

FAITH FORMATION

Moravian Church - Lehigh Valley

Resources for Kids and Adults *Bright Ideas*
Events, Ministries and Spiritual Formation Opportunities

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made..." (Romans 1:20). God's hand is revealed in nature, and this month we consider drawing closer to God by awakening our spirits through outdoor ministry. We also look ahead to fall curriculum ideas, Advent and more local networking opportunities! Please contact me anytime for curriculum recommendations and assistance: Lanie Yaswinski, Director of Faith Formation, lanie@mcnp.org, 610-559-4833



Save the Date! **Christian Educators'** **Networking Breakfast** **Saturday, November 21 @ 10:00am**

College Hill Moravian Church

Inviting all local Christian Educators to gather once again for a time of sharing and fellowship prior to Advent.

Light breakfast provided.

Topics will include:

*Modern lessons from the choir system

*Confirmation *Small groups

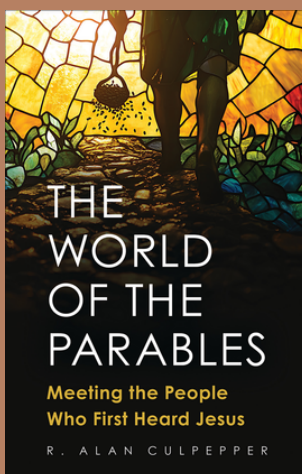
*Coordinating activities...and more!

Suggestions Welcome!

RSVP to Lanie by November 18.

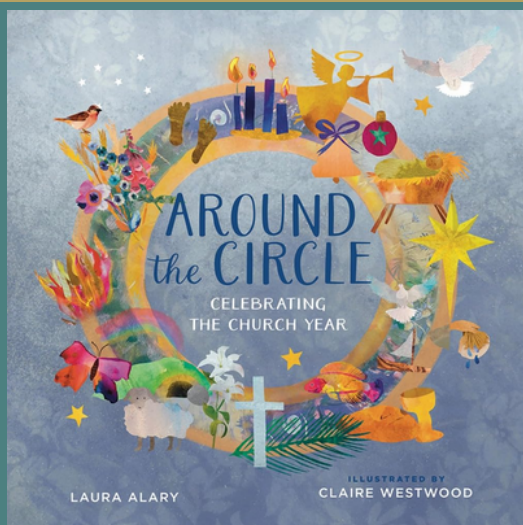
Be Prepared to Share!

New Adult Study on the Parables of Jesus



[Click Image for Link](#)

Want to take a deep dive into the parables? Consider this new study for your adult Sunday School class. **The World of the Parables** invites readers to meet the people behind the parables—from children and parents to shepherds and merchants—so that they may hear Jesus' words as first-century Galileans did, coming away with deeper understanding and appreciation.



[Click Image for Link](#)

Teaching Children about the Church Year

As children head back to school, it is a great time to consider how we talk about different ways of marking time. Calendars and the passage of seasons help ground children in the rhythm of life, but we also want to show them that the church also marks time through the liturgical year. This beautiful, gentle, and simple book offers pictures and words to help define the church seasons through our senses and experiences. Consider adding this to your Sunday School or Worship library!

Christian Education Sunday

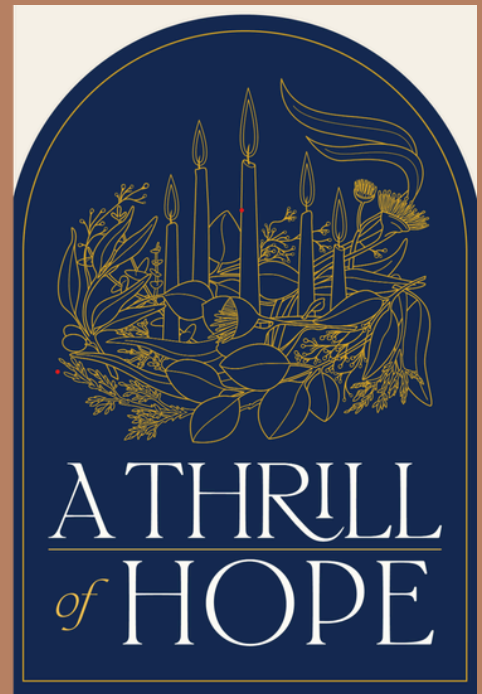


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Many churches will mark the return of students to school with a backpack blessing during the children's message, or maybe offer a prayer for local teachers and school personnel. If your church is looking for inspiration, check out our Presbyterian friend's free resource quick-sheet! It includes free to use prayers, hymn suggestions, sermon prompt, and much more. Feel free to borrow the pieces that will enhance your worship planning and tailor them to fit. We pray blessings on all our teachers, administrators, support staff, and children as they embark on a new year together!

Planning for Advent

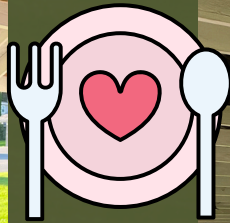
It's never too early to plan ahead, and Advent will be here before we know it! If you are interested in offering a church-wide theme that ties home reflection, worship, small group study, and children's programming together in the spirit of HOPE, you should consider Illustrated Ministries' newest seasonal bundle. Free samples are available, and you can purchase the right size bundle for your church. This theme is anchored in the lectionary texts and includes an impressive ecumenical writing team. Be sure to check it out.



[Click Image for purchase link](#)



Manna Dinner Church @ Schoeneck



Nearly 30 local Moravians and guests gathered on August 23 in the Schoeneck Church pavilion to experience a new ministry called Manna, aka "Dinner Church" led by Rev. Byrnes Craig. This new style of worship includes all elements of traditional worship - liturgy, song, scripture, sermon, communion, etc. - experienced through an informal meal. The vibe is casual, come-as-you-are and focused on building community and being fed - physically and spiritually. Participants were encouraged to open their hearts and minds through a change in perspective, setting and worship style. Manna can be experienced indoors or outside.

Please contact Pastor Byrnes if you'd like to try Manna at your church!

Click here for more info: <https://mannabethlehem.com/>



ECUMENICAL WORKSHOP OPPORTUNITY



Flexible Faith Formation: Models Beyond Traditional Sunday School (Jon Stratton)

For generations, Sunday school relied on age-graded classrooms filled with kids. But what happens when a parish only has a handful of children across all age groups? Today's changing church landscape calls for flexible, creative approaches that don't depend on large numbers to thrive. This workshop invites ministry leaders to reimagine faith formation beyond traditional classroom structures. Together, we'll explore practical, small-scale models, from intergenerational worship and micro-groups to family-centered, home-integrated practices, that allow children to grow deeply in faith, no matter the size of your young flock. This workshop will take place on

October 24th at 10 am at The Cathedral Church of the Nativity

321 Wyandotte Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015.

Registration required.

Click here to register: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfj3V2XLRZ-h44W7JPaLt7GhxRcdkmjQfMfW9TR35jaxYX2oA/viewform>

Zoom option is available.

Outdoor Ministry

Since Covid many congregations feel stuck in a spiritual rut. One easy way to enliven the spirit is to change perspective by going outside. Many local congregations benefit from an expansive lawn and pavilion. But no worries - even if you have just a small strip of grass and a sidewalk - you have an opportunity for outdoor ministry. By simply stepping outside we feel an instant lift in our hearts and souls through a connection with nature, where God's presence is felt in the air, the sun, the creatures and the greenery around us. Singing, seeing and praising God feel different outside, and we should find creative ways to invite that new perspective every chance we get. Below are some local outdoor spaces for inspiration...for example, Emmaus recently upgraded their pavilion and transformed a wooded area into a ministry space called "Hartzell Grove." Take a fresh look around your surroundings and think about how you can incorporate the outdoors into your ministry for an instant soul uplift!



Worship space in Hartzell Grove
Emmaus Moravian Church



Walking path in Hartzell Grove
Emmaus Moravian Church



Firepit at
Schoeneck Moravian Church



Outdoor pavilion
Emmaus Moravian Church

Outdoor Ministry



Prayer Walk



 what a wonderful world God has created for us to explore!


Matthew 7 v 7
"Ask, and God will give to you. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will open for you."

 **Evergreen:** Thank God for promising to always be with us. *Hosea 14:8*

 **A stone:** Dear God, thank you that you are our firm foundation. Help us to trust in you and build our lives on your word. *Psalms 18:2*

 **A bird:** Make a joyful noise! *Psalms 100:1-5*
What's your noise??

 **A flower:** Dear God, thank you that each one of us is beautiful and precious to you. Thank you that you know each one of us by name. *Luke 12:6-7*

 **A bug:** Ask God to bless those who are suffering or overlooked. *Matthew 5:1-12*

Do you know the name of the type of flower you have found?

 **A twig/branch:** Dear God, thank you that just like every twig comes from a tree, each of us is a small part of your big plan. Help me to live for you every day and share your love with others. *John 15:5*

 **A nut or seed:** Ask God to take care of your family and friends. The Lord will provide! *Matthew 6:26*

 **A piece of trash:** Dear God, thank you that you forgive us for our mistakes. I am sorry for the times when I have not lived right for you. Help me to clear up the mess from my own life. *Psalms 103: 10-12*

 **A berry or fruit:** Dear God, help us to share your love with others, may we demonstrate the fruits of your Spirit.

Read about the fruits of the Spirit- *Galatians 5:22-23*

Make sure you put the piece of trash in the garbage bin.

Last fall the Schoeneck Jr. Youth group elected to go on a Prayer Walk in Jacobsburg State Park. Upon hitting the trails we noticed a remarkable change in the kids' demeanor - happy, exuberant, energetic and engaged in nature and each other (not their phones). When visiting many local VBS this summer I noticed the same thing - an instant uplift in spirit as soon as the kids got outside.

When we consider that Moravian faith formation requires being in tune with our hearts and souls - to "feel" the Holy Spirit working in us - please try outdoor activities like a Prayer Walk as method to get kids (and adults!) to "tune in" to how the Holy Spirit is working in their lives. Prayer walks are good in urban areas too! Lots to discover walking on sidewalks through our local neighborhoods. God's presence is everywhere outdoors!



What colors God has made
in flower, field and tree!
From springing green of leaf and
glade I learn his love for me.

Quoted from Hymn #466 "What Colors God Has Made"
in the Moravian Book of Worship
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