From the Pastor's Desk!!

For the past three months our church has been waiting. We are waiting for a new elevator to come. We want the project to be finished. The necessity of waiting is mentioned time and time again in the Bible. A key life instruction is to wait in the Lord. This brings to mind the words of Shawna Nequist, in her book Cold Tangerines: Celebrating the Extraordinary Nature of Everything Life. She says:

"I have always, essentially, been waiting. Waiting to become something else, waiting to be that person I always thought I was on the verge of becoming, waiting for that life I thought I would have. In my head, I was always one step away. In high school, I was biding my time until I could become a college version of myself, the one my mind could see so dearly. In college, the post college "adult" person with always looming in front of me, smarter, stronger, more organized. Than the married person, then the person I'd become when we have kids. For twenty years, literally, I have waited to become the thin version of my self, because that's when life will really begin. And through all that waiting, here I am. My life is passing, day by day, and I am waiting for it to start. I am waiting for that book that person that event when my life will finally begin.

I love movies about The Big Moment - the game or the performance or the wedding day or the record deal, the stories that split time with that key event, and everything is reframed, before it and after it, because it has changed everything. I have always wanted this movie-worthy event, something that will change everything and grabbed me out of this waiting game into the whirlwind in front of me. I cry and cry at these movies, because I am still waiting for my own big moment. I have visions of life as an adventure, a thing to be celebrated and experienced, but all I was doing was going to work and coming home, and that wasn't what I look like in the movies.

John Lennon once said, Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans. For me, life is what is was happening while I was busy waiting for my big moment. I was ready for it and believe that the rest of my life would fade into the background, and that my big moment would carry me through life like a Life-boat.

The Big Moment, unfortunately, is an urban myth. Some people have them, in a sense, when they win the Heisman or become the next American Idol. But even that football player or that singer is living life made up of more than that one moment. Life is a collection of a million, billion moments, tiny little moments and choices, like a handful of luminous, glowing pearls. It takes so much time, and so much work, and those beads and moments are so small, and so much less fabulous and dramatic than the movie.

But this is what I'm finding, in glimpses and flashes: this is it. This is it, in the best possible way. That thing I'm waiting for, that adventure, that movie-score-worthy experience unfolding gracefully. This is it. Normal, daily life ticking by on our streets and sidewalks, in our houses and apartments, in our beds and at our dinner tables, in our dreams and prayers and fights and secrets- this pedestrian life is the most precious thing any of us will ever experience."
FAMILY CAMPING CENTER BENEFIT AUCTION: Come and enjoy the day at Camp Swatara on Saturday, August 31. Great items and gift certificates will be available for auction with all funds benefiting the ministry and facility needs at camp. Delicious food, creative crafts, and fun family fellowship will be available for the day! If you have items to donate, please deliver them to the FCC Fellowship Hall by Friday, August 30. Auction items will be available for preview on Friday evening. The Children’s Auction will begin at 9:30 Saturday morning with the main auction following the Children’s Auction.

ON THE TRAIL WITH GOD: A walking day retreat will be on Saturday, September 14 from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm at the camp. Our life of faith is a journey. Join us for a day of exploring the path as we prayerfully walk Camp Swatara’s trails. We will look at preparation for the journey and watch for how God meets us on the path of our lives. We will learn from scriptural examples of journeys and pay attention to God’s surprises along the way. The pace will be easy, with times for personal and group reflection along the easy to moderate unpaved trails. The trail guide will be Karen Haldeman. A registration fee of $30 includes lunch along the trail. Register online at www.campsватara.org by Monday, September 9.

Camp Swatara is having a FALL FUN FOOD FEST on Saturday, October 5th beginning at 5:30 pm. Prepare your favorite Camp Swatara dish and bring it along for a carry-in dinner. The kitchen will prepare some of our favorites for everyone as well. You won’t want to miss the Ice Cream Churn Off with special taste-testing judges! For more information and to RSVP contact the camp office at 717-933-8510 or www.campsватara.org.

TRAIL TREK AT CAMP SWATARA: Hike with us on Saturday, October 12. Earn prizes, eat ice cream and raise money for camp. Learn more about the event at www.campsватara.org.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Business issues were put aside except for elections and reports to make time for the process of discerning a compelling vision to guide for the Church of the Brethren in the future.

There were 120 tables groups of delegates and non-delegates who responded to a series of questions. The Compelling Vision Process Team and Compelling Vision Working Group will assess their answers to bring a vision statement for consideration by the 2020 Conference.

A love feast was celebrated which was open to all who were present, delegates and non delegates. It has been years since love feast has been celebrate by the full conference.

There was a worship service every morning and evening with praise songs and meaningful sermons. The offerings from those services went to Brethren Disaster work in Puerto Rico, rebuilding churches in Nigeria, CCOB core ministries, activities for the children at conference, and workshops in the districts.

There was also a blood drive in which 165 pints of blood were collected. David Sollenberger was elected Moderator -elect. Full coverage of the conference can be found on http://www.brethren.org/ac/2019.

Cyndy Wright and I (Gene Stoltzfus) also sang in the choir.

PRAYER BLANKETS: The Ladies Bible Study offers a prayer blanket to anyone in need of special prayers as they go through a serious illness, having emotional problems, or are over stressed and needs support and comfort. The recipient need not be a member of our church. The ladies individually pray over the blanket for the person. After which the blanket is brought to a Sunday Worship Service and Pastor Steve prays over it on behalf of the Congregation. If you know anyone in need please let us know. 717-336-7616
FELLOWSHIP TEAM  
CHURCH PICNIC

will be held on Saturday, August 17, at Snyder Park located along Clay School Road, adjacent to the Clay Elementary School. We welcome everyone to come out and enjoy the evening of Fun, Food and Fellowship. The Meal will be served at 4:30 pm.
The Meat will be provided. Please bring along picnic foods, lawn chairs and games you would like to share with others.
We will have the guessing games for both children and adults, also there will be games for the children to enjoy.
It is a great evening to be together and have great fellowship.

MISSIONS
NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

Night Out was held on Aug 6, 6-9 pm. The community sure came out to support this great evening of fun and fellowship. NNO was started here at East Cocalico C.O.B.

CAMP CONQUEST

The Missions Team is coordinating and served breakfast and lunch to the kids at Camp Conquest on Friday August 9th. “Bible Adventure” (Formally known as Release Time) kids are there Aug 5-9th and the churches each pick a day to buy the food, cook and serve them.

DENVER FAIR

At the Denver Fair, the Missions Team will have a table and hand out bottles of water. The Denver Fair runs from Sept 9-14. The Missions Team could use volunteers for 2 hour shifts. If you are interested in helping at any of these service projects, please call Bj Stoltzfus at 717-575-6392.

SMALL GROUPS

WIDOW’S LUNCHEON: The next luncheon meeting of the Widow’s Sharing Group will be held Monday, August 12 at noon at Gus’s Restaurant in Ephrata.
Please bring something from your home with special meaning to you to share with the group. This can be something old, something you made, just whatever you want to bring. If you bring more than one thing that will be fine! This should be fun and interesting. All widows from our church are welcome. Please sign on the sheet in the narthex or let Carol Buohl know if you plan to attend.

MEN’S BIBLE STUDY: All men are welcome! It is held at church at 7:00 am each Saturday, excluding the 1st Saturday of the month.

LADIES BIBLE STUDY: The ladies meet on Thursday mornings at 9:30 am at church. Welcome Ladies!

LUNCH BUNCH: After Ladies Bible Study, the Ladies leave church at 11:00 am and make their way to a designated restaurant on the 1st Thursday of the month. If you’re interested in joining the ladies, talk to Joan Lobb or Gloria Kunkle, the day, before.
Vision statement vision.
We are told to be Christ-centered servants. We seek to share God's love by creating a caring atmosphere that reaches into our community. We are committed to extend the saving grace of Jesus Christ by providing Biblically-based experiences and fellowship opportunities for families and individuals of all ages. We endeavor to equip believers for ministry, mission and evangelism.

Christ's desire for the local church is that we become a mature group of disciples, not merely a collection of passive observers.