

Hebron Happenings

A Note from Jason,

Where do you turn for help and consolation in difficult times? We are all aware of the many heartbreaking tragedies that have recently taken place and of many that are continuing to take place. From mass shootings to the ongoing war in Ukraine to the personal difficulties like struggling with health issues of our own or our loved ones – there truly are many difficulties in this world. As Christians, I want to suggest that one place we can turn for comfort, especially in difficult times, is the book of Psalms.

I am a long-time fan of the Irish band U2. Many of you may know that Bono, the lead singer, is a Christian who often writes and speaks about his faith.

One of my favorite U2 songs is simply entitled 40. In this song Bono takes his lyrics directly from the first three verses of Psalm 40. The song and the Psalm begin: “I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined and hear my cry; he lifted me up out of the pit, out of the miry clay.”

This Psalm is written by David during one of the many times he was in serious trouble and his life was on the line. Amid his struggle David waits ‘patiently’ for the Lord and trusts that in the end God will indeed come through – even if it isn’t immediately. David and the U2 song go on to state that God “set my feet upon a rock and made my footsteps firm” – showing his trust that even in difficult times our firm foundation is God.

The Psalm goes on to state the outcome of being placed on this firm Rock -a new song is placed in his mouth, “a song of praise to our God”. Even in difficult times David trusts his feet are on the solid rock of God and this reality wells up a song of praise within him. Not because everything is OK, because let’s face it - in this life *everything* usually isn’t OK, but because God is the solid rock and foundation on which we can stand even during the storms of our life. In recognition of this David concludes Psalm 40 writing: “As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are my help and my deliverer, do not delay, O my God.” I think I could pray that line every morning.

So, I would encourage you to make reading the Psalms a regular part of your devotional practice especially during times of struggle. The wonderful thing about the Psalms is they express the full range of human emotions that we experience in life and can give us voice to share those emotions openly and unashamedly with God. Perhaps start with Psalm 40 and read the entire thing and see the many emotions of David in it – perhaps while listening to an excellent U2 song in the background.

God Bless,

Jason

New Church Directory Needs You!

Hebron is planning to update the church directory. We are asking for people to provide their name, address and contact information such as a phone number and email address. You may also provide your Birthday month so we can wish you a happy Birthday! More info to come soon!



June Special Worship Services and Events:

- June 5th—Graduate Recognition Sunday.
- June 5th—‘Share Your Photo’ dinner following the 11am service in Fellowship Hall
- June 18th– Game Night in Fellowship Hall starting at 6:30pm
- June 19th—11am Worship at the Pavilion.

A reminder that worship will remain at 11am throughout the summer months.

A Reflection from Elder Doug Davidson

I enjoyed pastor Jason’s sermon on Acts 16: 16-40, which spoke about a time when Paull and Silas were imprisoned. The sermon is available on Facebook (May 29th sermon), so I won’t repeat his points here. But, his words reminded me of a recent visit Edi and I took to Philadelphia. During that trip we visited Eastern Penitentiary, a kind of jail museum. The jail is historic, built by Quakers during Pennsylvania’s early days, designed to make prisoners feel “penitent”, by isolating them in cells for self-reflection. When the jail closed, it stood vacant for 26 years and then was reclaimed as a Philadelphia attraction. The jail occupies an entire city block, has 40 foot high walls, and 12 wings to house prisoners. Following the tour, the visitor is directed to a comparison of inmate populations. I found these statistics interesting and would like to share them with you. The United States leads all nations in percentage of citizens housed in prison:

“State and federal prison and local jail incarcerations dropped by 14% from 2.1 million in 2019 to 1.8 million in mid-2020. While the United States represents about 4.2 percent of the world's population, it houses around 20 percent of the world's prisoners.”

Demographically, black and Hispanic populations face a higher probability of serving time than whites.

“According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) in 2018 black males accounted for 34% of the total male prison population, white males 29%, and Hispanic males 24%. White females comprised 47% of the prison population in comparison to black females who accounted for 18% of the female population.”

In our general population blacks and Hispanics combine to 32% of the population, but their portion of the jail population is 56%. In Allegheny County, 66% of the prison population is black. As of this March there were 1,671 inmates in Allegheny County jails.

The disproportionate amount of black prison population is often cited as a clear indicator of discrimination. Lack of income and inability to afford a lawyer are also signs of racial disparities.

In Luke 4:18 Jesus read a passage from Isaiah, at the temple in Nazareth: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,” I have frequently viewed the topic of ministering to prisoners as a difficult one, and I don’t have any particular vision as to the best way to proceed to helping prisoners. But, it is a topic we should consider when we are following the Bible.



A picture of one wing of Eastern State Penitentiary

Christian Education Update

The Sunday School program will hold its last class on Sun, June 12 before taking a break for the summer. I would like to extend my appreciation to Pastor Jason Rea, Larry Shoup, and Alf Butler for leading the discussions in the Adult class. I would also like to say Thank You to Joann Cox for volunteering to lead the Jr High/High School class and cleaning out the 3 downstairs classrooms.

Did You Know?

Hebron Church did not always have running water? The Church had two outhouses located where the ramp to the basement is now. After a well was dug just east of the church sign, restrooms were installed on the stair landing between the sanctuary and basement. After city water was available the well was abandoned.

Mission Update: Did you know that Hebron dedicates one tenth of all our offerings to go to missions? This allows us to support many different causes both locally and around the world. Some recent examples are gifts to the Richard Rhodes Go Fund Me, a gift to the Brother’s Brother Foundation for their work in Ukraine, and keeping our little food Pantry well stocked. Thanks for your generous support of mission!

Hebron Presbyterian Church
1767 Route 30
Clinton, PA 15026
Email: hebronchurch1767@gmail.com
Website: hebronatclinton.org