

Around the Hill

Round Hill Presbyterian Church, Elizabeth PA

Vol 2, No 1

May, 2015



From the Pastor's Pen...

Greetings, and welcome to another edition of *From the Pastor's Pen*.

In this installment, I am going to address our use (or, perhaps, our disuse) of a very small, very familiar word: "Amen." I suspect that many of us have at least a general idea what the word means and how it is used, but for those who do not, or who could use a refresher, the basics are as follows: "Amen" is, in origin, a Hebrew word that means something like "so be it," or "that's true," and it has been used as part of the worship of God's people from earliest times. But the specifics of how and when it is used have varied from place to place, from tradition to tradition, and over time. Among Christians, the original and still primary use of the word was as a mark of affirmation or ratification, spoken by the congregation to show that they agree with or second what has been spoken (or sung) by a leader or other individual. Thus, when Paul or John or any of the other apostolic leaders finished preaching, their audience would have said "Amen" to show their agreement. On the other hand, "Amen" would not have been used, originally, at the close of any song, prayer, or recitation that the whole congregation had sung or spoken together, because there was no need for it—the people's agreement was already shown by their participation.

I remember quite clearly when, several years ago, I spent some time studying up on this question. For one thing, it was then that I finally understood why, way back when, my pastor told us that it was the congregation's job to say "Amen" at the end of the Benediction—it was so that we

could concur in the request that God would bless us as we went forth from worship. Probably more importantly, I also realized that my own habitual uses of "Amen" didn't really conform to this historical pattern. I stopped saying "Amen" at the end of my own sermons, and at the end of the prayers I spoke aloud in worship. As it turns out, this didn't work very well in every case, since it tended to leave folks wondering "Is he done with the Invocation now, or what?" but overall, I cut back on saying "Amen" after things I'd said myself and, more importantly, started very intentionally saying "Amen" after other people's contributions to worship, so as to show that they spoke (or sang, or played) for me, too.

I think that sort of middle road is probably the best place for us to try to be. If we were going to be fussy and 100% consistent about all of this, we'd have to stop saying "Amen" at the end of the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and all sorts of things that would go against "the way we've always done it." But I don't think anything like that is necessary in order for us to add a couple of good ideas from the fathers and mothers of the church to the way we use "Amen" while we worship together. So, from here on out, I invite you to say "Amen" at the end of the Benediction, to show that you also desire God's blessing in the days to come. If you find yourself in agreement with the sermon, or moved by the music offered by our choir or musicians, show it—give an "Amen" there, too. It won't hurt (I promise!), and no one will look at you funny or anything. After all, you'll be in good company—the company of all God's people from the Temple in Jerusalem on down. Can I get an "Amen?"

**Less than 100 days until
CAMP 2015!!!**

Dates to remember:

August 2-8 CAMP

**June 14th \$25 deposit with
registration form/scholarship need.**

(This is a must!!! If you want to be included in on EFPCA fundraising assistance which is separate from scholarship).

July 19th remaining tuition due.

See you in August. Tell a friend.

Any questions? Contact Lori Fritz

Ben Little or Donna Durant

Date: 08/02/15 thru 08/08/15

Time: 4:00pm

Camp Crestfield



(Lori) imafritz2@comcast.net
(Donna) momdurantcrnp@aol.com
(Ben) bkl1541@yahoo.com

Reminder

Live in the moment; God has a plan for your “now.” That’s what the women from the Joy Circle of Round Hill Church heard on Saturday, May 2, 2015 at Central Highlands Community United Methodist Church. Gwen Smith was the attraction focusing on “Women’s Day in Faith” with her goal to “encourage you to think big thoughts about God by pointing you to His truth and grace through stories, songs and Scripture”.

The day started at 9:00 AM with the women from CHCUMC providing a delicious continental breakfast featuring fresh fruit and home baked goodies. The rest of the morning only got better with Gwen singing and playing her guitar along with joyful songs of praise with all the women joining in (about 120 in all). The day never got boring, with uplifting stories about Gwen’s life and her family—she grew up in this area before moving away to attend college. She now resides in Charlotte, North Carolina with her husband and four teenaged children.

Naturally we stopped for lunch, which was very innovative because everyone “packed their own.” Starting with an empty gift bag, we chose what we wanted for our lunch from sandwiches, crackers, chips, fruit, and home-baked cookies.

The rest of the afternoon just flew because she was so entertaining. We laughed, we cried, we sang, and we prayed. We all agreed it was one of the best retreats we ever attended. By 3:00 pm we called it a day with everyone remarking what an uplifting event it was. Gwen has a web site, www.GwenSmith.net, if you would like more information about her.

-Janice Sherman

Help us help you

If someone is in the hospital please call the church office (412) 384-5889 to inform Pastor Matt or the Deacons. Hospitals generally are prevented by privacy laws from informing churches when a person is hospitalized.

Calvary's Cross

There's a cross that stands on Calvary,
Where Jesus Christ was killed,
And the crowd all jeered and mocked Him,
As round His feet they milled.

Laughing, shouting, and gambling
For the purple cloak He wore,
Saying, "We should use it –
He won't need it anymore!"

The shame of all this history
Still haunts us to this day,
Our Lord died so victoriously
And bore our sins away.

Little did they realize,
That night at Calvary,
He was Lord, and gave Salvation,
And thus, He set us free!

-Marilyn Bowen

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Round Hill Church will be conducting our annual Vacation Bible School during the week of July 13th through the 17th from 9:00 AM to 12 PM. The theme of this year's activities will be "God's All Star Champions: Training to win God's way." The focus of the curriculum presents the theme of "putting on the full armor of God" with sports related activities. Training sites that include soccer, bicycling, softball, field hockey, and mountaineering are sure to present the gospel message in an exciting way that kids will enjoy.

VBS is an outstanding way to reach our community with the message of God's love, and to let our light shine. Please prayerfully consider participating in this very important opportunity to reach out to the children that Jesus loves. People willing to be involved in activities involving music, games, story telling, simple snack preparation, or assisting others who are involved in those activities are all needed at this time.

It's fun, it's an adventure, it's watching God's word change the world and being part of it. Please contact Jules Simon at (412) 872-4340 if you want to be a part of this outreach.

"Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven." - James 5:14-15

Oops! This is a part of Scripture that we seem to have overlooked! Elders are available at the end of the regular church service to pray for those who have a need, but that thing about the oil? Not so much! Clearly the disciples did it (Mark 6:13), but James is not speaking to the disciples. He is speaking to the elders of the church. As true products of our era, we tend to run to the telephone (and have our doctor's number on speed dial!) when we get sick, and, let's face it, without those doctors many of us would be dead. But perhaps as believers we ought also to *practice believing*.

I recently took this topic to the internet, but what I found there mostly confirmed what I already knew: theologians could screw up a one-car parade [*editor's note: maybe not all theologians...*]. There seem to be concerns that the oil used in anointing will be regarded as some sort of magic oil, which could be a concern in a more primitive culture, I guess. Scripture, though, clearly associates the use of oil with consecration and with the activity of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps instead of tying ourselves into theological knots we should simply trust and obey!

Pastor Matt has led an anointing service of this kind in the past, and the elders of Round Hill Church are willing to offer this biblical option to any member of our church community who requests it. Please contact any member of Session or Pastor Matt if you are interested.

-Dawn Gagliardi



RECHARGE YOUTH GROUP

The Recharge youth group at Round Hill has had an eventful first year. This group of a dozen middle school and high school kids meets after the Recharge services on Wednesday nights. In addition to “Taking Over” the Recharge service at times, the youth group has also prepared some Recharge meals this year. The youth group will be preparing a cookout for the final Recharge meal of this school year on Wednesday, May 20th. They’ll be cooking burgers on the grill and we’ll be eating outdoors (weather permitting). Please come join us!

Several youth volunteered at New Life Options during Holy Week. They helped by moving items and sorting baby clothes. On Saturday, May 16th, they’ll be participating in the “Walk for Life” to benefit New Life Options. The following day,

May 17th, the Recharge youth group will have fun together when the play mini-golf at Copperhead Canyon in the afternoon.

This summer, the youth group has planned some special projects since they will not continue to meet weekly. The Recharge group plans to deliver Meals on Wheels in June, plan a ‘Worship in the Woods’ in July, and organize a float trip or zoo visit in August. Several of the youth are planning on attending the REACH work camp in July and/or Camp Crestfield in August.

Before you know it, fall will be upon us! Watch the newsletter or website for these exciting youth events in October: Country Fair and Homeless & Hungry.

If you’d like to join the Recharge youth group or have questions, please feel free to contact Toni Stith at tonistith27@yahoo.com or (701) 261-0257.

Country Fair

The RHPC Country Fair will be held on Saturday, October 3. If you are interested in making craft items, helping with any of the various activities, or otherwise contributing to this great event, please contact Lisa Wagner!

For information about activities and events at Round Hill call (412) 384-5889 weekday mornings or online at

www.roundhillchurch.org

and

[Facebook.com/RoundHillChurch](https://www.facebook.com/RoundHillChurch)

Around the Hill, Volume 2, Number 1

Please submit material for future issues to:

Rev. Matt Stith, editor

Linda Leggett, news-wrangler in chief

Summer Worship Schedule



RHPC will begin our summer worship schedule on Sunday, May 31. From that date through Sunday, September 6, Sunday School will begin at 9:00 AM and the worship service at 10:00 AM. There will be no Wednesday Recharge services over the summer.

The regular worship schedule and Recharge will resume the week of September 13.