News, Notes and Revelations from St. John's Blymire's United Church of Christ

May 2025

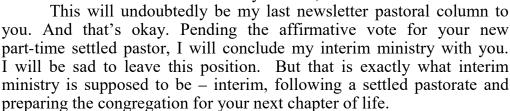
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From the Pastor's Keyboard

Dear friends in this wonderful family of faith,



The big news, of course, is that our search committee is recommending the Rev. Brenda Marin Enders to become your new part-time settled pastor. Pastor Brenda is very familiar to many of you since she was the student pastor here at Blymire's Church 14 years ago. She is currently serving Hayshire United Church of Christ where she is going part-time this coming month. This has been announced from the pulpit for two Sundays, and a letter has been sent out to congregational members.

There will be a meet and greet for Pastor Brenda on Saturday, May 3, in the Gathering Place, at 6:30 PM, for you to get to know Pastor Brenda a bit more. Then, the following day, Sunday, May 4, Pastor Brenda will conduct the service and give a "trial sermon". There will be a congregational vote immediately following worship on May 4 to extend a call to Pastor Brenda. If we extend the call, it will be for halftime ministry here at Blymire's Church. Her call will be with the understanding that she will have a team ministry here with our Lay Minister Cindy Innerst-Axe (Cindy and I have been working as a team for the past year and a half. Because it has been a success, we have recognized what a gift Cindy is to the church, and the CMT has asked that this team approach be done with our new pastor). Pastor Brenda's other half-time pastoral position is at Hayshire Church. We will be calling and extending our own contract to Pastor Brenda with the understanding that it is a joint call (also known as a yoke) with Hayshire UCC and that we will share Pastor Brenda's compensation package equally with Hayshire UCC. All congregational members in good standing are encouraged to attend worship and the congregational vote on May 4 because this step is important for the future of our church.

If we have an affirmative vote for Pastor Brenda on May 4, she will be starting her ministry with us on May 12. The Trustees have asked that I spend some overlap time with Pastor Brenda to orient and re-orient her to Blymire's Church and to help with the pastoral transition. I am happy to do that. The preaching schedule for May will be: May 4 – Pastor Brenda; May 11 – Cindy Innerst-Axe; May 18 – myself (that will be my last Sunday at Blymire's); and May 25 – Pastor Brenda.

I hope and pray that this interim period has helped pave the way for this next chapter in the life of Blymire's Church. I followed your two most recent outstanding pastors – Rev. Lou Ann Jones and Rev. Curt Weber. Their leadership over the last more than 30 years has helped this church become what it is today and carry out what is in the St. John's Blymire's UCC vision: "Joyfully receiving direction from Christ that enables creativity and innovation, believing everybody has the responsibility to lovingly share their unique gifts within the church family, the community, and beyond." You folks have shown time and again that you live out this vision beautifully!

You are an engaged church! I thank you for all your support, hard work, and clergy-lay partnership. We are so blessed to have such a wonderful staff with Lay Minister Cindy Innerst-Axe, Administrative Assistant Wanda Strickler, Organist Brenda Kerchner, Music Ministry Director Nelson Leader, and Sextons Ed and Judy Bishop. We are also fortunate to have such great lay leaders. Our CMT consists of Sterling Boyd, chair; Judy Bishop, Called to Care; Nelson Leader, Worship; Steph Frey, Fellowship; Marti Leader, FUN; Sharon Stein, Spiritual Formation; Mike Wills, Joel Frey, Joan Mickey, and Charlie Diehl, Trustees; Janie Montgomery, Carl Criswell and Joan Mickey, Counters; vacant position, Outreach; Sterling Boyd, Linda Eichelberger, Kathi Sterling, and Roberta Wills, Pastoral Relations Team; Jeri Jones, Men's Group; Ginny Weber, WOW, Cindy Innerst-Axe, Janie Montgomery, and Kathi Sterling, UCC delegates. Moreover, we don't want to forget our choir members, bell ringers, FUN Team members, Bible Study participants, WOW participants, those who have fun with the Card and Game Club, and those who help out to meet many local needs with Emmanuel's Closet.

All of you have helped us continue programs such as Emmanuel's Closet, Bible Study, men's and women's groups, support of our missions in Africa and Haiti, choir and bell ringers, outdoor worship services and pet blessings, Creative Crew, Hymn Sings, Hand of Hope Fund, Chicken Barbecues, Sunday School, and FUN events. You have also helped us start new things during this interim period, such as Messy Church, livestreaming of our worship services, brief reflection time following Sunday worship, putting in a new hallway floor, painting the sanctuary, updating our HVAC system, updating Building Use forms, maintaining our church and cemetery property, doing Red Brick Church repairs, establishing a partnership with the Dallastown Area School District with our Sharing and Caring Fund, and expanding our pool of Sunday School teachers. I can't express all my thanks to you for helping us spread the love of Jesus Christ through all that we say and all the ways that we are active as a church.

You have a bright future ahead of you with all of your participation and with your new pastor. Thank you for letting me be a part of your church's journey as your interim pastor. As I have mentioned for almost three years, during the interim period, we asked ourselves, and we answered: Who are we as St. John's Blymire's United Church of Christ? Who are our neighbors? Who is God calling us to become as we journey into God's future? What is our unique niche here in Dallastown? Being your interim pastor has been one of the highlights of my ministerial career. Thank you, thank you!

Let me close with one of my life Bible verses that I have shared with you before: Galatians 2:19b-20: "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." May Jesus Christ continue to live in each of you and in the life of St. John's Blymire's United Church of Christ as you continue to shine the light and love of Jesus Christ to each other, your neighbors, and beyond.

It's always a blessing for me to see you, Pastor Rick



CALLING FOR PICTURES OF CHURCH MEMBERS

Instead of a pictorial directory and for the benefit of our new pastor and our new church members, we are starting to put on one of the bulletin boards in the hallway pictures and names of our church members.

Please submit a picture of yourself individually, as a couple, and/or as a family (along with your name) to Sharon Stein for her to put up on the bulletin board. If you need any help, please see Sharon.

Let's fill the bulletin board with the beautiful faces of our wonderful church family!

MONTH OF SUNDAYS WORSHIP SERVICES FOR MAY 2025

MAY 4, 2025 – THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Message Scripture: John 21:1-19

Message: Rev. Brenda Marin Enders preaching, delivering her trial sermon

Congregational Meeting and Vote immediately after worship to extend a call to Pastor Brenda to become our new half-time settled pastor and to partner with Hayshire UCC, as a yoke, where Pastor Brenda will be their half-time settled pastor, too, and we will equally share her compensation package.

Sunday School: Cindy Innerst-Axe teaching

MAY 11, 2025 - FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER/MOTHER'S DAY

Message Scripture: John 10:22-30 Message: Cindy Innerst-Axe preaching Sunday School: Cindy Innerst-Axe teaching

MAY 18, 2025 - FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER/UCC MENTAL HEALTH SUNDAY

Message Scripture: John 13:31-35 Centering Scripture: Revelation 21:6

Message: "We Are Family! What's Our Secret?"

Theme: What makes followers of Christ unique? What makes St. John's Blymire's UCC

unique? A brief look back and a look ahead for us.

This is Pastor Rick's last Sunday with us.

There will be an "Ending An Authorized Ministry" as part of our worship service. Sunday School: Dr. Joy Giguere, presenting Part 2 of local cemeteries and how they express our Christian faith (last Sunday School until September)

MAY 25, 2025 –SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER/UCC RURAL LIFE SUNDAY/ MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND SUNDAY

Message Scripture: John 14:23-29 / John 5:1-9

Message: Rev. Brenda Marin Enders preaching on her first official Sunday with us.

May Humor:

A Here are some things that a Pastor dreams of hearing in his church.

- 1. Hey! It's my turn to sit in the front pew.
- 2. I was so enthralled, I never noticed your sermon went 25 minutes over time.
- 3. Personally I find witnessing much more enjoyable than golf.
- 4. I've decided to give our church the \$500 a month I used to send to TV evangelists.
- 5. I volunteer to be the permanent teacher for the middle school Sunday School class.
- 6. Forget the denominational minimum salary, let's pay our pastor so she can live like we do.
- 7. I love it when we sing hymns I've never heard before!
- 8. Since we're all here, let's start the service early.
- 9. Pastor, we'd like to send you to this Bible seminar in the Bahamas.
- 10. Nothing inspires me and strengthens my commitment like our annual stewardship campaign!
- 11. I couldn't find space to park outside. Praise God!

Pastors in Germany:

Q. What do they call pastors in Germany? A. German Shepherds.

MAY BIRTHDAYS



May God Bless You On Your Birthday!

- 2. Mike Wills
- 3. Brenda Kerchner Trudy Hertzog
- 5. Sonja Ness Linda Flinchbaugh Holly Gingerich
- 7. Kathi Sterling
- 9. Alexandra Humbert
- 10. Nelson Leader
- 11. Jane Picking
- 12. Zachery Tyler Ness
- 14. April Weber
- 15. Chuck Miller
- 17. Brad Leader
- 18. Douglas Leader
- 20. Lonnie Barnhart
- 24. Joyce Platts
- 25. Martha Leader
- 27. Richard Nelson
- 28. Braxton McKenzie
- 30. Claire Barley

CELEBRATING MAY ANNIVERSARIES

May 4 - Scott and Sarah Smith - 17 years

May 9 - Tim and Donna Sleeth - 16 years

May 10 - Bob and Wanda Strickler - 50 years

May 10 - Michael and Heather Matthews - 28 years

May 12 - Greg and Connie Hays - 24 years

May 13 - Matthew and Randi John - 19 years

May 22 - Brad and Michele Leader - 26 years

Maria 22 Marila and Diana Maria 42 maria

May 22 - Mark and Diane Ness - 42 years

FINANCIAL REPORT

Undesignated General Fund

Red Brick Chapel

Cemetery

Month-2024	Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Income	Expense
January	\$7.763.00	\$10,980.79	\$3001.83	\$384.30	\$1,127.63	\$0.00
February	\$8,040.00	\$10,783.87	\$2.33	\$492.68	\$257.54	\$427.22
March	\$11,744.00	\$16,632.22	\$2.00	\$686.27	\$305.15	\$3,448.68
April						
May						
June						
July						
August						
September						
October						
November						
December						
Total	\$27,547.00	\$38,396.88	\$3006.16	\$1,563.25	\$1,690.32	\$3,875.90

Balance of Undesignated General Fund @ April 1, 2025

(\$7098.72)

Balance of Red Brick Chapel Fund @ April 1, 2025 (Includes \$63,469.49 Endowment)

\$73,394.90

Balance of Cemetery Fund @ April 1, 2025 (Includes \$914,398.00 CD's, Trusts, UCC Foundation

\$930,971.44

Financial Assistance Given through Hand of Hope Fund - 2025

	#	# Total Monthly		Monthly	Available	
	Families	\$\$\$	D	onations	Balance	
Beginning					\$	542.38
January	4	\$225.00	\$	81.00	\$	398.38
February	3	\$175.00	\$	87.00	\$	310.38
March	2	\$100.00	\$	110.00	\$	320.38
April						
May						
June						
July						
August						
September						
October						
November						
December						

Total 9 \$500.00 \$ 278.00

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS and those in need of PRAYER

Terry & Fran Doll

Room 346 Residence @ Fitz Farm 2200 Springwood Rd. York, PA 17403 Terry's cell (717) 968-2454 Fran's cell (717) 968-8754

Peggy Luckenbaugh

Room 710B York View Nursing Home 970 Colonial Avenue York, PA 17403

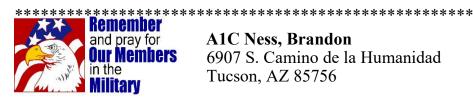


Linda Trone

Room 604 York View Nursing Home 970 Colonial Avenue York, PA 17403

Keeping in our prayers

Cindie McKinsey Friends battling cancer **Covid 19 patients**



A1C Ness, Brandon

6907 S. Camino de la Humanidad Tucson, AZ 85756

CEMETERY CLEAN-UP

Volunteers are needed to help clean up the cemetery on Friday, May 9, beginning at 7:30 AM. Help is also needed to paint the new kitchen door in the basement of the Red Brick Chapel. Please let Sterling Boyd know if you will able to help with either of these tasks. Thank you.



A special spring sale is now taking place in the Book Room. Buy any 5 books for just \$2.00. Be sure to take this opportunity

to stock up on your spring and summer reading material. Sale ends June 1st.

Ladies Afternoon Out

The FUN Team is once again sponsoring an afternoon out for the ladies. This one is called "Life Is Like a Box of Chocolates." The event will be held from 12:30-4:30 PM on Saturday, May 3. The cost is \$20 per person.

Come join us for an afternoon of fun and fellowship, including a chocolate buffet. There is a sign up sheet in the Gathering Room or you can call the church office at (717) 244-0655. This is not just for church members, so grab a friend or two and come join us. Deadline to register is Sunday, April 27.

Emmanuel's Closet

Thank you again for your ongoing support of Emmanuel's Closet. Here is a list items that are currently needed the most: Peanut butter/jelly, canned meat such as ham, spam, beef stew, roast beef, chicken, pork (no tuna, we have plenty of that). Of course, other non-perishable food items, as well as paper products, cleaning supplies and toiletries are always welcome.

Life Path Christian Ministries has offered a way for us to dispose of items that we are no longer using and help the clients who come to Emmanuel's Closet at the same time. When you donate clothing, books, toys, household items, furniture, etc. at the Life Path Thrift Store at the Cape Horn shopping center, tell them you are donating for St. John's Blymire's UCC. They will keep track of what is donated and will in turn give us gift cards for the Emmanuel's Closet clients to use in their store. If you have a large amount of donations or pieces of furniture that you are unable to bring yourself, call the store at (717) 229-7300 and they will arrange to come to your house to pick up your items.

Since Emmanuel's Closet no longer offers clothing or household items, this is a great way to help our clients while de-cluttering our homes!

MEN'S GROUP

The Men's Group will hold their next meeting on Tuesday, May 13, at 7:00 p.m. at the church. The program will be presented by Shawn Carbaugh who will talk about the history surrounding the Pigeon Hills.



Our second chicken BBQ of the season will be held on Saturday, May 10, 11:00 AM-1:00 PM. You will get a 1/2 chicken, baked potato, applesauce, roll and butter all for \$10.00. To place an order, please call the church at (717) 244-0655. We sold out early nearly every month last summer, so to be guaranteed a dinner, it is best to pre-order. Other BBQ's will be held on the 2nd Saturday of each month thru October.

We are also planning to set up a bake sale table and would welcome donations of homemade cookies, rice krispie treats, cupcakes, candy, etc. Please put individual portions in baggies or plastic wrap. They may be dropped off at the church the day before or the morning of the BBQ. Thank you.

What is Messy Church? It's church, but not as you know it! Messy Church is a form of Community Outreach for families, friends and neighbors. It involves creativity, celebration and hospitality! It's church for people of any age and at all stages of their faith journey. A meal will be provided. Our next Messy Church will be held on Friday, May 16, 6:00-8:00 PM.

The Messy Church team is asking for volunteers to help with crafts and other fun activities. Any questions, see Sharon Stein.

LANCASTER THRIFTING DAY

Mark your calendars for Friday, May 30. That is when we will be taking a road trip to Lancaster County to check out lots of shops. We will meet at the church at 9:00 AM and carpool from there.



CARD and GAME CLUB

We have started a group to play card and board games here at the church. Everyone is welcome, and if you don't know how to play certain games, there will be someone who can teach you. You can bring lunch or order in.

We meet the second Wednesday of each month starting at 11:00 AM and playing until people are ready to stop. May's meeting will be on the 14th.

The public is invited to join us in the pavilion behind our church for an outdoor concert series featuring a variety of different types of music. The concerts will be held on Sunday afternoons from 2:00-4:00 PM. In case of inclement weather, they will be moved indoors to the church. There is no admission charge, but a free will offering will be taken. Snacks will be available for purchase. In addition to other snacks, hot dogs will also be available at the August event.

Bring your own lawn chairs or blankets or sit at one of our picnic tables.

Below is a list of concerts for 2025:

JUNE 8 - EMIGSVILLE BAND (Traditional band music)

JULY 27 - JC FISHER BAND

(The band brings an eclectic mix of rock, country, blues, Motown and folk music. People are invited to sing along with them.)

AUGUST 4 - ROCK and ROLL EXPRESS, DJ

(Attendees are encouraged to dance if they like)

If you have any questions, please call the church office at (717) 244-0655.

"Motherhood is full of frustrations and challenges... but eventually they move out."

Unknown

The mother of three notoriously unruly youngsters was asked whether or not she'd have children if she had it to do over again. "Yes," she replied. "But not the same ones."

David Finkelstein

A little boy forgot his lines in a Sunday school presentation. His mother was in the front row to prompt him. She gestured and formed the words silently with her lips, but it did not help. Her son's memory was blank. Finally, she leaned forward and whispered the cue, "I am the light of the world." The child beamed and with great feeling and a loud clear voice said, "My mother is the light of the world." — Bits and Pieces, 8/1989

A teacher gave her class of second graders a lesson on the magnet and what it does. The next day in a written test, she included this question: "My full name has six letters. The first one is M. I pick up things. What am I?" When the test papers were turned in, the teacher was astonished to find that almost 50 percent of the students answered the question with the word Mother.

Unknown



Dear "big" kids, when your mom says she doesn't want "anything" for Mother's Day, what she means is she just wants:

A hug

A text
A phone call
A conversation
A shared meal
A "thanks, mom"
To hear your voice.
To see your face.
A "how are you, Mom?"
An "I love you:" via any method
To know you are happy and healthy
And for you to know you mean
everything to her!





May 2025



So today I will swing my feet to the floor again, dedicate the day to Him, roll up my sleeves and joyfully be His worker bee, busily following up on the inspiration He has placed in my heart. Surrender to God.

Dream big. Work diligently.

Lisa Bowman

We are closer to God when we are asking questions than when we think we have the answers.

Abraham Joshua Heschel

INHALE AND EXHALE

I've been needing to remind myself to breathe these days.
Listening to the radio, checking my phone, following the news:
my body tenses, my shoulders lift, my throat tightens. "Take a
deep breath, Kate," I tell myself. And usually, I have to let a
breath out first to actually accept any new air in.

Out, in. Out, in.

Maybe you know the feeling. I don't think I'm alone. Fear, anger, grief—they get stuck inside of us like too much CO2, taking up all the valuable space we need for fresh oxygen. Holding our breath for too long, we lose our ability to make conscious decisions. We get confused, dizzy with all that excess chaos, stress, and uncertainty. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale.

Maybe I sound trite right now, like a self-help guru or your smart-watch. But who cares. Breathing is holy. The first thing God ever did for humanity was breathe life into us. The risen Jesus met his fearful disciples and breathed the Holy Spirit on to them. Our breath is a reminder that we are alive, that God is near, that we are not alone.

So, when the events of the world fill you to bursting, exhale. Let go of those toxic fumes. Release the anxiety, the bitterness, the despair to God. Then inhale. Take in the Spirit's presence. Breathe in courage, calm, and the assurance that God's breath strengthens you even now.

The world may feel suffocating, but the breath of the Almighty gives us life. And as long as we are breathing, we are not defeated.

PRAYER—Spirit of God, fill my lungs with your sustaining breath. Remind me to exhale what is hazardous and inhale what is holy. Amen.

STORIES OF HOPE!

In these troubled times, there are terrible things happening, and yet there are actions of love, courage and the best of human capacity happening.



During an online multi faith prayer gathering, hosted by ServiceSpace.org, a woman from Poland spoke. She told the heart breaking story of how millions of people were entering Poland, families and children who had to flee their homes in the Ukraine, often leaving everything behind but what they could carry. Then she told two stories:

The first was a story of a social media page where people who were coming from the Ukraine into her town could post what they needed (water, shelter, food, clothing). She had personally been trying to host a family in her home, but every time someone posted about a need, within 60 seconds shelter had been offered. She couldn't offer fast enough. People were opening their hearts and homes, doing what they could in these difficult times. People were reaching out doing what they could, welcoming the stranger, providing for their needs - within 60 seconds.

The second story was that of a Russian soldier who had been captured and was taken to the center of a small town. A crowd gathered and it was looking grim for the captured soldier.

Then a single woman walked through the crowd and offered the soldier a cup of soup. He looked at her with wonder and confusion. The crowd quieted and another woman moved through the crowd and offered the young man a cell phone and encouraged him to call his family, they would be worried and needed to know he was alright. The young soldier broke down and wept into his hands. He could be sent back to the war, but he would not be harmed by the people of this town.



The international peacemaker, John Paul Lederach, tells the story of two groups of African women who had lived on either side of war. The dividing line between countries was only a mile or so from their villages. They decided that nothing would change unless they could see one another as people who had suffered and who had a story. So they started meeting at noon, gathering at the dividing line and telling their stories of love and loss. It created a node, like a point on a spiderweb that can vibrate across an entire structure. It shifted something. It doesn't take 100% of people to create change, it only takes nodes, individuals and communities who are willing to do the extremely hard work of listening, hearing and doing something decent in the midst of all that is indecent.

IN YOUR CORNER!

I was seven years old. I'd had enough of my father's rules and decided I could make it on my own, thank you very much! I got to the end of the alley and remembered I was hungry, so I went back home. Did Dad know of my insurrection? I suspect he did. Was I still his son? Apparently so – no one else was sitting in my place at the table.

Suppose someone had asked my father, "Mr. Lucado, your son says he has no need of a father. Do you still consider him your son?" What do you think he would have said? He considered himself my father even when I didn't consider myself his son. His commitment to me was greater than my commitment to him. So is God's. I can count on him to be in my corner no matter what!

And you can too.

Max Lucado

A wise man fills his brain before emptying his mouth.





Everyone I know is dealing with hard things. Big things, small things—it's not my place to say. Because what may feel big to one person may feel small to someone else.

Every single day I remind myself it's not my job to judge how someone else's hard things compare with my hard things. Because, I don't know their story. And even if I do... Never in the history of the world has it been helpful to judge or compare. Just show kindness. Give grace. And don't minimize someone else's hard. Period!

Louise Massey



God doesn't try
to find us"
He already
knows where
we are.
Rather he goes
with us as we find
ourselves.

Bob Goff



Make these sweet sandwiches for a Mother's Day tea party.

What you need:

- 4 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3 Tablespoons powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 6-10 strawberries, washed and sliced
- 6 slices of white bread
- Cellophane
- Adult help



What you do:

- With an electric mixer, whip the cream cheese in a bowl until fluffy.
- Add cream, powdered sugar, and lemon juice. Continue whipping on high speed until mixture is stiff.
- On each slice of bread, spread a layer of the mixture. Then arrange some sliced strawberries on top.
- Place the sandwiches together, with filling on the inside.
- Wrap tightly in cellophane. Chill for two hours so the filling sets.
- Trim off crusts with a serrated knife.
 Cut sandwiches in squares or triangles.
 Serve and enjoy!



A NOBLE EXAMPLE

Proverbs 31 describes a God-honoring woman. How are the women in your life like her? How can you follow their example?

Directions: Use the word bank to complete all the Bible verses. Then write the circled letters in order below to complete Proverbs 31:30, NIV.



- WORD BANK -

bread, household, women, laugh, children, clothed, speaks, husband, tongue

She is with strength and dignity; she can at the days to come.
She with wisdom,

and faithful instruction is on her ___

She watches over the attai	rs of her $ullet$ $ -$
and does not eat the $_$ $_$	of idleness.
Her	arise and call her blessed;

ner also, and he praises her.
"Many do noble things,
but you surpass them all." Proverbs 31:25-29, NIV

Charm is	ecep	tive,	and be	_ty is fl	_eting; but a	а
woma	w_o	f	_rs the Lo_	_d is to k	oe praisd.	

Proverbs 31:30, NIV

Answers: clothed, laugh, speaks, tongue, household, bread, children, husband, women; Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Proverbs 31:30, MIV