



# Muncy Baptist Church Newsletter



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### **Drawing Closer: A Call for Unity** *with Rev. Rob Rice, Pastor*

Throughout the Bible, we are reminded by God that no matter what we face in this life, He will be with us. It seems like in the past several months, I have leaned on this truth more than I ever have before. The list of adjectives that we could use to describe the past several months is impressive: unprecedented, historic, and life-altering are just a few that come to mind. That being said, though we would like this time to be over, we know it is far from it. COVID-19 is still circulating, tensions in our nation are still-raging, and there is a real threat to our unity as the body of Christ.

Sources of division are many right now. Views on the seriousness of the virus, the importance of wearing masks, political stances, and how we address racial tensions are just a few things that people have different opinions on at this point in history. Where there is difference of opinion, there is opportunity for division. Make no mistake, Satan can and will attempt to use these differences to divide us as the body of Christ. But division does not need to be inevitable, there are things we can do as a people to allow unity and peace to reign in our midst.

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The first thing we can do is look to Jesus. While we may think of the Lord's Prayer as the only prayer of Jesus, there is in fact, another prayer that Jesus prayed in Scripture, which is found in John 17. In that prayer for the disciples prior to His crucifixion, Jesus petitioned the Father to bring unity to all believers:

*“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one — I in them and you in me — so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”*

John 17:20-23

Of all the things Jesus could pray for, He chose unity. It is of course because Jesus recognized that without unity, the church loses its ability to be a witness to the world. If the church is divided, how can the world possibly find unity?

The second thing we can do is to look to Jesus. Along with praying for unity, Jesus also modeled for us how unity can happen. In the book of Philippians, Paul wrote that we should “have the same mind of Jesus Christ” and “consider the interests of others above our own interests” (see Philippians 2:1-11). It's up to each of us, at this time, to think about others and their interests. This can be modeled in what we say, as well as in what we do. We all need to take steps to go over and above in our love, in our encouragement, and in our deference to one another at this time. We can't look down on each other, criticize decisions about how people are worshipping with us, or make people uncomfortable by doing whatever we please in regards to things like social distancing and mask wearing while we are at the church. Instead, we must seek to love others and seek to be unified as the body.

The final thing we can do is, you guessed it, look to Jesus and join Him in praying for unity. We don't need to reinvent the wheel in our prayer, we can use the very template that Jesus provided, reading through and agreeing with Jesus in prayer with a simple “Amen!,” meaning “Let it be so!”

Please join me in looking to Jesus, in trusting in God to bring us unity, and in taking action to promote the unity we have in Jesus at Muncy Baptist Church, for we are stronger together, and are called to be a witness to our community and the world!

# A Willing Witness



**I Find it Difficult to Share My Faith**  
with Rev. Dr. Don Edwards,  
Associate Pastor of Evangelism & Outreach



*“So, it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish”* (Matthew 18:14). **Point** – Our commitment to witnessing begins by understanding that lost people matter to God.

*“Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him”* (John 7:13). **Point** – Even those who knew Jesus best, struggled with a hesitancy to witness.

Acknowledge Christ Before Men:

*“And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God”* (Luke 12:8). **Point** – Heaven awaits those who know Jesus as Lord.

*“And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever”* (Daniel 12:3). **Point** – God will honor those who honor Him by proclaiming the Good News of what He has done. There is no greater purpose in life than sharing the message that could make the eternal difference in someone’s life.

*“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God”* (2 Timothy 1:7-8.) **Point** – When the enemy tries to intimidate you with lies about your inadequacies, you can summon that same power God used to transform your life to boldly share your faith.

**Point** – For the church to grow and in particular, for Muncy Baptist Church to grow, we need to share our witness with others and encourage them in Christ!



# God at Work

## Muncy Baptist Church's Men's Group with Sandy Bernan

When I started attending Muncy Baptist Church's Men's Group (2009?), it was held at Dr. Warren Fisher's home on Thursday mornings. As I recall, attendance was minimal: Warren Fisher, Tom Henninger, Pastor Scott Warren, and me. Then Dick Dietz started coming. We eventually changed our meetings to Wednesday mornings at the church, now with about 12 men in attendance.

I attend men's groups both in Pennsylvania and Florida: three groups are directly related to "church," while two groups are "Bible Study Fellowship" (BSF) groups. There are two things that vividly stand out to me regarding these men's groups other than the outstanding studies, discussions, and prayers we've had over the years:

- I've invited and encouraged several men over the years to come just once or twice to a men's group to try it out. Several have come, some have continued to come, while some aren't yet ready to join a group. One time, years ago, three of us who attended a men's group together were talking about something that had recently happened during our men's group gathering, and another man asked what we were talking about. We told him; he came to the next men's gathering. He told us that he had been reluctant to come because he had once been involved in a study where he had disagreed with someone and had been gruffly told, "You're wrong! You're just wrong!" with no further teaching from scripture or discussion. We assured him that response would never happen in our group, and to this day (March 31, 2020), when we meet as a group, this guy comes, shares, discusses, reads, questions, laughs, and loves. He fully knows we are truly *brothers in Christ*.
- The second thing that sticks out in my mind, and the most important, is how I see our Muncy Baptist group of men coming together each week with the determination to learn the truth about God, and what He reveals to us through His written word. Yes, we rely on the leading of the Holy Spirit, too, and other gifts of the Spirit, but my point is that this group is *not* seeking ways to use *our own will* with the support of scripture taken out of context, but rather seeking and conforming to **God's** will. While that is not always an easy thing to do, it is what *this* men's group is all about: God, His will, our journey on the road called "sanctification," and us serving Him.

With that in mind, I encourage all the men in our church to genuinely, sincerely, truly, totally, and deeply consider joining our Men's Group. Feel free to invite other men from other churches to attend, too, as we already have two men from outside our church who regularly come to learn, laugh, and love as brothers in Christ.

# Anniversaries & Birthdays

## Anniversaries for July



LaRue & Sarah Whitmoyer	07/01
Dennis & Kathy Gorg	07/10
Matt & Jen Breneisen	07/19
Eric & Mary Talerico	07/20
Amos & Peggy Reese	07/24

[www.hillsideflorist.biz/woburn-hillside-florist/teleflora-s-joyful-memory-bouquet.html](http://www.hillsideflorist.biz/woburn-hillside-florist/teleflora-s-joyful-memory-bouquet.html)

## Birthdays for July



Getty Images/iStockphoto

Eliza Fisher	07/01
Mary Talerico	07/03
James Miller	07/04
Mark Swinehart	07/04
Jenny Frederick	07/05
Hope Shoop-Libutti	07/05
Christopher Dunkle	07/10
Jude Stabler	07/12
Kaylyn Rice	07/16
Brian Soars	07/16
Nathan Fisher	07/19
Kyle Woodruff	07/19
Johnathan Taylor	07/20
Dave Johnson	07/23
Jody Sanders	07/24
Connie Place	07/29
William McCarty	07/30
Riley Burke	07/31

**Don't see your anniversary or birthday?  
Please let us know, so we can celebrate with you!**