

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

“The Heart of God Seeks the Lost”

Scores of tiny figures moving up and down the rubble, back and forth. It’s hard to see the ground beneath them. They came from all over America. Like an army of ants, they worked and worked and worked as if they could never stop. A slab here, a steel girder there, cranes moving mountains of concrete. All their labors with one purpose driving them, searching, searching, searching. They were searching for the lost.

On September 11th, the City of New York lost several high rise buildings, called the Twin Towers. They lost most of their first response fire and rescue vehicles, and an endless number of computers, cars, and business records. But those who labored at ground zero were not searching for computers. They were not digging for lost fire trucks. They were seeking, with all their strength, lost friends, for missing loved ones, for fellow human beings lost, whether dead or alive.

Luke 15:4–6 (NKJV) “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? ⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together *his* friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’

In this bible passage, we read about a God who is on a never-ending search for the lost and missing. God is like a shepherd looking for a lost sheep, a woman searching for a lost coin, God invites us to rejoice – “rejoice with me, for what was lost has been found”.

When Jesus visited the home of Zacchaeus in Jericho, Luke records Jesus. “For the Son of man came to seek and save the lost.” That was his mission. That was his purpose.

When Adam & Eve were lost, God came looking. God came searching. He found them hiding and afraid. In both the O.T. and N.T. we encounter a God who is on a mission to seek the lost and redeem His people. The central act of God in the O.T. is the Exodus, a divine intervention into human history to free His people from slavery. The decisive act of God in the N.T is the divine intervention of God into human history at Bethlehem to free us from slavery and sin.

Hebrews 2:14 He became one of us ...”Since we have flesh and blood, he too shared in our humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”

The Hebrew slaves were destined for the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Jesus promises his followers the abundant life. He invites us to “cast our burdens upon him.” He invites us to pray for his intervention into our personal history.

(continued)

Jesus said "I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name ... Ask and you will receive so that your joy may be complete". John 16:23-24

God was always at work to save his people. One time he sent a little shepherd boy with a few stones and a sling shot to whip a Philistine giant. After the resurrection of Jesus, God sent the Holy Spirit, the promised comforter, Counselor, to serve as the continuing presence of God in the lives of His people. "Much like the pillar of fire and cloud by day given to the ancient wilderness – wanderers in the Exodus to guide them, so the Spirit of God guides the people of God, the followers of Jesus as the move from Jerusalem, to Jude, Samaria, Kittanning & Beyond.

In the summer of 2002, the country spent several anxious days concerned about the fate of nine miners trapped in a mine in Pennsylvania. Rescue efforts involved several innovative strategies, including the pumping of heated air down a shaft. As the workers emerged from their ordeal, so did their story of survival. One key element was their decision to huddle together to stay warm and in touch with one another in the cold darkness of the collapsed mine.

The church in North America often resembles these miners...feeling that Christianity is under attack....watching the argument over crosses being removed, and political correctness that allows other religions to be intolerant but calling Christians intolerant and outdated.... The tendency is to huddle together in the building and pray for God to "rapture" us out of this mess.

Instead, the church, and each of us, should adopt the role of the rescue workers on the surface at ground zero. They refused to quit, worked 24/7, and were willing to go to Plan B or whatever it took to affect a rescue.

God is calling us listen for the voices of those calling out of the darkness, seek the lost and rejoice when the lost are found.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Don



We will be celebrating
Pastor Appreciation on
Sunday, October 15.



The Fall Fest has been
cancelled for this year.



The annual meeting for Region
3 of the Covenant Brethren
Church will be held here at
Center Hill on Saturday,
October 7 beginning at 9 AM.

We are excited to host several
other churches for this gathering.
Everyone is welcome to
come and see what is going on
in church region.

DVD Library

We now have a DVD library for kids of all ages downstairs in the Sunday School hallway. We have many "Feature Films for Families" movies, faith-based films, and some for youth. There is no sign out. We just ask that you bring the DVDs back when you're finished with them.



Cooking With Pastor Don

Slow-Cooker Chicken & Dumplings

Ingredients:

- 6 boneless skinless chicken thighs, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper, divided
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 3 celery ribs, chopped
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 cups chicken broth, divided
- 2 bay leaves

Directions:

Sprinkle chicken with 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add chicken; cook and stir until no longer pink, 6-8 minutes. Transfer to a 6-qt. slow cooker.

In same skillet, cook celery, carrots and onion until tender, 6-8 minutes. Add garlic, tomato paste and remaining salt and pepper; cook 1 minute. Stir in flour; cook 1 minute longer. Whisk in 2 cups chicken broth; cook and stir until thickened. Transfer to slow cooker. Stir in bay leaves, thyme and remaining chicken broth.

For dumplings, whisk together flour, baking powder, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Stir in milk and butter to form a thick batter. Drop by 1/4 cupfuls over chicken mixture. Cook, covered, on low until bubbly and dumplings are set, 6-8 hours. Discard bay leaves. Remove insert and let stand, uncovered, for 15 minutes.



DUMPLINGS:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 3 teaspoons baking powder
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1/4 teaspoon pepper
 - 1 cup whole milk
 - 4 tablespoons melted butter
-



The Fall Festival has been cancelled for this year.



The Youth are requesting donations of candy and medium sized pumpkins or the Harvest Party they are planning for the Pioneer Club on Sunday, October 29. You can place your donation in the designated box in the vestibule.



**CHURCH
COUNCIL**

The All Church Council Meeting will be held on Monday, October 16 at 7 PM. Everyone is welcome to attend!

The Antietam Bible Comes Home

The bloodiest conflict of the Civil War occurred 161 years ago yesterday. On September 17, 1862, the battle of Antietam resulted in nearly 23,000 casualties with over 3,600 deaths.

Most Brethren know of the little Dunker Church sitting on the battlefield. This building became a rallying point as well as a field hospital where surgeries were performed on the Elders' Table.

On that late summer day, both blue and grey soldiers were killed or wounded at the rate of one per second. It is truly ironic that this house of worship for non-resistant Brethren found itself smack dab in the middle of what is still the deadliest day in US military history.

That meetinghouse has since collapsed and been rebuilt, but what many do not know is the story of its Bible.

Corporal Nathan Dykeman of the 107th New York Infantry visited the building eleven days after the fighting and stole the Bible as a souvenir. His friend carried it to Dykeman's home in Millport, NY where it remained for 41 years.

After participating in a victory parade in Washington DC three years later, Dykeman was struck by a train and killed. The Bible remained at his home apparently stashed away and forgotten.



In 1903 Dykeman's sister found the Bible and brought it to a Civil War reunion requesting it be returned. The veterans were happy to do so but didn't know how. Someone remembered, however, that a Dunker lived nearby that might help make this happen. John Lewis was a black man who had worked for Mark Twain's family and had saved the lives of Twain's sister-in-law, niece, and friend by risking his own life to stop their runaway horse and carriage. Years earlier, Lewis had been baptized into the German Baptist Brethren at Westminster, MD and then moved north.

After being photographed with the Bible, Lewis shipped it to Elder John Otto, and the leather-bound Scriptures arrived home in December of 1903 for the Christmas celebration. The Bible is displayed at the battlefield visitor center and is often used for the annual commemorative worship service held at the church.

Before Lewis died, he penned his own obituary, a portion of which reads, "...I recognize none as true Christians who refuse to teach the whole Gospel." How many he would so recognize today? The incredible story of this Bible's theft and return is a prime illustration that it's never too late to right a wrong. If you have stolen something or hurt another and you can either return it or make restitution, do so. In this case, it was the man's sister who was convicted and then acted. As we remember this historic battle, may the return of this Bible remind all who follow Jesus to do the right thing even if it's difficult or costly.

(I am indebted to Alan Schmidt and Terry Barkley for their research on this as recorded in their book, September Mourn, available on Amazon.) **George Bowers – CBC Executive Board member**



Center Hill Covenant Brethren Church

2039 Freeport Road

Kittanning, PA 16201

centerhillchurchpa@gmail.com

centerhillchurchpa.org

