



# OVERBROOK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## *News from the Crossroads*

June 2018

Overbrook Presbyterian Church is a welcoming and diverse Christian community that seeks actively to love and serve God, each other, and the world.

—Mission Statement



### Overbrook Church Staff

Revs. Bruce  
and Carolyn Gillette  
*Co-Pastors*

Rev. David K. McMillan  
*Pastor Emeritus*

Dr. Christopher Gage  
*Director of Music*

Lisa Faso  
*Office Manager*

Carol Rozmiarek  
*Financial Secretary*

Leonard Robbins  
*Church Custodian*



### Worship in June:

**June 3:** Pastor Carolyn will preach a sermon on Matthew 18:21-35, Jesus' teaching about forgiveness. Thank you to those who filled out the questionnaire on favorite hymns and sermon topics; this topic of forgiveness is one that someone asked us to preach on this summer. This worship service will also include the presentation of age-appropriate, Contemporary English Version Bibles to Overbrook Church's second graders, as well as the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This worship service will be Lois Randall's last worship service with Overbrook Church; in the worship service and at the Coffee Hour following it, we will honor Lois' many years of faithful service and thank her for the blessing she has been here among us.

**June 10:** Pastor Bruce will preach on faith and a contemporary issue that has been in the news a lot lately— the issue of immigration. Thank you to the folks who suggested this topic for an upcoming sermon. This worship service will include the baptism of Isaac and Isidora Gosfield. It will also be the last day of Sunday School. Worshipers of all ages are invited to stay for the Deacons' picnic on the church lawn afterward.

**June 17:** "The Sermon on the Mount: A Worship Service of Lessons and Songs." This worship service is a wonderful way for us to celebrate Jesus' teaching by reading all of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount from Matthew's gospel in one worship service. Jesus' most famous sermon is powerful when heard in one service. This service will include 20 readers, including children, youth and adults, reading different scripture lessons and prayers. Please let our pastors know if you would be willing to do one of the short readings for this worship service. It will also include several hymns on various parts of this important teaching of Jesus.

**June 24:** Join us for Pastor Bruce and Pastor Carolyn's last Sunday at Overbrook Presbyterian Church when our co-pastors will preach a sermon on Jesus' greatest commandments— to love God and to love our neighbors.



**Special Congregational Meeting on June 17:** Session has called a special meeting of the congregation to be held following worship on Sunday, June 17 to act on a motion to dissolve the co-pastoral relationship with the Reverends Bruce and Carolyn Gillette, effective June 30, 2018. We hope that all members of Overbrook who are able will attend this meeting.

**From Our Pastors: Free Rent, MLK, Dance of Forgiveness & Why “Debts”?**

A few years ago for 12 weeks, a group of addicts, alcoholics, seekers and Bruce got together for a Bible study on the 12 Steps. One addict shared a story of how he was in so much pain due to what another person had done to him and for that reason, he said, he had started using drugs to lessen his pain. Another addict in the group turned to him and told him, “You have to forgive the man who wronged you, otherwise you are letting him have free rent in your head.” Forgiveness benefits both the one being pardoned as well as the victim.

Frederick Buechner, in *Wishful Thinking*, wrote: The alternatives of not loving and not forgiving harm all: “Of the Seven Deadly Sins, anger is possibly the most fun. To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past, to roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontations still to come, to savor to the last toothsome morsel both the pain you are given and the pain you are giving back—in many ways it is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you.”

Martin Luther King, Jr., in *Strength to Love*, wrote: “Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend. We never get rid of an enemy by meeting hate with hate; we get rid of an enemy by getting rid of enmity. By its very nature, hate destroys and tears down; by its very nature, love creates and builds up. Love transforms with redemptive power.”

“The Dance of Forgiveness is described by L. Gregory Jones in the forgiveness chapter in *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People* edited by Dorothy Bass:

- ◆ We become willing to speak truthfully and patiently about the conflicts that have arisen.
- ◆ We acknowledge both the existence of anger and bitterness and a desire to overcome them.
- ◆ We summon up a concern for well-being of the other as a child of God.

- ◆ We recognize our own complicity in conflict, remember that we have been forgiven in the past, and take steps of repentance.
- ◆ We make a commitment to struggle to change whatever caused and continues to perpetuate our conflicts.
- ◆ We confess our hearing for the possibility of reconciliation.

“So to live a “forgiven” life is not simply to live in a happy consciousness of having been absolved. Forgiveness is precisely the deep and abiding sense of what relation—with God or with other human beings—can and should be; and so it is itself a stimulus, an irritant, necessarily provoking protest at impoverished versions of social and personal relations.” (Rowan Williams).

Forgiveness is not easy; Jesus realized it, for he included a petition asking for God’s help in his simple, short prayer that he taught his disciples. Presbyterians say “debts” from the King James Version of the prayer in the gospel of Matthew. “Trespases” is found in the Anglican/Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer*. “Sins” is found in the Gospel of Luke’s version and the ecumenical version of the prayer. Whatever language we use, we all need it for ourselves as well as needing to offer it to others.

We ask your forgiveness for us and we offer our forgiveness to you all. May God bless you!

Grace and Peace,  
Bruce & Carolyn Gillette

**Want to learn more about forgiveness?** Check out an excellent article about it on the OPC web site: <http://www.overbrookpresb.org/pdf/Forgivenessland2.pdf>

## Mission and Outreach

As the summer approaches, Mission & Outreach is wrapping things up and looking forward to moving a little slower.

Your hard work and donations will help to feed 319 of children around the world through Feed My Starving Children. Thank you to Becky Lazo, Janet Bowker, Deb Rottinger, Kristan Davis, and Jim Vagnoni for all of your hard work in organizing fundraisers and volunteers. (See article below for more information)

We also fed adults locally through the Life Center, Calvin's Hunger Store, and the Welcome Church. Thank you to Nancy Gilhool and Janet Bowker for coordinating, cooking, recruiting volunteers and serving the guests at the Life Center of Eastern Delaware County. People were able to go to sleep with full stomachs, because you cared and made it happen. Mike Rottinger, Emily Amerman, and Jim Vagnoni served a coffee hour for the Welcome Church near Logan Circle. Jane Rozmiarek and Janet Bowker worked with a group to make sandwiches and pack bags for their coffee hour. Mike Rottinger collects canned goods for Calvin Presbyterian's Hunger Store. With greater demand on food banks, your donations are needed more than ever. Thank you, Mike for coordinating and hauling the donations.

In June, we turn our focus to our children. The Women's Dining Circle will get together on Friday, June 8 at 6:30pm to raise money for the Youth Mission Trip. If you did not receive an Evite, contact Carol Rozmiarek to be added to the list.

We have a variety of collections and organizations we support throughout the year. 10% of your annual OPC pledge goes to the Mission & Outreach budget. We know that people are motivated to give to different things that are important to them. We use your additional contributions as a gauge for whether we are working on the missions you support. As your Mission & Outreach Committee, we want our missions to represent the interests of the church. Thank you for allowing us to take care of those who can't take care of themselves, in our neighborhoods and around the world.



**Feed My Starving Children update:** It's a wrap! On April 28, over 700 volunteers came together and scooped and weighed and sealed and packed 116,640 MannaPack meals which will feed 319 children for an entire year. You all are AWESOME! Many, many thanks for all the donations and prayers and helping hands; it truly could not have happened without you.

We are still confirming our final donation totals, but we packed more meals than we had planned (because OVER 700 VOLUNTEERS!), so if you didn't get a chance to donate or you collected a few more dollars in quarters, we will gladly accept your donation at any time. Any "extra" money that is collected can be put toward next year's event. Again, thank you all so much. We'll share an update once we know where the meals we packed will be sent. *With deepest gratitude, The Care at the Crossroads Committee*

*many thanks*

Many thanks to all those who helped with the May 29 shelter meal.

There are two more opportunities this year to lend a hand: Tuesday, July 31 and Tuesday, October 30. Give it a try if you haven't already been a part of this endeavor. Contact Nancy Gilhool (gilhoolfam@verizon.net) or Janet Bowker (jbowker@friendscentral.org)

*Save the Date*

### Spring Women's Dining Circle Event

The next Women's Dining Circle dinner will be held on Friday, June 8 at the home of Janet and Jeff Bowker, 6492 Sherwood Road, Philadelphia. This dinner will be the last before summer and, in usual OPC tradition, we will be supporting the Youth Group as they head off to West Virginia on a mission trip this July. Festivities begin at 6:30. The Women's Dining Circle committee provides a delicious dinner, a wonderful speaker and an opportunity for fellowship. All that we ask in return is that you contribute what you might spend for a dinner at a restaurant. Please remember that a bottle of wine is never a bad idea. If you are interested in attending and have not received an Evite invitation, please see Janet Bowker. See you on the 8th!



### What's up with that table of groceries at coffee hour?

A Community Emergency Food Closet resides at Calvin Presbyterian Church, 1.5 miles from Overbrook. Men and women from the immediate neighborhood around Calvin who demonstrate need can receive food and other basic supplies. About once a month Mission and Outreach does some food shopping and places the food on that table in coffee hour. You are invited to purchase a can of soup or bag of rice and leave it there for us to deliver to Calvin. The money raised goes to purchase next month's food!

## Mission and Outreach (Cont'd)

*For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink... Matthew 25:35*

### The Welcome Church – Worship and Fellowship on the Ben Franklin Parkway

On Saturday May 5<sup>th</sup> the Mission and Outreach committee created hundreds of PB&J and beef bologna sandwiches. These were added to our bags of ice, bottled water and serving gloves that became part of the Welcome Church's worship service on the Parkway that Sunday afternoon. A partner church from Bucks County joined us with snacks, donuts, more sandwiches, coffee, socks and a few other goodies.

We had a full worship service including communion in front of the Franklin Institute. As the homeless formed the majority of the congregation, participants were encouraged to give something from around them as an offering and were encouraged to contemplate what the offering meant for them.

Following the service the "coffee hour" was a generous outpouring of food, beverages and fellowship. There were plenty of PB&J left which we brought to Arch Street United Methodist at Broad and Arch

We departed the parkway feeling that we had definitely filled a need and many guests expressed gratitude. The weekend's activities fit in well with OPC's Matthew 25:35 mission theme.



NCT's run of 'A House Divided' dropped its final curtain on May 12 after a very successful five show run. The attendance to this show was high and being almost its formal debut and our refreshment venue earned record funds for such a short series. KUDOS to Jane and Carol Rozmiarek, Irma Mae Leskin, Joan Moylan, Edelene Carroll, Nancy Gilhool, Lainie Blodgett, Peju Abebanjo, Sharon Parker, Linda Huff-Paul, Danielle Long, Mary Lou Ryce, Ron Homer, Jason and I Mei Sheau, Gretchen Boger, and Janet Bowker. It truly takes a team (all professional concessionaires now) to make the OPC's refreshment stand a success.

*With Much Appreciation, Judy*

## Congregational Life

### Coffee Hour for June



During the summer months we still carry on the OPC tradition of Coffee Hour but we change to Ice Tea/Lemonade Hour during the warmer weather.

- June 3- Overbrook Choir
- June 10-Deacons Picnic
- June 17-TBA
- June 24-TBA

If you are interested in hosting a coffee hour instructions for this easily accomplished, highly valued ministry are available on the OPC web site and in the church kitchen (on the microwave). For more information please contact Amarilis Stricker at 484-343-0679 or Raelyn Harman at 610-331-8972. Thank you.



Dear OPC Members and Friends,

The OPC updated photo directory production is underway! It is not too late to be included in the 2018 edition. The dates are Mon., June 4<sup>th</sup>, Tues., June 5<sup>th</sup>, Fri., June 8<sup>th</sup>, Thurs., June 21<sup>st</sup> from 2pm-9pm and Sat., June 9<sup>th</sup>, 10am-5pm. Every household that gets their photo taken will get a free photo directory and free 8x10 photo. There are alternative ways to include your photo if the scheduled dates are not possible for you. Sign-up by following the links at [overbrookpresb.org](http://overbrookpresb.org) or contacting Nancy Elmore at 610-639-2184 or Raelyn Harman at 610-331-8972. Thank you.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:** There is a need for volunteers to register people as they arrive to get their photo taken. Please sign-up for a two-hour time slot during the hours listed above by contacting Raelyn or Nancy. Thank you

## Stewardship



Ice Cream Social

**A big THANK YOU** to all who helped with the Ice Cream Social — decorators, brownie preparers, ice cream scoopers, games providers, clean-up crew and most important, the sundae eaters! Donations and ticket sales helped to raise about \$500 for this summer's youth mission trip. Fun, fellowship and fundraising all in one!

# Christian Education



## Vacation Bible School

It's Time to Register for Overbrook Church's Vacation Bible School: Vacation Bible School is coming soon! Children aged Pre-K through 5th grade are welcome to join us Sunday, July 8-Thursday, July 12 from 5:30-7:30pm. Supper will be served, and each evening will include Bible stories, songs, and activities. Youth are welcome to come and help out, and *new this year*: there will be an adult class happening simultaneously for any parents or other adults who want to come. We could also use some volunteers to help with various aspects of VBS, including check-in, leading lessons, and preparing meals. VBS registration forms can be found outside the office. Please contact Becky Lazo, [rebeccalazo@hotmail.com](mailto:rebeccalazo@hotmail.com), if you have any questions or would like to help!



## Confirmation Sunday

On May 20, we welcomed six OPC youth by profession of faith into church membership on Pentecost. Congratulations to all of our newly confirmed members.

*Maya Stricker  
Emma Biedermann  
Kendi Long  
Liam Clifford  
Everett Whalen*

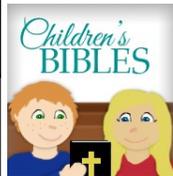


## Youth Mission Trip Car Wash

Overbrook Youth will be having a car wash on Saturday, June 16 from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. in the church parking lot. The Car Wash will benefit this summer's youth mission trip to West Virginia. All youth, whether they are participating in the mission trip or not, are encouraged to help out with this mission fundraiser. All Overbrook car owners: Please stop by the church and support our youth, and enjoy a clean, newly washed car.



**Summer** Last Day of Sunday School: Please note that our last day of Sunday School will be on Sunday, June 10. After Sunday School and worship that day, please stay for the Deacons' Picnic.



## Bibles for Second Graders

Overbrook Church second graders will receive their Bibles on Sunday, June 3, during the worship service. Each student will receive a beautifully illustrated *Contemporary English Bible* that is at an age-appropriate reading level. Come celebrate with our second graders on this special day



**Summer Youth Mission Trip to West Virginia:** We have a full mission team of 16 youth and 5 adult chaperones/drivers for this summer's mission trip. Orientation/planning meetings for youth and adult participants will be on Sundays, June 3, July 1 and July 15 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. If you are going on this trip, please plan to attend as many of these meetings as possible. Please contact Pastor Carolyn if you have any questions about the trip.



**If I Had a Hammer...** Here is a list of tools we are asked to bring with us on the Summer Youth Mission Trip. Please let us know if you can help us by lending or giving us some of these tools: Hammers (each person needs one), Tape measures (4), Utility knives, Pencil (each person), Squares (2), Chalk line, Nail apron (each person), 4' level, 2' level, Circular saw with blades, 50' Electrical cord, Drills, Masks (box), Goggles (5), Work gloves, Long pants (each person), 5-gallon water jugs, Coolers for lunch, IF POSSIBLE: Skilsaw, power drills.

## Sunday Forums in June: The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism

Join us on Sunday mornings starting at 9:15 a.m. in the McMillan Chapel for a continuation of Timothy Keller's *The Reason for God* for the 1st two Sundays.

June 3 - "What Gives You the Right to Tell Me How to Live My Life?"  
June 10 - "Why Is the Church Responsible for So Much Injustice?"  
June 17 - A representative from Bread for the World  
June 24 - "Reclaiming Jesus"



## Worship and Music



**From the Director of Music:** The season is coming to a close, and we should all be proud of what we, as a community, have accomplished musically over the past few months: Richard Elliott's stunning recital, a thorough tuning of the organ, a special Good Friday presentation of John Stainer's *Crucifixion*, another successful *Messiah* Sing in December, and our excellent hymn festival to mark the five hundredth anniversary

of the Reformation, not to mention all of the fine music-making that happens every week in worship and at home. Thank you for all your support!

June 3 marks the last Sunday that the **Overbrook Choir** will sing before the summer, and we hope that you will join us that day for some special events. During the service, we will recognize people who have made this musical year possible, including those members of the choir who have been singing for a significant number of years. At coffee hour, we will offer a fond farewell to our mezzo-soprano soloist and section leader, **Lois Randel**, by celebrating her eighteen years of service to this congregation.



Finally, there is just enough time in the season for another **Postlude Sunday**, directly after the service on June 3. I will play the *Introduction and Passacaglia in D minor*, a thrilling work by the late-Romantic German composer Max Reger. Please plan on staying for a few extra minutes to hear this wonderful piece!

Be sure to come early on June 17 for a Hymn Sing starting at 10:10 a.m.

## Community/Fellowship

### The Farmers Market is Back!

Every Saturday, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM in the church parking lot



**About the Market:** Established in 2008, this market is located at the Overbrook Presbyterian Church, and has a loyal following of residents in the neighborhood who make this market a regular part of their Saturday mornings.

**Look for:**

- ◆ Forest View Bakery - (Breads, sticky buns, moon pies, jams, jellies, relishes)
- ◆ Walnut Springs Farm - (Early berries and asparagus, in season sweet corn, peaches and more)
- ◆ Homestead Gardens - (Seasonal fresh vegetables)

**Payment accepted:** Cash, ACCESS cards, Philly Food Bucks and WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) vouchers



The Overbrook Climate group is hosting a meeting (Overbrook Church, Monday June 4, 7pm) to discuss and learn about home solar power generation.

Three Overbrook members, Peter Seidel, Margene Biederman and Brian Taussig-Lux, will talk about their experiences with installation and use of solar in their homes and community. Brian will bring a friend from Media who has more general knowledge to share. Bring your friends.



The OPC men's group will reconvene this Saturday, June 2 at 8 a.m. We are honored this week to have long time OPC member Bob Bevan. Bob will share his personal experience with Overeaters Anonymous(OA), a Twelve Step fellowship based on the Twelve Steps in Alcoholics Anonymous(AA). OA serves people with Eating Disorders including obesity, anorexia and bulimia. The story of Bob's 26 year journey of strength and hope will surely inspire. Feel free to bring a neighbor or friend.



Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, along with the Boy Scouts will be sponsoring a "Shredding Event" in the OPC parking lot on Saturday, June 9, from 10:00 a.m. til noon.

# Deacons



6/3	Jonathan Wiggins	6/18	Christopher Sheau
6/4	Deb Rottinger		Maya Phan
6/5	Shirley Alford	6/20	Maya Williamson
	Valerie Coursen		Paul Stricker
6/9	Julie Tulba		Miriam Harden
6/11	Will Vagnoni		Liz Shah
	Kate Shackelford	6/22	Ernestine Harris
6/13	Ted Dillon	6/25	Mimi Winkler
	Laurel Wilson		Linda Huff-Paul
	Anna Tausig-Lux	6/26	Ron Homer
6/14	Sharon Parker	6/29	Jane Bevan
6/16	Steven Folwell		Kevin Trindade

## Prayer List

- ◆ Patricia Ogundele recovering from knee replacement surgery.
- ◆ Luis Wong is home and recovering from surgery from a broken hip. .
- ◆ John Nathaniel is in rehab and welcomes visitors.
- ◆ DeDe Sherlock, Pat Dillon's sister, is continuing to have health issues.
- ◆ Ed Harvey is home recovering from surgery. He is very grateful for prayers by his church family.
- ◆ Leo Miller, Vince Gilhool's nephew, is receiving cancer treatment.
- ◆ The Rev. David McMillian, OPC Pastor Emeritus, is thankful to be recovering from knee surgery!
- ◆ Thomas James, father of Savannah England (formerly Anna Lemley) is battling lung cancer.
- ◆ Charlotte Carpenter is dealing with rheumatoid arthritis.
- ◆ Lynda Johnson is having health concerns.
- ◆ Ellen Burr has ongoing health issues.

Please contact Pastors Bruce or Carolyn to add names or concerns to this list. Bruce and Carolyn can be reached by email, cell phone, or by leaving a message in the Church Office, or by speaking with one of them in person.

## Church Picnic



Congregational Picnic-Sunday, June 10th- following worship. Everyone is welcome to join us for the Deacons Annual Picnic. There will be food, fellowship, music and games.

## Pastoral CARE

### Pastoral Care & Feedback

**Welcome:** We are grateful to people who let us know about pastoral needs in our church and

community. We welcome visiting people in their homes, at work, in the hospital and at the church. We welcome the opportunity to bring home communion to anyone who would like to receive the sacrament.

Please contact us by email ([pastors@overbrookpresb.org](mailto:pastors@overbrookpresb.org), [bruce@overbrookpresb.org](mailto:bruce@overbrookpresb.org) or [carolyn@overbrookpresb.org](mailto:carolyn@overbrookpresb.org)) or phone (Office: 215-877-2744 or Bruce's Cell: 302-528-1796 or Carolyn's Cell: 302-528-1797) if you, or someone you know, would like a visit from an Overbrook pastor. Your ideas, feedback and prayers help us all serve better together. See our contact information above so we can have a conversation with you soon. Thank you. Pastors Bruce & Carolyn Gillette



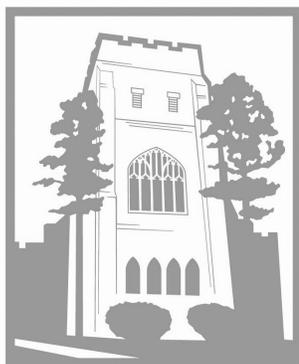
### Remember to Sign the Prayer Cards:

These cards are located on the raised table in the Wistar Morris Room. We ask all church members and friends to please sign these cards before or after worship each Sunday. "You were remembered this Sunday in the prayers of the people of the Overbrook Church in Philadelphia" is the message found on prayer cards. Please contact our pastors or church office if you would like us to send a prayer card to someone.

John Nathaniel is still in rehab and would love visitors: Moss Rehab at Einstein Philadelphia, 1200 West Tabor Rd, Philadelphia, PA. Feel free to call Ellen Valudes for updates or room number, 215-498-0933.



## *News from the Crossroads*



### Overbrook Presbyterian Church

6376 City Avenue ♦ Philadelphia, PA 19151

215-877-2744 ♦ office@overbrookpresb.org

www.overbrookpresb.org

#### Church Office Hours

Mon., Wed., & Fri.

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Tues., & Thurs.

9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

### Connect with Us



**Connect with Us!** Everyone should have received an email invitation to our new member/friend database called Realm. If you have not received an email please let the church office know so that they can confirm your email address.

This database will make it easier for our church family to connect with each other and keep up with what's going on here at OPC. If you have any questions or want to know more about Realm please feel free to contact either Lisa or Carol in the office or visit our website at [www.overbrookpresb.org](http://www.overbrookpresb.org) and under the Connect with Us tab, will be a link to Realm and also FAQs

-Lisa Faso and Carol Rozmiarek

# June 2018

## Overbrook Presbyterian Church

Invite your Friends, Neighbors, and Co-workers to our times of Learning,  
Worship, Fellowship and Service

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Don't Forget –to sign up for our photo directory. Lifetouch will be here from 2-9pm, June 4,5,8, 21 and 10-3pm, June 9.  <b>Coming up next month:</b> Vacation Bible School - 7/8-7/12-5:30-7:30 PM.					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 8:00 AM Men's Group 9:00 AM Farmers Market-Parking Lot 9:00 Women's Retreat @ IHM
<b>3</b> 9:15 AM Adult Forum 10:30AM Worship Sunday School 11:30 AM Coffee Hour 12:00 PM M&O Committee 5:30 PM Youth Mission Trip Meeting	<b>4</b> 2:00 –Lifetouch Photos 7:00-Climate Change Group Meeting on Solar Homes	<b>5</b> 1:00 PM Worship Committee 2:00 PM Lifetouch Photos 7:00 PM Finance Committee	<b>6</b> 10:30AM Bible Study 5:00 PM Property Committee	<b>7</b> 7:00 pm –Stewardship @ Karen Wong's Home.	<b>8</b> 2:00 Lifetouch Photos 6:30 PM- Women's Dining Circle- Janet Bowker's House	<b>9</b> 9:00 AM Farmers Market-Parking Lot 10:00 AM Shredding Event-Parking Lot 10:00 AM Lifetouch Photos
<b>10</b> 9:15 AM Adult Forum 10:30AM Worship Last day of Sunday School 11:30 AM Coffee Hour 12:00 PM Deacons Picnic	<b>11</b> 7:00 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry	<b>12</b> 7:00 PM Session	<b>13</b> 10:30AM Bible Study	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 9:00 AM Farmers Market-Parking Lot 11:00 AM OPC Youth Car Wash
<b>17</b> 9:15 AM Adult Forum 10:10 AM Hymn Sing 10:30AM Worship 11:30 AM Special Congregation Meeting 11:30 AM Coffee Hour	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 10:30AM Bible Study	<b>21</b> 2:00 pm—Lifetouch Photos	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 9:00 AM Farmers Market-Parking Lot
<b>24</b> 9:15 AM Adult Forum 10:30AM Worship 11:30 AM Coffee Hour	<b>25</b> 7:00 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 10:30AM Bible Study	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 9:00 AM Farmers Market-Parking Lot

# Reclaiming Jesus

## A Confession of Faith in a Time of Crisis

This ecumenical statement will be the basis for the discussion in the June 24 Sunday Forum at 9:15 am.

**W**e are living through perilous and polarizing times as a nation, with a dangerous crisis of moral and political leadership at the highest levels of our government and in our churches. We believe the soul of the nation and the integrity of faith are now at stake.

It is time to be followers of Jesus before anything else—nationality, political party, race, ethnicity, gender, geography. Our identity in Christ precedes every other identity.

When politics undermines our theology, we must examine that politics. The church's role is to change the world through the life and love of Jesus Christ. The government's role is to serve the common good by protecting justice and peace. When that role is undermined by political leadership, faith leaders must stand up and speak out. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state."

It is often the duty of Christian leaders, espe-

cially elders, to speak the truth in love to our churches and to name and warn against temptations, racial and cultural captivities, false doctrines, and political idolatries—and even our complicity in them. We do so here with humility, prayer, and a deep dependency on the grace and Holy Spirit of God.

Jesus is Lord. That is our foundational confession. If Jesus is Lord, then Caesar was not—nor any other political ruler since. We pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Our faith is personal but never private, meant not only for heaven but for this earth.

Applying what "Jesus is Lord" means today is the message we commend as elders to our churches. We pray that we, as followers of Jesus, will find the depth of faith to match the danger of our political crisis.

The present crisis calls us to go deeper—deeper into our relationship to God; into our relationships with each other, especially across racial, eth-

nic, and national lines; and into our relationships with the most vulnerable, who are at greatest risk.

We need to recover the power of confessing our faith. Lament, repent, and then repair. If Jesus is Lord, there is always space for grace. We believe it is time to speak and to act in faith and conscience, not because of politics, but because we are disciples of Jesus Christ—to whom be all authority, honor, and glory. He is the light in our darkness. "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Signed: *Bishop Carroll A. Baltimore, Rev. Dr. Peter Borgdorff, Dr. Amos Brown, Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann, Dr. Tony Campolo, Dr. Iva Caruthers, Bishop Michael Curry, Rev. Dr. James Forbes, Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, Dr. Cynthia Hale, Rev. Dr. Richard Hamm, Rev. Dr. Joel Hunter, Rev. Dr. Jo Anne Lyon, Bishop Vashti McKenzie, Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, Jr., Dr. John Perkins, Bishop Lawrence Reddick, Fr. Richard Rohr, Dr. Ron Sider, Rev. Jim Wallis, Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, Bishop Will Willimon*

**I. WE BELIEVE** each human being is made in God's image and likeness. Racial bigotry is a brutal denial of the image of God in some of the children of God.

**THEREFORE, WE REJECT** the resurgence of white nationalism and racism in our nation on many fronts, including the highest levels of political leadership. We reject white supremacy and commit ourselves to help dismantle the systems and structures that perpetuate white preference and advantage. Any doctrines or political strategies that use racist resentments, fears, or language must be named as public sin.

**III. WE BELIEVE** how we treat the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger, the sick, and the prisoner is how we treat Christ himself.

**THEREFORE, WE REJECT** the language and policies of political leaders who would debase and abandon the most vulnerable children of God. We strongly deplore the growing attacks on immigrants and refugees; we won't accept the neglect of the well-being of low-income families and children.

**V. WE BELIEVE** that Christ's way of leadership is servanthood, not domination. We support democracy, not because we believe in human perfection, but because we do not.

**THEREFORE, WE REJECT** any moves toward autocratic political leadership and authoritarian rule. We believe authoritarian political leadership is a theological danger threatening democracy and the common good—and we will resist it.

**II. WE BELIEVE** we are one body. In Christ, there is to be no oppression based on race, gender, identity, or class.

**THEREFORE, WE REJECT** misogyny, the mistreatment, violent abuse, sexual harassment, and assault of women being further revealed in our culture and politics, including in our churches, and the oppression of any other child of God.

**IV. WE BELIEVE** that truth is morally central to our personal and public lives. Jesus promises, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32).

**THEREFORE, WE REJECT** the practice and pattern of lying that is invading our political and civil life. The normalization of lying presents a profound moral danger to the fabric of society.

**VI. WE BELIEVE** Jesus when he tells us to go into all nations making disciples. Our churches and our nations are part of an international community whose interests always surpass national boundaries. We in turn should love and serve the world and all its inhabitants rather than to seek first narrow nationalistic prerogatives.

**THEREFORE, WE REJECT** "America first" as a theological heresy for followers of Christ. While we share a patriotic love for our country, we reject xenophobic or ethnic nationalism that places one nation over others as a political goal.

Full statement and resources available at [ReclaimingJesus.org](http://ReclaimingJesus.org).