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Hampden Heights Sentinel

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Students at RJA were feeling a little sheepish. Page 1
- ...anywhere traveled with God will somehow be a blessing to those who trust Him. Page 2
- An opportunity presents itself amidst the chaos. Page 2
- The heart of God is no more disposed to their prayers as to ours. Page 3
- Sugar and good health don't mix. Page 4
- Our current worries are an invitation to put our trust in God. Page 5

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Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. ~Ephesians 4:32 NIV~

RJA News Corner by Lee Stahl, Principal



RJA students singing at Music Fest

On March 5-7, Blue Mountain Academy hosted the Pennsylvania Conference Music Fest. This year only four schools and one church group participated. It was also the first time that Music Fest was held over a three-day time period. The extra day not only gave students more opportunity to learn the songs, but also provided the students with other activities to engage in. On Friday afternoon the students participated in a rotation of different events that included cooking, drama, science, an escape room, hand bells, soccer, basketball, and gymnastics. Overall, the students enjoyed the new format and it was a very well organized.



Biology students dissecting a sheep's brain. Submitted by Wendy Stahl

Students at RJA learn about the structure of the brain, by doing a sheep brain dissection. Although sheep are not considered one of the "brightest" of God's creatures, the structures in their brains are almost exactly like those of humans. Most students don't realize that the brain contains many structures that are identifiable by sight, especially when you separate the two hemispheres. Most just think of the ridges (gyri) and valleys (sulci) you see on the outside are what continues all the way throughout the brain.

I think it is important for students to have these experiences in Biology. Many of the public schools are not providing these opportunities for the students anymore. It is amazing to see how intricately we are made! I'm thankful that I am able to provide this type of avenue of learning at RJA, as well as, sharing how "fearfully and wonderfully" we are made.



What's wrong with their hair?
(continued on page 6)

The Pastor's Pen by Shawn Shives, Pastor, Hampden Heights SDA Church

And the Children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them ... And the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. Ex 14:22 and 27.

Have you noticed that the world today seems to transition from one crisis to the next? Political upheaval, North Korea threatening the peace of Asia; China flexing her newly gained military power in her part of the world. And just when you hoped for

a break from bad news, COVID-19 has taken the world by storm and is suddenly everywhere, including Berks County. Now we have been instructed by our government to stay home to help prevent the spread of this deadly virus in our community.

There was another time that God's people faced impending danger. The Red Sea must have appeared overwhelming to the Israelites as they saw the water standing high on either side of them. How easily that water could come down upon them; and ended their lives; it was only by God's grace and mighty power that they might

be delivered. God's people needed to demonstrate complete faith in order to cross over that sea of water. Remember that no place is as safe as the place of danger, if we are there at God's command! When God commands, He takes full responsibility as long as we trust and obey. The Red Sea crossing is a reminder that anywhere traveled with God will somehow end up being a blessing to those of us who follow God with all our hearts.

While others may be extremely frightened by the events that are occurring around us today; you and I should realize that as long as we are in obedience to God,

we have nothing to fear. In the heat of battle, A soldier once was once asked by a reporter if he was afraid. "Afraid? "No," the soldier replied to the reporter, "You may be afraid, but that is because you have no business here on this battlefield. However, I am right where I am supposed to be- doing my duty."

As we face these uncertain days, let each of us remember, the One who parted the sea is still in charge. Let's follow our Master and do our duty, together!

A Note from the Editor by Bob Kondracki

It is a distressing time we're living in right now. Most of us have never experienced anything like what is currently happening in our world because of the Coronavirus. Of course, throughout history we've always had epidemics at times, and in many places in the world, but this is altogether different. The Coronavirus is a world-wide problem, not one limited to just one continent or specific region. It has the potential to change the entire world as we now know it. In addition to the many deaths it has caused, and will continue to cause before being brought under control, there is a ripple effect. Monetarily, his disease

is going to drive our country into recession at the very least, and bankrupt many businesses. It's going to change the way we work, socialize, shop, and find entertainment in the future. Even when it does eventually recede or be brought under control, the memory of it will always be lurking in the background, creating fear and anxiety because of the uncertainty whether it will ever occur again, or whether it was just a harbinger of things to come. Many of us have heard the echoes of Bible warnings and prophesy in light of what's going on, and I've been told that Bible study requests

have multiplied dramatically lately.

Perhaps this will serve as a wake-up call to many. But perhaps interest will then fade when the current crisis is past. Regardless, we are still called by Christ to take the gospel to the world, even in difficult times. We might view this as an opportunity to reach people that may not have been receptive in the past. Whether they are only serious for the time being is not our call. We have our job to do, the Holy Spirit has His.

For keeping some consistency and normalcy at this time, I will continue to publish and

distribute the newsletter via email only. I believe it helps to keep some semblance of contact with our church. Even in this age of social media, some of us do not engage in that method of keeping in touch. (including me) I encourage you to submit things to the newsletter that you believe people may find helpful or encouraging, and I will alter the format of the newsletter accordingly to accommodate. I will not promise to include everything submitted, because of obvious space restrictions and appropriateness, but I will attempt to get as much relevant information as possible included.

Notable Quotes selected by Bob Kondracki

Sure I am of this, that you have only to endure to conquer. ~Winston Churchill~

There are dark shadows on the earth, but its lights are stronger in the contrast. ~Charles Dickens~

The God we serve does not seek out the perfect, but instead uses our imperfections and our shortcomings for His greater good. I am humbled by my own limitations. But where I am weak, He is strong. ~Rick Perry~

Prayer is more than meditation. In meditation, the source of strength is one's self. When one prays, he goes to a source of strength greater than his own. ~Madame de Stael~

From the errors of others, a wise man corrects his own. ~Publilius Syrus~

Mastering others is strength. Mastering yourself is true power. ~Lao Tzu~

Grace's Outpost by Ashley Richards

"This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him." - [John 5:14-15, NASB]

It was a dismal, hot summer Sunday in Oberlin, Ohio. At the end of many long, dismal, hot summer weeks. Everyone was discouraged and worried. Everyone was losing hope.

This drought meant death in this farming community—death to their crops, death to their livestock, and if something didn't change soon, death to their livelihood and their hopes for a future. Everyone had waited for rain, but rain wasn't coming, and

people were losing their hope, their faith.

Except Pastor Charles.

That Sunday, Pastor Charles woke up with a purpose. He was going to pray for rain. God had called him to it. He packed his wife, Lydia, and his three young children, Helen, Charles, and Frederick, in their wagon, grabbed his Bible and his umbrella, and drove to church (I wonder what Lydia must've thought of that umbrella propped between them).

Charles watched as the over 3,000 members of his congregation filtered into their church that Sunday, discouraged and dusty, worn down and weary, hopeless as the day is long. The service began, and Charles stood to his feet, gripped the podium, and began to pray. "... we do not presume to dictate to Thee what is best for us, yet Thou dost invite us to come to Thee as children to a

father, and tell Thee what we want. We want rain. Our pastures are dry. The cattle are lowing and wandering about in search of water. Unless Thou dost give us rain, our cattle must die, for we shall have no hay for them for winter; and our harvests will come to naught. O Lord, send us rain, and send it now! Although to us there is no sign of it, it is an easy thing for Thee to do. Send it now, Lord, for Christ's sake!"

Pastor Charles finished his prayer, read the scripture reading, and settled in to preach his sermon. A few minutes later, the congregation could hear thunder in the distance, and no less than half an hour later, the rain was pelting the windows and the roof with such a cacophony that no matter how loudly Pastor Charles preached that day, no one could hear him for the sound of the deluge of rain falling down all about them.

The congregation, as one, began to weep, but Pastor Charles burst out in song.

"When all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view,
I'm lost in wonder, love, and praise."
- When All Thy Mercies,
Joseph Addison (1712)

It wasn't until his parishioners filed out of the sanctuary and into the downpour, did they see Pastor Charles's umbrella, propped against the wall just inside the door.

Though faced with a catastrophe of much different proportions, the heart of God is no more disposed to their prayers as to ours. Pray, little children of God. He *loves* you. He *hears* you. He is with *you*.

Board Minutes From 3-16-20 via Teleconference submitted by Wayne Johns

Coronavirus Update

Currently we are in Stage II which includes limited contact (no hugs/handshakes). Offering will be given at door as members leave. If you have health risks or 80+ Y/O, we encourage you to stay home. No Potlucks.

Stages III is confirmed cases within membership and church will be closed.

Conference personal want PA membership to know they are available and plan to utilize Hampden Heights with live streaming via Facebook to PA Conference membership.

Motion with 1st and 2nd to have PA Conference personnel provide Sabbath school and worship church that will be live streamed to PA Conference membership during COVID-19 Pandemic.

Motion was approved.

FYI: Richard Farley submitted a proposal for 2020 lawn care: \$169/mowing + \$75 for banks. Suggestion was made to secure two additional bids for lawn care and flowerbed maintenance.

FYI: We are awaiting 5 pending transfers to Hampden.

FYI: Plan to visit members remaining at home during COVID-19. We will remain outside the house during our visit. Phone calls are also encouraged to remain in contact with membership.

FYI: Prayer conference line will be open 8:30 a.m. each Sunday. Will posted phone number and time on website.

FYI: We will continue with Bible Studies.

FYI: Church secretary will send e-mails of our church membership to PA Conference in effort to increase Conference ability to contact PA constituency.

FYI: Discussed projector for fellowship hall. Lee indicated RJA has a projector and Pastor Shawn recalled there was one at his Georgia church and will check on its availability. Will await on input from Pastor Shawn and Lee.

FYI: April evangelistic meeting have been placed on hold.

Editor's note: This is obviously dated information. It's not presented as the latest news for our church, just as a record of what was discussed in the meeting.

The Path to Better Health by Leo Pena

For the Life of the Flesh is in the Blood; The Effects of Sugar on the Immune System.

With the current Covid-19 virus pandemic, one of the most asked questions is, "What can we do to protect ourselves?" Homeopathic medicine is one of the most sought after for answers, because many people have doubts in the reliability of today's health system.

There are plenty of foods and herbs we can add as part of our daily diets that can help improve and protect our body. However, there is one food that, if eliminated from our diet, will go a long way in maximizing our immune system.

Blood in our body plays a vital role in transportation of oxygen, minerals, salt, water and food ingredients in the form of energy to all parts of the body through blood vessels. One of the main components of blood is white blood cells (leucocytes). These are produced in bone marrow and form the immune system. Hence, WBCs not only protect the body from invaders (germs which enter into the body) but also from different diseases. WBCs perform Phagocytic action (the process in which WBCs

engulf the bacteria and die). They are responsible for taking quick action against parasitic infection, central nervous system diseases, allergic and antigen response etc.

Glucose is a carbohydrate whose level in blood changes throughout the day. Though it is a very vital source of energy for the body, its abnormal use disturbs the proper functioning of not only blood, but also other vital organs. It is noted that the effect of sweets remains for 2-5 hours after you eat them. Most of us are spending our days and weeks at home now, which can mean frequent visits to the cupboards for cookies and the freezer for ice cream. We're looking for all the comfort we can get these days, so what's the harm in a little sugar? Sugar has direct and severe effects on our immune system i.e. on WBCs. By drinking 1 Liter bottle of soda or by eating 100-gram sugar, the reactivity of WBCs reduces 40%. This can make our immune system disabled for 4 or 5 hours. WBCs perform the function of immunizing by killing bacteria and viruses through phagocytosis. Vitamin C is very vital for proper functioning of WBCs. Sugar and vitamin C have the

same chemical structure. When we eat sugar it directly competes with vitamin C. As a result, less vitamin C enters into WBCs. Sugar does not help WBCs to fight against pathogens, and hence weakens their reactivity.

Some estimates from US government surveys say that the average American consumes 152 pounds of sugar and about 133 pounds of flour [which convert to sugar] annually. About 74 percent of packaged products contain added sugar! Read ingredients. Anything ending in "-ose" is sugar, but researchers estimate there are 61 names for sugar.

Another very closely-linked problem is obesity. Obesity research shows that it leads to insulin resistance and diabetes. People with uncontrolled and high blood sugar levels are at a higher risk of infections. Hyperglycemia, or high blood sugar, has a negative effect on phagocytosis and neutrophil synthesis, which are important for the proper functioning of the innate immune system.

Sugar also reduces the number of beneficial bacteria that live in the gut. As this bacteria is needed for us to absorb nutrients from our food, a diet high in sugar can quickly lead to poor nutrition and vulnerability to gut complaints. It hinders the absorption of the minerals calcium, chromium and magnesium we need for a fully functioning hormonal system and proper energy production.

You don't have to cut all sugars out of your diet to be healthy: Sugars are a key element to keeping your body and brain functioning. But educating yourself about the foods you put in your body is critical to keeping your energy level and immune system running at optimal levels. The best thing to reach for if you crave something sweet is a piece of fruit, ideally something organic, seasonal and locally grown.

Recipe of the Month by Arleen Johns

This recipe freezes well, either as the finished product, which can be popped in the toaster, or as the wet mix.

Enjoy.
Arleen

Cashew French Toast

½ C raw cashews
½ C pitted dates
1 C water (or more)
2 ripe bananas
½ tsp salt
1 tsp vanilla
½ tsp cinnamon

Blend till creamy.

Coat bread on both sides.

Fry on each side about 2-3 minutes.

Going Deeper by Barbara Snyder

Psalm 91 and Our World

I awoke this past Sabbath morning feeling grateful for the sun, the quiet optimism and peace in my heart. I thought of the reality of our times, the threat of the Covid 19 virus among us, and Psalm 91.

Psalm 91 is so appropriate for today, isn't it? "He that dwells in the secret Place of the Most High". Or in other words "He that sits in the most Holy Place with the Shekinah Glory", or even more easily understood in its simplicity, "The secret place of the Most High is He who dwells within us." We are His sanctuary. It is a beautiful partnership, a symbiotic relationship in which God envelops us with His love, His character, and His unspeakable glory. Likewise, we return His love as a mirror reflects whoever peers into it. Nothing of our own. It's all Grace.

"He covers us with His feathers, and under His wings I shall trust." What a comfort this has been to me in the past! The statement is a hint of the female, motherly character of God. Can you relate? Such nurture is described in these few words. On God's side is protection and strength, dependability, lasting care. On our side: dependence, safety, solace, childlike trust. There have been a few times in my life that I've felt the blanket of God covering me, keeping me at one with Him no matter what was happening. It is this dependent trust that is akin to faith.

"I will not be afraid of the terror of night or the arrow that flies by day, for the pestilence that walks in darkness..." sounds like a virus to me! Even pictures of the virus remind me of a World War II mine waiting in the murky, watery darkness to explode the structures of ships and countless lives. But in the next verse is the promise: "Only with your eyes will you experience the rewards of the wicked." And "Neither shall any plague come near your dwelling." But you say, "The righteous too are affected." Yes, they are. But nothing can tear us away from His presence. In sickness, hunger, poverty and in death He is here. You might say, "Oh, but that is not encouraging. I'm not heartened by those kinds of statements." True, at times, because of our human nature. However, when we think of His personal journey for us, do we not feel drawn to an understanding of our mission for the world? If He suffered so we shall. Yet in His mercy no suffering can be as great as His was for us. He only asks that we lean on Him to get through it and, in the meantime, He transforms our worry, illness etc. into an invitation to the world to trust.

"For He will give His angels charge over thee to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up lest you dash your foot against a stone." Here it would be good to imagine your angels. They have names, and I suppose characteristics as you and I have characteristics. They have very specific charges (like you and me) that sets them apart from other angels. I've not thought too much of

them in the past but perhaps this is a time to focus my/our imaginations on them. How much they work for us because of the love they have for their Master! Imagine their joy and satisfaction when they can help us cope, and care for others.

Lastly, "Because he/they have loved me, he/they will call upon Me when in trouble...and I will hear him and answer him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him My salvation." A perfect ending for a psalm filled with promises. I've lived and claimed Psalm 91 since I first read it decades ago. This last verse has held out peace to me in the past and I plan on experiencing that peace again and again. Of all the statements I have heard from other Christians over the years, if anyone would have quoted these verses to me, I do not think I would have felt anything other than hope.

Psalm 91 might not be your favorite psalm but it is mine. I would encourage you to find your favorite. It will be like reading a love letter from Jesus over and over again until the words are memorized and have found a familiar place in your heart forever. I will not pretend that the current crisis we are living in has not discouraged me at times. There have been mornings when I awoke and did not have the words for prayer, or the hope to arise with a plan and enthusiasm for the gift of the day. But I chose to get into the habit of just repeating this psalm, Psalm 23, and the Lord's Prayer over and over again. I honestly feel that I have experienced little gratitudes, especially throughout the

morning, more than any other period of time in my life. These small gratitudes have nothing to do with great miracles, or good news, or any such thing. But they have been represented by sunlight streaming through a window, the sounds of birds, appreciation for my horrid little laundry room which seems not to irritate me as much, for my little dog who now looks bedraggled because she is sick, old, and ungroomed. (I, however, think she's the most beautiful creature!). I find myself impressed by the usual but unappreciated gifts of life. I find myself hoping that maybe when this is over both myself and my nation will be more aware of what is important in life and what is not.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus and He will bring it to pass. Always.

Amen.

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The Children's Page by Ashley Richards

"Then you will call upon Me, and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you." – Jeremiah 29:12, NASB

Do you pray? Prayer is POWERFUL, because prayer is how we talk to Jesus! Prayer connects us to God, the most POWERFUL One, because He is King of the universe! In the puzzle below, you'll find a list of 20 people from the Bible who we know either prayed or had a very powerful relationship with Jesus where they talked with Him and walked with Him—like He was their best Friend! Jesus loves to talk to you, and is so excited when you pray to Him!

A X J C L A I R E Y T Z P V S
 R O N U S K X V W U L N A S C
 V B R N O A H H M M T O D T W
 N I N J L C B A D A M Y H S B
 G S W O O G I N P N U M A R Y
 K F R S M Q D N H E X F B E I
 E J E H O S H A P H A T R R Q
 W O B U N D A H J E S P A L M
 K N E A D J E R E M I A H F O
 T A C E A H Z V S I G U A G H
 D H C Y V P B M U A R L M H P
 L D A N I E L O S H P Y V Q W
 B J M C D T J S Q T K J N O F
 U X F J C E V E K M X G E U P
 J O B Z A R I S W O L V Z D Q

- | | | | |
|---------|-------------|----------|---------|
| Abraham | Hannah | Jonah | Noah |
| Adam | Jehoshaphat | Joshua | Paul |
| Daniel | Jeremiah | Mary | Peter |
| David | Jesus | Moses | Rebecca |
| Eve | Job | Nehemiah | Solomon |

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that Isaac was almost 20 years old when God told Abraham to sacrifice him as an offering? Isaac could have easily hurt his father and run away, because his father was over 100 years old, and Isaac was a young man. But he didn't! Do you know why? He trusted that God had a plan, even in that situation—and He did! God provided the ram in Isaac's place.



RJA News Corner (continued from page 1)

Yes, on Friday, March 6, students came to school with some weird and wacky hair dos. We saw painted and multi-colored hair, attached eyes in hair, various objects in hair. You might say it was a hairy day! However, for the students at RJA it was their opportunity this month to show their school spirit by coming up with some wacky hair dos.

**Reading Junior Academy...
Educating Today and for Eternity!**