch. His theological pedigree is impressive. He is a graduate of Trevecca Nazarene University. He has both a graduate degree in Theology and a graduate degree in Christian History from Yale Divinity School. Zack has been on the front lines of preaching and ministry for over 20 years, has written a previous book, *Unraptured*, and continues to write articles about the daily entanglements of faith and politics.

Within *Godbreathed* we follow the evolution of a young evangelical Zack as he studies the actual development of the book he adores. We are introduced to ancient Biblical scholars, including Origen and Augustine, and recognize that contradictions and apparent flaws have been the essence of the Bible's message since its inception.

And Yes! There is Good, even Great, News along this journey.

*"the gospel isn't good news because it's perfect. It's good news because it breathes new life into a world of death, and we don't have to be perfect to proclaim that message."* *Godbreathed*, Zack Hunt, loc 1997

You will not regret walking this path of Biblical discovery with Zack. It has strengthened my faith and reignited my passion for wrestling against the current "Christian" campaign of misinterpretation and condemnation. Give it a read. I believe even the faithful will find a reaffirming message.

*Godbreathed* by Zack Hunt is available through:

- Herald Press
- Amazon