

THE SPIRE

Love God! Love Others!



Upland Baptist Church, 1851

Summer 2018

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Where Have You Experienced God TODAY?

How have you experienced God today? Though I believe this should be an easy question to answer, it often is not. Life is busy and full of places to be, things to do and people who need us. It is easy to get distracted by life and not experience the presence of God in our lives. This does not mean that God is not present. It just means that sometimes we miss his presence because we so caught up in other things.

One of my favorite stories in the Old Testament is the story of Elijah. Elijah gets the honor of being God's prophet. It is not an easy job as no one wants to hear what the prophets are saying. Elijah tells King Ahab that there will be no rain until God so decrees it and they experience a terrible drought. Then Elijah faces off with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. (You can read this account in 1 Kings 18:16-46) It is a powerful encounter where Elijah prays to God and asks him to light the altar on fire, after Elijah had thoroughly soaked the altar. God responds, and people believe once more in the Almighty God.

After this powerful moment, Elijah gets discouraged. King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, want him dead. Jezebel threatens Elijah that by this time tomorrow she will have killed him. And Elijah runs. I understand his fear, but also questions why he doesn't trust God. God has just shown his power in an extravagant manner, yet Elijah runs.

While on the run, God sends the ravens to feed Elijah and directs him to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. When Elijah gets to the mountain, God speaks to him and asks Elijah what he is doing there? Elijah answers, *I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant broken down your altars and put your prophets to death with the swords. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.* God sends him out to as the Lord is about to pass by.

Elijah stands on the mountain, waiting for God to pass by. *Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; ¹² and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁴ He answered, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away."* 1 Kings 19:11-14

God was not in the big, booming moments. God was in the silence. If Elijah had not stopped and truly opened his heart to the presence of God, he would have missed God altogether. If we are going to experience God, then we must open our hearts and look for God.

There are some serious distractions to opening our hearts to God. For Elijah it was fearing for his own life that kept him from being open to God's presence when he was at his darkest moment. For us it is often other things that keep us from experiencing the presence of God. It

can be as simple as a tight schedule. When we have lots of things to do, we are less likely to be open to what God is doing in our midst.

It can also be something more dramatic. Sometimes when we are going through a difficult time, we get so wrapped up in the pain that we miss God's presence. Other times it goes completely the other direction and we are more open to experiencing God.

No matter what is distracting us, we often need to pause and refocus if we are going to experience God. I find that if I begin a day asking God to reveal himself to me, to walk with me, then I am more open to God's presence. I need to do something that keeps me aware and looking for God.

Think about the difference in walking through a day just going about your business and going through that same day saying thank you to God for everything. *Thank you, God, for getting me up. Thank you, God, for breakfast. Thank you, God for clothes to wear, for water to shower in, for a way to get where I am going.* By being grateful for each and everything in our lives, no matter how mundane, we open ourselves to experience the presence of God. We see God's hand in our lives. We experience his presence as we go about our normal lives. Opening ourselves to the presence of God can be as simple as offering prayers of thanksgiving throughout our day.

When we experience God in the little things, we are more open to experiencing God during the big moments of our lives. There will be pain and tragedy that we experience. In those moments God is present. We will be able to receive him more easily, if we have been open to him all along.

Though I wish that summer brought the joy of summer vacation as it did when I was a kid, when summer meant freedom and fun, but summer still brings with it its own sense of joy. We often find ourselves taking trips, eating outside, watching fireworks, doing things that we only do during the summer. During these moments, I want to encourage you to intentionally look for God. Where is God on your spontaneous trip to the beach? Where is God in your backyard barbeque, or your time in the pool? Where is God at the 4th of July fireworks? Where is God on those hot summer days?

This I can guarantee you, God is present. He is with you. He loves you and is walking with you. He wants you to notice him. He wants you to talk to him, to give thanks for him and to praise him. God longs to be in relationship with you.

So, spend some time this summer asking yourself, where have I experienced God today? Maybe even ask yourself each night before drifting off to sleep? Where have I experienced God? It may have been in the kindness of a stranger, in the hug of a loved one, it may have been while you were reading scripture, or a million other places. God is present. Let's notice him!

Pastor Brenda



Children and Youth News . . .

- **THANK YOU** to **Katie Boyer-Mason, Tom Geveke, and Stephen Shaw** who played in the *Joyful Noise* Bell Choir.
- **Katie Boyer Mason** graduated earlier this year with a 4.0 GPA, and she is looking forward to going to the beach.
- **Katelyn DeVecchis** moved into a new apartment in Claymont. It is where she and her fiancé will live.
- **Megan DeVecchis** continues to commute daily to Atlantic City where she works for the Caesars Corporation.
- **Sam DeVecchis** is in Italy right now for a week and half. He is on break from classes in Germany. He has been to Rome, Florence, the Coliseum, Vatican City, the Pantheon, etc.
- **Tom Geveke** will be taking two classes at Delaware County Community College this summer. He will also be working at the Brookhaven Swim Club.
- **Sara Mason** put in extra learning days, and finished school early. She is looking forward to going to the beach.
- **Matthew Shaw** has had a busy spring. He is advancing in Cub Scouts and will be a Wolf. He recently read *Mr. Noisy* by Roger Hargreaves to his first-grade class. Baseball is finishing up for the season. This summer, Matthew is looking forward to Cub Scout Day Camp, going to Grandma's house all by himself, and swimming!
- **Stephen Shaw** had several reasons to celebrate this spring. He recently played in the Advanced Band concert and played the *Star Wars* theme as a solo. He reached his goal of reading 3 million words for the Million Word Challenge at school, and he is finishing strong in baseball. This summer, Stephen is looking forward to band camp, Boy Scout Sleep Away Camp, and going to Grandma's house!



VBS Night

A **BIG Thank You** to our VBS Night Volunteers:

Brenda Shaw

Jane Kofroth

Charlene Miller

Joan Decker

Linda Cook

John Kofroth

Hans Geveke

Betty Vandergrift

Dawn Rafalski

We would also like to give a **BIG Thank You** to everyone in the congregation who has supported the VBS Night with monetary and food donations. We could not afford the program without your support. Thank you for your prayers, too!

Congratulations!

This year we celebrate with three of our teenagers who are graduating from high school! Let's give a cheer and a round of applause to . . .

Katie Boyer-Mason

Tom Geveke

Will be attending Penn State Main Campus

Rachel Miskowic

Will be attending Delaware County Community College

We wish them much luck and success as they pursue job opportunities and/or continue their education.



From the Legal Corporation and Ministry Council . . .

At the May Meetings, we . . .

- Discussed Church finances and reviewed expenses;
- Discussed Church accounts;
- Discussed completed repairs around the Church and Chapel;
- Discussed other property issues including the Chapel roof, Church soffit, and Church parking lot; and
- Each of the Team Leaders reported on various items they were working on and/or hoping to initiate. Their reports can be found in this issue of the *Spire*.

Our Church **Planning Meeting** is scheduled for **Tuesday, June 19th at 7:00** for all members of the Ministry Council.



School Supplies For Main Street Elementary School

During the months of June, July, and August, we will be collecting **marble composition books, pencils, yellow highlighters, and boxes of 24 crayons** for students in Main Street Elementary School. There will be a basket in the back of the Chapel for your donations. Monetary donations will also be accepted and can be given to Linda Cook or Pastor Brenda. Watch for sales this summer and stock up! Many students cannot afford to buy school supplies or replenish them, and it is left to the teachers to purchase the needed supplies. Our donations will help the children be ready for school and throughout the year!



COMMUNICATIONS TEAM LEADER – Frank Kulp

We want to hear from you if you are watching the broadcast at home. Please email the church or give the office a call and let us know how you are doing.

WORSHIP – Priscilla Mills

Worship Services move to the Chapel for the summer starting Sunday, June 17th.

Nursery During Worship

Nursery is available on Sunday during church services for children up to age four. There is an ongoing need for volunteers to staff this service to our young families. Please sign up in the back of the church.

Belvedere

Worship at Belvedere is on June 24th, July 22, August 26 at 2:30 pm. Please let Pastor Brenda know if you can attend.

Memorial Day

On Sunday, May 27 during Worship we honored our Veterans who have given their lives in service of our great nation or have served their country and have now passed on.

We are also grateful to the Veterans currently in our church who have served and made sacrifices to defend our freedoms and liberties.

Memorial Fund

Upland Baptist Memorial Fund was established to provide families and friends a place to donate in remembrance of their loved ones. Some donations are made just once, others are made yearly. The fund is used to supplement our church budget and to help provide needed repairs to the church. Please consider our Memorial Fund when you are donating to a charity in lieu of flowers when a family member or friend dies.

Donations to the Memorial Fund were received this year and flowered plants were given to the 11 families in their honor on Sunday, May 27th.

Memorial

Day grave markers were given to the families of deceased Veterans: William Herbster (WWII), Billy Wray (WWII), Charles Hartshorn (Vietnam War) and Carlton Ottey (Vietnam War).

Thank you gifts were given to the veterans in our congregation who returned home.

Father's Day

Father's Day is Sunday June 17th. The idea of a special day to honor fathers and celebrate Fatherhood was introduced in the United States. Sonora Smart Dodd was inspired by a church sermon on Mother's Day in 1909. She planned a day to honor her father in Washington State in 1910. In West Virginia on July 5th, 1908, Grace Golden Clayton suggested the local Methodist Church hold services to celebrate fathers after a deadly mine explosion that killed 361 men.

Calvin Coolidge recommended Father's Day become a national holiday in 1924 but there was no official action. Lyndon Johnson by executive order designated the third Sunday in June as the official Day in 1966. Father's Day was officially recognized as a National Holiday in 1972 during the Nixon administration. Father's Day is celebrated world-wide to recognize the contributions that fathers and father figures make to the lives of their children. Be sure to tell your father how much you love and admire him this year.

"As we express our gratitude we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter the words but to live them." John F Kennedy

MINISTRY TO MEMBERS – Dawn Rafalski

Karen Johnston's son Aaron is deployed out of the country and we have been praying for him and his unit as well as collecting goodies to send to them. Aaron has received both packages that we sent, and his unit is so grateful for our support. For the month of June, we'd like to collect slim jims, chap stick, puzzle or crossword books, packaged cookies, crackers etc. We have sent a lot of candy so no more candy for a while and please no chocolate.

We have three high school seniors graduating this year and would like to recognize them on June 3rd during worship. They have worked hard this year so join us and celebrate their accomplishments.

Katie Boyer-Mason
Tom Geveke
Rachel Miskowic

We are in the process of planning for the next year so watch you church bulletin for Summer Sunday Socials.

Are you interested in going to a Blue Rocks game? Are you interested in a bowling event in the Fall? Let Dawn Rafalski know so that we can plan some fun group events.

Men's News

The Annual Men's and Young Men's retreat is scheduled for Friday, July 27 – Sunday, July 29, 2018 at Shippensburg University. The theme is "Nothing is Impossible with God" and "So Let Your Light Shine for Jesus to all!"

The Keynote Speaker is Rev. Chuck Stecker, Retired Army Lt. Colonel, and Author and the Youth Program is having a Praise Band.

DISCIPLESHIP – Karen Johnston

Sunday School

There is an ongoing need for volunteers to teach Sunday School. Teachers are needed for June, July and August. Please give this some thought as your help is critical in teaching our children Gods plan for them. Please contact Karen Johnston if you are interested.

Summer Lunch

It's time to plan for Summer Lunch. Mark your calendars for Monday, June 25 through Thursday, August 2.

Will coordinate Summer Lunch Training with Pastor Brenda.

OUTREACH – Joan Decker

Memorial Day

The Memorial Picnic was Monday, May 28, 2018. Thank you to all who helped. This is one of the biggest outreach projects for Upland Baptist Church. A lot of work goes into making this a successful event. Hope everyone enjoyed the parade and picnic.

Summer Lunch

The summer lunch program will be starting again this year. Look for information on the church website and in the June Spire. Anyone who would like to help with the lunch program please call the church office at 610-874-7474. Volunteers are still active with the Main Street Elementary School. Volunteers will be off for the summer but back with activities in the fall.

Worship

Please join us on Sunday morning for Worship at 10:00 AM.

Food Bank

The Food Bank is always in need of help. For the month of June, the Food Bank will be collecting cans of pork and beans and plastic bags. Please support the food bank in any way. Drop off donations at the church.

Have a nice summer. I thank everyone who did something to help with any outreach programs. Activities will start up again in the fall.



Once again, we will be sponsoring 6 weeks of activities and free lunch for any child (18 and under) who would like to join us. We have decided to try doing 6 weeks at the beginning of the summer. Our hope is that the notices we send out through the schools will net us more participation if we start soon after school lets out.

Mark your calendars for Monday, June 25 through Thursday, August 2.

Monday – Bible Story and activities

Tuesday – Craft Day

Wednesday – Board Game Day

Thursday – Library Day with Guest reader

Activities are from 11:00 to 11:45am

Lunch is served from 11:45 am to 12:15 pm

Please plan to volunteer this summer as we *Love God! Love Others!*

HOME AND INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES FOR SUMMER

Rev. Yamina Apolinaris 6/2
Corporacion Milagros del Amor
P.O. Box 6445
Caguas, PR 00726-6445

Email: yapolinaris.corma@gmail.com

Rev. Rick Bunker 6/2
Philadelphia Park
P.O. Box 1000
3001 Street Rd.
Bensalem, PA 19020-1000

Email: rbunker@rtca-pa.org

Mr. Philip Smith 6/8
1801 Dante Michilini – APTO 501
Mata Da Pria – Vitoria, ES-Brazil

Email: philip.smith@internationalministries.org

Rev. Vital Pierre 6/15
Apartado 21
La Romana, Dominican Republic

Vital.pierre@internationalministries.org

Mrs. Kelly Bunker 6/22
Address same as above

June Birthdays

6 Colleen Walker
7 Adam Robert Moore
8 Henry Strunk
18 Axel Williams
23 Madison Hahn

June Anniversaries

11 John and Rev. Brenda Shaw
22 Darlene and David Pysher
30 Frank & Sue Kulp

July Birthdays

2 John Fraim
7 Linda Cook
8 Billy Lord
10 Karen Johnston
13 Grace Miles
16 Betty Vandergrift
Christy Mason
18 Jesse Kulp
28 Harold Hampton
30 Stephen Shaw
31 Charlene Miller

July Anniversaries

7 Bill & Karin Lord

August Birthdays

1 John Kofroth
6 Carol Arscott
8 Elinore Ottey
15 Doris Fraim
21 Cameron Klimek
Lucas Charles Gervase
22 Ava Noelle Harman (2014)

August Anniversaries

2 Henry & Darlene Strunk