

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



Coming the  
week of  
March 8th!  
We will have  
Pecans too!

**Strawberries will arrive on Wednesday, March 10. The truck should arrive around 10:30 a.m.**

As soon as we are unloaded, strawberries may be picked up from the front of the church. Checks may be made out to Staunton COB.

**There are extra strawberries and pecans in case you forgot to order.**

**Our March 14 worship (next Sunday) will include a time of Communion.** Because this will be done virtually, we are asking each person/family to provide their own bread and drink. While unleavened bread is traditional, any piece of bread, pancake or cracker can be used. While grape juice is the usual drink, you can use any liquid--water, soda, tea, orange juice. Just have the elements ready when you tune into the worship to celebrate God's love which found expression in the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross.

**Haven't picked up your 2021 Church Directory yet?? You can pick up your copy along with the new devotionals this Wednesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> when you come for your strawberries!!** If you are not able to pick up your packet, please call or email Annie in the church office to make other arrangements.

**From our friends at Love, Inc.:**



Love INC  
Love In the Name of Christ

*REDEMPTIVE COMPASSION* Wednesday classes have begun and run through March 24 at Westwood Baptist Church in Waynesboro. The time is from 10:00 a.m. to Noon. A second opportunity to take these classes will be on Friday afternoons, March 5 – April 23 at

Waynesboro Free Methodist. The cost is \$15.00, which covers the book and materials. *Redemptive Compassion* is a BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY of how we can offer HOLISTIC HELP to those we serve in our community. The principles taught are also easily lived out with family, friends...anyone with whom you have a relationship. **To register contact:** Karen at 221-2955 **OR** [www.LoveINCSAW.com](http://www.LoveINCSAW.com)

## **COMPELLING VISION STATEMENT:**

**“Together, as the Church of the Brethren, we will passionately live and share the radical transformation and holistic peace of Jesus Christ through relationship-based neighborhood engagement. To move us forward, we will develop a culture of calling and equipping disciples who are innovative, adaptable, and fearless.”**

**A 13 session Bible Study Series is being offered to you through Staunton Church of the Brethren** in a virtual format. The series is a project of the denomination's Compelling Vision Working Group and is intended to help church members study the statement above, which will be brought to the 2021 Annual Conference for approval. Each study session invites participants to gather around the Word as they explore a different word or phrase from this statement.

**The Series is held on Sunday mornings from 9:30 - 10:40.** Bruce Bowman and other members of the Faith and Film class will facilitate the lessons. To participate, you will need a Zoom invitation from Bob Armbruster (rarm5208@gmail.com). Contact Bob who will send you the necessary information to login each week through email.

We are hoping to offer an additional Class if there is interest. Contact Donna Wells, Nurture Chair, if you would be interested in another day and/or time of day.

A study book is not necessary, but a scripture reference will be sent weekly so you can prepare for the lesson. We hope to study together virtually and reconnect in this "personal" manner!

**Please see the additional insert for a letter from David A. Steele,  
General Secretary of the Church of the Brethren.**

### **Contact Information**

**Interim Pastor JD Glick's email is**

jdglick@verizon.net

Phone: 540-421-6924

**Church Board Chair Mark Lane's email is** marklane37@gmail.com,

Phone: 540-908-7299

**Office Manager Annie Collins' email:** scobsecretary@gmail.com,

Office Phone: 886-8655.

**Youth Communications Coordinator Amy Farthing's email is**

hokiebirdamy@verizon.net, Cell phone: 804-814-5515

**Interim Christian Education Directors:**

**Brennen Gilbert's email is** gilbertba.scob@gmail.com

**Catherine Sanger's email is** ccs2038@email.vccs.edu

**Church Website:** [www.stauntonbrethren.org](http://www.stauntonbrethren.org)

**The Church Office hours are Monday-Thursday, 8:30am-1:00pm**



## Church of the Brethren

February 2021

Dear Staunton Church of the Brethren,

In these early days of 2021, I have found myself not only caught up in the unsettling events of recent weeks, but also reflecting on the last several years of life together in the Church of the Brethren. One cannot deny the pain, fear, brokenness, and division inside our church, neighborhoods, and world. The impact of the pandemic is real for many, but the cold and hollowness of division and the “us” versus “them” mentality pervades not only our culture but our church. Republican versus Democrat, progressive versus conservative, liberal versus evangelical, and the list goes on. The fences we have worked so hard to build in our neighborhoods—to protect ourselves from the things we fear or to keep those who do not believe like us on the other side—are now making it difficult for our neighbors to find us and, more significantly, making it difficult for us to reveal Jesus in our neighborhoods at a time when Jesus is needed most.

I grieve the place we have arrived in our life together, the families and congregations that have been torn apart by a vote, and the congregations, friends, and family who have left us. I mourn the loss of our ability to gather at the table to study scripture, pray, and have fellowship together without being suspicious of one another. I lament that we as the body of Christ struggle to celebrate the values, priorities, and hopes that we hold in common. And most of all, I regret that, for some, our faith in Christ and our commitment to follow him no longer seem to be enough.

During Advent, I was drawn to the words of the 2017 Casting Crown’s song *Make Room*. The song tells of the Savior’s birth into a fearful, lost, and hurting world, and offers the invitation to make room in our hearts for God’s story to be written in us and among us. This became my prayer for Advent and Christmas, and remains with me in this new year.

In this season of struggle and challenge, how are you making room in your heart for God’s unfolding story? Are you opening yourself to opportunities to participate in God’s redemptive work? I am excited about the renewed possibilities of God’s story within the Church of the Brethren as we prepare for our conversation and affirmation of the compelling vision at Annual Conference, together with the Mission and Ministry Board’s new strategic plan



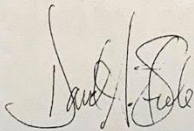
A woodcarving featured at  
New Carlisle Church of the Brethren.  
Photo by Traci Rabenstein

that is oriented around "Jesus in the Neighborhood." These movements are worth celebrating. However, before authentically finding this posture, we must make room in our hearts for a new chapter of God's story by first acknowledging and praying for God's blessings on those who feel called to ministry outside our fold, and second, by spending time in self reflection, repenting for:

- failing to build up the body and contributing to division,
- casting judgments on others and believing that we are right,
- putting personal needs and preferences before the needs of others,
- wielding power and influence against others,
- using social media to tear down brothers and sisters in Christ,
- believing that enforcing polity and policy will fix division and brokenness,
- withholding prayerful (or other) support from the family of faith,
- harboring a lack of grace and forgiveness,
- diminishing the personhood of others and not loving our neighbor as ourselves, and
- (add your own).

For us to make room in our hearts, we need to let go of what stands in the way of allowing God to write God's story. In our broken and hurting world, country, and church, may we make a commitment to one another to make room in our hearts so that we can, with a renewed sense of call and purpose, be united in our efforts to live for Jesus in our neighborhoods.

With gratitude and hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Steele". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being more prominent.

David A. Steele  
General Secretary