



The Taftsville Chapel Current

God calls us as followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as a community of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to our world.

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What Do These Stones Mean?
Joshua 4:6b

Throughout the history of Israel, God came through for His people again and again in remarkable ways. Briefly, the story behind the “what do these stones mean” question comes from the time the entire nation crossed the Jordan River, during flood stage, on dry ground, to enter the Promised Land. The Lord ordered that twelve stones be taken from the middle of the Jordan to be set up on land as a memorial (a way of remembering), so that future generations would ask about them, and then be told the story of God’s involvement. Another time, the prophet Samuel took a stone and set it up after God miraculously delivered Israel from being wiped out by the Philistines, and named it “Ebenezer”, which means “thus far the Lord has helped us.” (I Sam.7:12)

Throughout the history of Taftsville Chapel, some things have come in to being that are like old familiar stones to some and to others they prompt a “what does this mean” question. Ekklesia, Song Service, the Birthday Song, and the grapes and crackers for the children during communion all have stories and meaning behind them that for visitors or new members take a bit of explaining! Similarly, as Thanksgiving approaches, there is a long story and rich meaning behind our Special Thanksgiving Offering.

Since the earliest days of Taftsville’s history, giving has been a core value and joy. Old records and church council minutes reveal a consistent desire to give to worthy causes, and an equally consistent longing

to do more. There were seasons where each Sunday’s offering was designated to go to a specific “worthy cause”, sometimes local, sometimes away. These included missions, relief efforts, Christian education, intervention ministries and the like. Council minutes reveal a continual effort to keep our own expenses as low as possible in order to give as much as possible. Prayerful suggestions were often invited on how to cut the budget or increase giving. Over the years, amounts have sometimes had to go down, and sometimes there was a bit extra, but always there was something and always there was joy in giving. Thus far the Lord has helped us.

In October of 1975, a Thanksgiving service was planned with a special offering to be taken to benefit a relief effort, as well as a food offering to fill baskets after the service. The late 1970’s again were apparently a time of limited means, but by 1979 the record shows the establishment of something called “The Special Thanksgiving Offering”, and it has been a part of our life together ever since. Each year there is prayerful discussion as to where it will go: Sometimes locally, sometimes away, sometimes a blend of both. Always it still has meaning and joy, it still reflects a part of what God has called us to be as a community, and it still is a potent testimony to the Lord’s ongoing involvement with us. It is one of our stones of remembrance.

This year, the church council has determined to split the Special Thanksgiving Offering between the Haven (a trustworthy and effective local relief effort for families in need of life’s basics), and New Beginnings Community Church (an urban ministry

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in a tough section of NE Philly that provides a safe haven, food, fellowship and education for people in their neighborhood). New Beginnings was hit hard by Irene and Lee, and their building was flooded resulting in the loss of all their outreach resources, their kitchen, and fellowship hall. The pastor, Jon Moore, lives in a single room in the flooded basement.

So, what does the “stone” of our Special Thanksgiving Offering mean? It means that God continues to move our hearts to be of help as we can. He causes us both to will and to act according to His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13), so the glory and the increase are His. It means we are part of a long story of God’s faithfulness and that’s a story worth remembering and passing on. Thus far the Lord has helped us!



Meeting new friends



Fellowship Meal at New Beginnings Community Church

Adaptation of Psalm 136 (vs. 10-25) for Taftsville Chapel *adaptation by: Elinor Shattuck*

**To him who brought young Mennonite men
from Pennsylvania to Vermont**

His love endures forever.

**And led some of them to stay here with their
families**

His love endures forever.

**To form a community of believers in the town of
Taftsville.**

His love endures forever.

**To Him who brought others from the
community to join them in worship**

His love endures forever.

And brought leaders from other places

His love endures forever.

As well as raising up leaders from within.

His love endures forever.

**To him who brought people to this place to find
healing for brokenness**

His love endures forever.

And sent them out again to other places.

His love endures forever.

To Him who has answered our prayers

His love endures forever.

When Josiah was born without brain damage

His love endures forever.

And again when Josiah began to walk.

His love endures forever.

To Him who brought physical healing

His love endures forever.

**For Darryl Snader . . . for Tim Guntz . . . and
many others.**

His love endures forever.

**To the one who guided Carol to her Mother’s
will.**

His love endures forever.

And to Him who remembered us

His love endures forever.

When we were awash in the muddy waters of Hurricane Irene

His love endures forever.

Who will help us to recover and will heal our land.

His love endures forever.

To our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer

His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of Heaven.

His love endures forever.

Flannel Graph Forays Rediscovering Our Stories

Hello Taftsville Family! To stay connected to you and express our thanks for your support, I will be writing for the Current—sharing some of what I am learning in school. I am just old enough to have gotten flannel graphs in my Sunday School lessons and the image is a reminder of the beautiful simplicity of trusting Jesus. It is never easy, but it is a simple call that I want to keep before me while I foray into the world of study. Hopefully this space will be a little way to bring it all back home. We love you all! Dave

An Unlikely Story

by: Dave Swanson

After two months at Duke, I have relearned that studying the Bible honestly and faithfully in today's world of biblical studies is a complicated task. There is a constant process of figuring out how to best read the text as Scripture while also engaging the massive amounts of data that have come out over the last two hundred years of more "scientific" study of scripture in the fields of literary and textual criticism, archeology and ancient history.

It might be tempting for Christian students of the Bible to solve this tension by ignoring all the work that doesn't self-identify as rooted in the Christian faith. But I am finding it fruitful to engage different takes on the text while rooted within a community of readers (that's you all and our church down here!) that will help me worship the God I know while also having that knowledge expanded and, sometimes, challenged.

A great example of this came a few weeks ago when my professor, Ellen Davis, teaching on the book of Joshua, brought up the strangeness of the conquest narrative. Even though the idea (Deuteronomy 20:10-18) was to kill or displace everyone in Canaan so Israel could maintain purity and avoid idolatry, the story tells us that it did not happen! For instance, Joshua 15:63 recounts, "But the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the children of Judah were not able to dispossess them." There are a number of passages that make this point: Israel did not have a full conquest within the story (some Anabaptists give a little cheer, here).

To understand this in context, Dr. Davis turned to some other ancient conquest narratives from the region. In 1700 B.C.E. Hammurabi, a Babylonian King, had an inscription made up that said, "I, Hammurabi... have gathered abundance and plenty, have stormed the four quarters of the world, have magnified the fame of Babylon." We had a laugh in class when Dr. Davis said, "I can virtually assure you-no, I can absolutely assure you-that no ancient near eastern king ever had a monument made up that said 'Well, we lost that one.'" In other words, Joshua is Israel's "official" story—as public as an inscription carved into stone in Babylon—but it is not a victory monument.

This really convicted me because I have always read stories of Israel's failures as a record of God's indictment on Israel. It dawned on me that this is only part of the story since, scholars agree, the OT evolved over a long period of time—centuries. Jewish theologians and scribes had ample opportunity to edit out the stories of the Israelites' failure and unfaithfulness, but they did not do it! They could have, like Hammurabi, told a story of themselves as always successful and faithful. Instead, under God's inspiration, they kept these unlikely stories and called them sacred—a self-indictment and a reminder to stay humble. I hope we can follow their example and tell the whole story.

Taftsville Chapel Mennonite Fellowship

Located in the village of Taftsville, VT, one block south of Rt. 4 on Happy Valley Road.



Randy Good, Pastor

www.taftsvillechapel.org

Send your contributions for the Current to: samuel.carbaugh@gmail.com or contact a Newsletter Staff member: Carie Good & Virginia Schlabach

TAFTSVILLE TIDBIT TRIVIA

Do you remember when...

40 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

November 8, 1971

A gift of \$50.00 will be budgeted monthly to Bethany Birches Camp.

November 8, 1971

Harold Fisher represented the young people in requesting renovations to the church basement. \$200.00 was allocated for purchasing games, heat ducts, better lighting, etc. If good interest is shown with the young people, more extensive renovations will be considered.

November 14, 1971

From the Congregational Profile sent to John Lapp to assist in the pastor search: "The number of families worshipping at Taftsville is approximately 15. The predominant age of the members is between 25-33. Nearly all have young children".

35 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

November 2, 1976

Librarian's Report (Ruth Ann Glick) -The new books for children are a pop-up book on The Story of the Nativity, and a book about squirrels called Hurry, Scurry and Flurry.

November 8, 1976

Canned hams for Thanksgiving food boxes will be purchased with money from the church treasury.

30 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

November 10, 1981

Candlelighters met at Mary Guntz's home to make pot holders for the Thanksgiving Baskets. Twenty potholders were made, two per box, with leftovers being used later.

November 5, 1981

Church council discussed plans for future leadership. We talked about our immediate goals and concluded that the most important immediate need in our fellowship is to strive to improve our relationships with each other and then concentrate on reaching out to neighbors and fellow workers.

25 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

November 19, 1986

Wednesday evening Thanksgiving activity will be centered on the country of Benin. Murray and Joanna will coordinate this project which will include a meal from that country as well as learning about the life and church in Benin.

20 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

November 18, 1991

It was agreed to purchase an answering machine for the church so that we will be sure not to miss any calls from those who are inquiring about our church.

15 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

November 20, 1996

We had some discussion about our increasing difficulty of ending our coffee time so that we can begin Sunday School on time. Please be aware if this applies to you.

10 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

November 29, 2001

An anonymous donation has been received to purchase a brass plaque for the church building as a registered building in the Taftsville Historical District.

Poem of the Month

George Herbert was an English poet in the 17th century. An orator and minister by trade, Herbert's poems often invoked Biblical and religious themes. His long poem, The Church-Porch, is a very good read if you are interested in exploring more of his work.

The Call

by George Herbert

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
Such a Way, as gives us breath:
Such a Truth, as ends all strife:
Such a Life, as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my
Strength:
Such a Light, as shows a feast:
Such a Feast, as mends in length:
Such a Strength, as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
Such a Joy, as none can move:
Such a Love, as none can part:
Such a Heart, as joys in love.