

Creekside Church of the Brethren Connection

February 2023



Open Our Eyes, Lord

John 9:40

Surely we are not blind, are we? John 9:40b

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a black American, was murdered by a white Minneapolis police officer. It was an event which shocked communities across the US, ignited protests, and energized the Black Lives Matter movement. It left some white Christian communities wringing our hands or scratching our heads trying to figure out what we could do in response to racism.

Creekside's Outreach Team started a program called **small change**; the idea was to collect loose coins or small bills from the congregation and use that money for shared ministry with a local black church, or some kind of outreach partnership—we weren't sure what form it would take. With some of that money, Creekside applied for and received a grant from the Church of the Brethren intercultural ministries. We purchased copies of Drew Hart's book, *Trouble I've Seen*, and several Sunday School classes worked through it. It was a fine place to start.

You have continued to contribute toward **small change**. We have collected over \$1,000 since that program began in 2020, and we are going to be continuing conversation about the intersection of faith and race. The theme of the District Women's Retreat at Creekside on March 25 is "Undoing the Barriers: Understanding the Dividing Walls of Racism." That one-day event will be led by Nekeisha Alayna Alexis from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Thanks to Christian Education Team, and especially Judy De Pue, for their planning. In addition, worship services in Lent will be around the theme, "Open Our Eyes, Lord." I have partnered with representatives from On Earth Peace, an agency of the Church of the Brethren committed to "the work of racial justice and anti-racism transformation." I am writing resources for worship which will be made available to any interested congregations and worship planners in the denomination; OEP is developing resources for small group study—Sunday school classes or Bible study groups; these will be a combination of video resources and written materials.

The timeline for developing these materials has been short, and I have been doing reading on my own. It is challenging work, and quite humbling. As a white woman I can't speak from the experience of people of color, but I am increasingly aware of my own short-sightedness. This may be appropriate, especially during Lent, but it is hardly comfortable. I will be inviting you into some potentially uncomfortable spaces, as well. I have been inspired by the biblical texts and the other authors I am reading.

February 26 is the first Sunday of Lent. I hope you are willing to join me on the journey; I am confident that the grace and guidance of the Spirit will be with us.

In Christ—*Pastor Rosanna*

ASH WEDNESDAY is the beginning of Lent, the 40 days (excluding Sundays) before Easter. Worship Team is planning a service that evening, (Feb. 22, 2023). Stay tuned for more details in the coming weeks! —*Pastor Rosanna, for Worship Team*



PASTOR'S REPORT

I was glad to be able to travel with Tim and our son Joel to California at the end of December. Thanks to those of you who have asked about my mother; I was encouraged to see how well she is doing, and we were happy to celebrate her 92nd birthday with her.

I have had plenty going on since I returned on Jan. 1. I am so grateful for all the preparation that Creekside folks did for Bill Pletcher's memorial service on Jan. 2. He will be missed by his family, this congregation, and our community. My thanks to David Bibbee and Betty Kelsey for their assistance at the graveside and memorial services. I began a three-year term on the Church Community Services board on Jan. 16; Elkhart City Church was one of the founding congregations in 1968 and I am happy to continue that partnership. On Jan. 18, I presented my Sermon on the Mount manuscript at Timbercrest in N. Manchester. The audience included Elizabeth Morphew, Tim's mother, who was happy to see his part in it. I will be leading a Women Creating Community group at Camp Mack beginning in February. That group had been discontinued during the pandemic, and I am grateful it will be starting again. There's room for more interested women! See me for details.

I have invested significant time in creating worship resources for Lent 2023 (see Pastor's Page). I have enjoyed writing and portraying Jerks of the Bible for the last three Sundays of January. Thanks for your encouragement as I explore new ways to behave badly on Sunday mornings.

I appreciate your prayers and the friendship of the New Life Sunday School class as Tim and I accompany his sister Joy on her journey with breast cancer. I will be taking her to some appointments and chemo treatments at Goshen Center for Cancer Care. I will try to fit those around my commitments at Creekside. God bless you— *Pastor Rosanna*

FROM THE CHURCH BOARD:

The Church Board retreat was held at the Elkhart Valley Church of the Brethren cabin on January 15. We appreciate the Fellowship Team providing us a delicious lunch of chili and baked potato bar.

The working portion of the retreat was centered around the questionnaire "What is Church" that the congregation completed last May. We took a second look at the results to see areas where the board might focus this year. We had a good discussion on the question, "What defines a successful church?"

Let me share just a few ways that Creekside is successful. We are a warm and welcoming congregation. We have three strong adult Sunday School classes. We have a wonderful pastor. Financially, we are sound. We ended 2022 with over \$10,000 in our general fund. This allowed for the year-end love offering to be utilized for outreach giving. Congregational giving plus funds from the Outreach team allow for giving of over \$10K to local charities. Our garden also produces thousands of pounds of produce for outreach efforts.

The area we felt that Creekside was weakest is in attracting more young families. The board would like to look at ways our church can be intentional about attracting and welcoming younger families with children and providing education and activities for them each week.

The Board will be inviting team leaders to share goals with the board throughout this year.
Kurt Vardaman, Church Board Chair



Do you have a My Neighbor credit card through Everence? If so, you could generate donations for Creekside by using your credit card! Contact Roger Griffith for more details. In 2022 we received almost \$900 from this program. Thanks to those who already participate!

THANK YOU!

Thank you, Creekside friends, for each sharing your talents during Bill's memorial service at Creekside on January 2nd. The family meal was delicious, plentiful, and colorful. Our kitchen crew are amazing! Thanks to those who ushered, helped in nursery, audio, live-streaming for our friends and family not able to attend in person. Others led singing, played piano, read scripture, etc. A special thanks to Pastor Rosanna for leading our service and her comments. Thanks to each of you for welcoming the Pletcher-Rouch families with smiles.
—*Rosemary Pletcher*

OUTREACH GIVING

Thank you for your Advent gifts of \$8,005 toward community outreach. With the Followers of Faith contribution of \$2500, we had \$10,505 to share with Faith Mission, Susanna's Kitchen, Elkhart Child Development Center, Elkhart Women's Shelter and Brethren Child Disaster Services. Here is how resources have been used to date:

- Faith Mission: \$180 for bath towels, \$550 for new socks and hygiene items, donated clothing, coats, and socks
- Susanna's Kitchen: \$2500 check for kitchen remodel, new socks and donated clothing (*presentation pictured at right*)
- Elkhart Child Development Center: \$2500 check for new tables and chairs
- Women's Shelter: \$525 for Christmas gifts for women and children. The shelter has asked us to keep money back as other needs arise in 2023.
- Child Disaster Services: We will purchase items for one Kit of Comfort to store at N Indiana District office, and donate \$750 to New Windsor, MD headquarters to purchase a second kit as needed.

Our Outreach Team has done a great job of shopping for and delivering items. Thanks to all of you who were able to donate clothing items in January 2023: they were much appreciated.

Pastor Rosanna, for Outreach Team



Dear Creekside family,

I want to express a deep gratitude for the Love Offering gift to Child Disaster Services. When I spoke to the CDS office, they were thrilled with such a blessing. They are always looking for individuals with a heart for children to learn about working with children after disasters! There is a training in Bradford, OH, March 17-18. Register at brethren.org/cds/training/dates/. Contact me with questions.

Deb Kauffman, 574-312-8251

GARDEN PLANS FOR 2023

Team members and leaders who have ministries on Creekside's property gathered on January 22 to coordinate efforts with our Seed to Feed garden. Creekside donated 7867 lbs of produce to the CCS food pantry in 2022! Seed to Feed coordinator Gabby Parrish was present to let us know what resources could be provided by CCS. Here are some tentative plans:

- We will have only one vegetable garden, by the apple trees (Orchard Garden).
- We will plan to plant, tend, and process tomatoes again in 2023.
- We will also plan some single-harvest crops, such as winter squash, onions and potatoes, which are in demand at the CCS food pantry.
- There will be supervision for volunteers Tuesdays & Thursdays 8-10 am and Tuesdays 4-6 pm.

Landscaping, bees, greenhouse, and container gardens will continue. If you'd like to volunteer for any of these ministries, Pastor Rosanna can connect you to an organizer.

Pastor Rosanna, for garden ministries



Let's Gather Again!

Join us for a Women's Retreat on Sat. March 25, 9:30-3:00 at Creekside!

Women from the N. Indiana District of the Church of the Brethren, and their friends and family members, are invited. The **\$10 cost** covers a light breakfast (hard-boiled eggs, muffins & beverages) and a catered box lunch.

Topic: "Undoing the Barriers: Understanding the Dividing Wall of Racism" Creekside's Christian Education Team and Pastor Rosanna McFadden have been encouraging members of our church to learn more about the impacts of

race in our communities. We chose to extend this learning opportunity to women in the district.

Nekeisha Alayna Alexis from AMBS in Elkhart, Indiana will lead us.

Creekside Church is looking forward to seeing your smiling faces as we connect and learn together!



CAMP MACK NEWS

There's a lot happening at Camp Mack even in the "off season". Please watch the "Happenings around Creekside" slideshow on Sundays to see upcoming retreats & get-a-way days. I'd like to think that they have something for everyone, from decorating Valentine Cookies to Wood Carving. Pick up a 2023 Camp Mack booklet and Get-a-Way day pamphlet from the table outside the coat closet.

There is a lot happening behind the scenes at Camp Mack, too. Ulrich house is being updated into an accessible retreat center. Thank you to our volunteers! (If you'd like to volunteer but a construction site isn't for you, Camp is looking for volunteers to help with a Garage Sale on Feb. 17 & 18.) The work on Ulrich, plus the Peace Garden and completion of the Hamer Health Center & restroom facility were made possible by a successful \$1.1M capital campaign.

April 15 is Camp Mack Giving Day. Money raised on this day will be used to purchase generators to support camp when the power is out. In 2022, camp experienced 8 major outages. They do not want to send campers home because of a lengthy power outage.

2022 was a difficult financial year for Camp. The budget and costs for campers are set the preceding fall, but the cost of food and products for campers increased with inflation and supply chain issues in unprecedented ways. Camp suffered a lightning strike in May that damaged the sound & telephone systems, computers and servers, causing extensive data loss. Currently, their on-hand shortfall is \$150K. The staff is working with the IN Camp Board to make up for this loss by (1) doubling the number of summer campers in 2023—If you know of a child or youth, consider sending them to camp! (2) consolidating the camping season to 5 weeks. This utilizes the camp as fully as possible during those weeks and allows for additional outside camps and retreats which create higher revenue. (3) raising the price to attend camp. Everyone who buys groceries knows that prices have increased. Camp also needs to be able to cover these increased expenses and help recuperate the shortfall.

Thank you for supporting Camp Mack by volunteering, sending campers, attending events and donating! If you want to know more about Camp Mack, just ask! —Lisa Vardaman, Camp Mack Rep.

THE BEE LINE

Every time I hear the phrase "settled down for a long winter's nap," from Clement Moores' "The Night Before Christmas," I look forward to my next nap on one of these dreary winter days.

As I lie dreaming, an apiary comes into view covered with inches of fresh fallen snow. This snow offers insulation for the bees that are inside. Are they enjoying their long winter's nap in their toasty warm cluster? Deep in my slumber, I also wonder, "Do bees ever sleep?" They do! In summer, Honey Bees sleep 5-8 hours depending on the demands of their job. They bow their heads toward the ground, stoop their antennae, rest their wings on their bodies, and snooze away. If you look quietly at summer flowers, you may find a slumbering bee or two. I'm told sometimes two bees sleep with their feet touching each other. They seem to like the touch of another bee sleeping beside them.

For me, a long winter's nap is just perfect with my wife snuggled up against me to keep me warm. "What's that clanging noise? Time to awake already?!"
Ron Nicodemus for the Bee Team



EVERENCE

Household debt in the US totals more than \$16 trillion according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. This averages \$125,800 per household. Everence offers strategies for paying off debt.

A debt snowball approach: List your debts from smallest to largest & make payments each month, adding any extra payments to the smallest debt. When you pay off the smallest, add that payment to the next smallest, and so on. **A variation of this approach:** Focus on the debt with the highest interest rate, then next highest, and so on. **Lutheran Social Service:** Everence members can get help with debt and budget counseling from Lutheran Social Service.

Visit everence.com or lssmn.org/financialcounseling/everence for details.
Jan Nicodemus, Creekside Advocate

Praise, Blessing & **J.O.Y.** with Brynne Spiritoso



Jesus:

What song or Bible verse brings praise to mind for you? There are so many songs I love that come to mind! For the Beauty of the Earth, How Great Thou Art, and Hallelujah Chorus are a few of my favorites.

What do you love about Creekside Church? The Creekside family, Pastor Rosanna, and our lovely church & grounds are just so wonderful! Everyone is very welcoming, and I'm so touched by the giving and caring spirit shown by all those at Creekside!

What is one prayer you have for Creekside? My prayer is that through word-of-mouth and the outreach of our church, we can attract more families and grow, so that many more have the chance to experience the special people, pastor, and place that is Creekside!

Others:

What ministry do you do for others? I support various organizations in our community, several that help children and our veterans. And I try to help in whatever way I can if I learn of someone personally or at my workplace that is facing a hardship or crisis.

What connects you to people at Creekside? I have very fond memories of attending Sunday School and Bible School classes as a young girl at Elkhart City COB. Sharon Graber, Doris Walters, Esther Buchanan, Garnett Heeter, Lois Losee, Betty Muhl nickel and so many others were such wonderful teachers and role models—it's great to recall old memories and see some of these ladies so many years later at Creekside! (I also vividly remember

at age 6 being with my Dad at the church for the Last Supper play on Palm Sunday 1965 when the tornado warnings came, and my Dad had to rush us home to take cover with my Mom and baby brother!) It's been special to reconnect with a church where there are so many familiar names, faces, and memories. But better still that I've been able to make new memories and friends from the special people that attend Creekside!

What words of blessing or encouragement do you have to share with others? I think you could say I'm someone that perseveres, and I've definitely learned to keep a sense of humor about my life! I've had what I call a lot of "Brynne Episodes" over the years, but I read something a long time ago that keeps me on track. "You can never go back and make a new beginning, but you can always start now and make a new ending."

Yourself:

What would you like to share about yourself? I was lucky enough to be a stay-at-home mom for 25 yrs., and I have 4 fantastic, adult children (Steve, Stephanie, Grant & Holly) as proof. So I started my career much later in life. I am currently the HR Manager at Bravo Trailers in Bristol. My job keeps me very busy, but when I do have spare time, I always enjoy traveling to be with family, old friends, or to see new places! And, of course, I always try to make time to be with my 4 precious grandchildren (Jay, Maria, Mark & Alexander), who are definitely my best buddies!

What gives you joy? MY FAMILY!! My greatest blessings call me Mom and Grandma! And, of course, I have the best Dad, Jay Ganger, who many of you know here at Creekside. Family times are ALWAYS the best of times for me!

FEBRUARY 2023

BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Zerbe, John
- 9 Bode, Deb
- 9 Hendricks, Graham
- 10 Borem, Brandon

ANNIVERSARIES

- 21 Randall, Tim & Shelly
- 26 Barwick, Bruce & Cathy

EVENTS

- 8 Finance Team, 2:30 pm
- 9 Fellowship Team, 6:30 pm
- 10 Game Night, 7:00 pm
- 12 Kids' Valentine Party, 2-3:30 pm
- 13 Church reserved
- 14 Brunch at Angel's, 10:45 am (RSVP to Roger Neal)
- 15 Christian Ed Team, 6:00 pm
- 15 Church Board, 6:30 pm
- 18 Keifer Memorial service
- 22 Ash Wednesday

The Creekside Connection

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