

# District Developments

*The Newsletter of  
The Eastern District  
Moravian Church  
November 2017  
David E. Bennett,  
President*



## **Old Hemlock Sparks Fire-Pit Ministry**

Sir Winston Churchill once said, “A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity...but an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.” One could say, then, there are a fair number of optimists in Schoeneck Moravian Church in Nazareth, PA!

Faced with a dangerously decaying “difficulty” – a hemlock tree near the parsonage -- a few of their faithful became determined to remove the menace from the property before it could do any damage. It would be an enormous job and take a lot of human energy....not simply to cut down the large tree, but also then to remove the heavy piles of wood that would eventually be the result. Somewhere in the midst of the effort, possibly while eyeing up the enormous pile of wood, Brother Mel Messinger conjured up an idea. Instead of seeing the old hemlock tree simply as a difficult menace....what if God planted it so that it could eventually become the seeds for a new ministry.....a fire-pit ministry! And with that thought and a little help from other Schoeneck faithful, the pile of wood found a home near a fire-pit in the church’s grove and an evening around a warm fire, campfire foods, and singing was planned. Not to hold this new oppor-

tunity to themselves, other area Moravian Churches were invited to enjoy the old hemlock and the fellowship it could provide. To the wonderment and pleasure of the Schoeneck hosts, the “first” fire-pit night had 65 in attendance, including folks from 5 different congregations and with 5 clergy present! I highlight the word, “first,” because it became clear from the joy and fellowship found around the warm fire that this was an evening that must be repeated. So a second equally successful fire-pit evening was experienced and a third is currently planned for November 4, at 7:00 PM. (All you need is a lawn chair, blanket, and flashlight!)

I’m delighted to hear this spirit-filled story of a menacing old hemlock tree being seen with Gospel eyes as a new ministry and gift from God. As Brother Mel states, “I have felt for years that we at Schoeneck have under used our beautiful grove. The gathering has taken on the feeling of a camp vesper service. So our grounds are being used and all who come are having a time of fellowship. Finally, the Lord promises he will attend this gathering as we meet in his name. Our hope is that hearts will be changed through this ministry.” That hope is coming to fruition as the fire-pit has now become the gathering place for worship and singing, including two youth guitarists and a bass guitarist who have so much enjoyed playing together and leading the praise songs that Schoeneck now has its own Praise Band! All this ministry....from a menacing old, decaying hemlock tree....

How many of us could imagine ourselves mumbling and grumbling all the way through the labor of cutting that old hemlock down and removing

it from the premises? Would it have occurred to us that it was actually a gift from God.....given so that Christ could walk among us in fellowship....that a praise band could discover a ministry together....and worship could become real? In this season of Thanksgiving.....I find myself quite surprisingly thankful for the divine gift of an old decaying hemlock tree.....and those who could see it with Gospel eyes.

## **Moravian Ministries Foundation Moravian Donor Advised Fund**

The Moravian Ministries Foundation (MMFA) is excited to help individuals, couples, and families create Donor Advised Funds to benefit the Moravian ministries and other causes they care about most.

When you create a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) through MMFA, you make an irrevocable gift and retain the privilege of making grant recommendations over time. You are eligible for an immediate charitable income tax deduction upon funding the account based upon the tax rules for gifts to a public charity. MMFA will invest the funds and handle administrative matters for the individual accounts including but not limited to check writing, charity due diligence and verification, statement production, and all gift acknowledgements.

If you are interested in learning more about DAFs or in creating one, please contact Chris Spaugh (888-722-7923 or [daf@mmfa.info](mailto:daf@mmfa.info)).



## Schedule of Events

**November 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – Camp Hope Alumni Retreat** –Join other Camp Hope alumni for a weekend of reminiscing and service. For more information, registration information, and fees, contact the Hope Center Office or [www.camphopealumni retreat.org](http://www.camphopealumni retreat.org) Or find the Camp Hope Alumni Retreat Facebook page.

**November 4<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm, Schoeneck Moravian Church – Fire-Pit Ministry** (See front page article).

**November 14<sup>th</sup> - Bach at Noon – A Cantata Series. 12:10 pm – 1 pm,** Central Moravian Church, 73 W Church St. Bethlehem, PA. Please visit [www.Bach.org](http://www.Bach.org) for more information. Free.

**December 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, December 2<sup>nd</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>, December 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, Moravian College Vespers** - Please call Moravian College at 610-861-1300 or [www.moravian.edu](http://www.moravian.edu) for tickets.

**December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 1:30 pm, Sanctuary Central Moravian Church, Bethlehem PA, A Musical Christmas Extravaganza** – Listen and sing along with Christmas favorites with Mainstreet Brass, Central Choir and the majestic pipe organ. Candles and sugar cake. Admission \$15.

**December 11<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm, Contemplative Worship Service in the Old Chapel, Central Moravian Church, Bethlehem, PA** – Experience an hour of quiet and reflective Christmas music with Becky Lepore on piano and John Arnold on guitar. Free.

**January 12<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup>, 2018 – Post High Winter Retreat – Grade 9-age 21.** Please contact Camp Hope office for more information or contact Rev. Cynthia Rader Geyer, Eastern District Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries at: [cynthia@mcnp.org](mailto:cynthia@mcnp.org)

**January 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018 – Moravian Girls' Retreat Grade 3-8**  
This retreat is currently filled however you can be put on waiting list. by contacting Rev. Jodie Harney at Mountainview Moravian Church, [jlharney212@gmail.com](mailto:jlharney212@gmail.com) or 610-838-9344

### Hope Conference Center Help Wanted

**Administrative Assistant**, part-time seasonal position.

**Executive Chef/Food Service Manager**, full-time for summer; also occasional hours during rest of year.

For more info, see:  
[camphope.org/employment](http://camphope.org/employment)  
Or call 908 459-4435

### Birthdays & Anniversaries

#### November Birthdays

- 1 The Rev. Percival Gordon
- 4 The Rev. Michael Poole
- 5 Mr. Warren Gericke
- 8 The Rev. Gary Straughan
- 10 Mrs. Jill Westbrook
- 12 The Rev. Carol Reifinger  
The Rev. John Fritts
- 13 The Rev. David Wickmann
- 14 The Rev. Dr. Hermann Weinlick
- 19 The Rev. Rowan Simmons
- 21 Mrs. Carole Freeman
- 22 Mr. Bill Hassler
- 26 The Rev. David Sommers
- 27 Mrs. Erin Petrella
- 30 Ms. Katrina Lehman  
The Rt. Rev. Chris Giesler

### November Anniversaries

- 3 The Rev. & Mrs. Ron Rice
  - 6 The Rev. Dr. & Mrs. David Schwarz
  - 14 The Rev. & Mrs. John Fritts
  - 16 The Rev. Rebecca & Mr. Vince Sisley
  - 19 The Rev. & Mrs. John Wallace
  - 22 The Rev. & Mrs. Mark Breland
  - 23 The Rev. Carol Reifinger & Mr. James Reifinger
  - 29 The Rev. Daniel Michael Miller & Ms. Elizabeth Behrend
- Churches celebrating November anniversaries:
- 9 - 1980 Grace, Queens, New York
  - 13 - 1965 Covenant, York, PA
  - 30 - 1746 Lancaster, PA

November 13, 1741 - Formal announcement to the congregations of the Moravian Church of the immediate Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ in his church on earth.

### Pastoral Changes

Br. Mark Newman, a 2016 graduate of Moravian Theological Seminary, has accepted a part-time appointment to serve as the pastor of the Newfoundland Moravian Church in Newfoundland, PA. He will be installed on November 5, 2017. The provincial Elders' Conference has licensed him to administer the sacraments in the context of this appointment. We invite your prayers for Mark and his wife, Dianne, and the Newfoundland congregation during this time of transition.

Sr. Desna Henry Goulbourne, pastor of the Tremont Terrace Moravian Church in New York City, has resigned her appointment to the Tremont Terrace congregation. She concluded her ministry there on October 29, 2017. Please pray for Desna, Her family, and the congregation at this time of transition.