

# The Rolling Stone

June 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ known as *Sampson's Mills*,

Greetings! Grace, mercy and peace to each and every one of you in the name of our risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ!

As your most recent former pastor, I thought I'd take a moment to write a quick note expressing my sincere, heartfelt gratitude at the lovely reception that you threw in my honor, to wish me well in my new endeavors and upcoming adventures. While individual thank you notes will be arriving in due course, I want you all (or should I say *yinz* or perhaps even *y'all*) to know that your outpouring of love, personal warmth and generosity shall hold a special place in my heart for the rest of my days. It was extraordinarily difficult for me to hold it together at my farewell reception. Later that afternoon, when my strength was exhausted, I did break down and cry because I truly do miss you and feel immensely unworthy of receiving such an outpouring of your love. For allowing this young minister the opportunity to serve you as your transitional pastor for twenty months, for sharing life together during that time, and for the loveliest farewell and send off I've ever received, and so much more, thank you one and all!

In addition to my gratitude I have some exciting news to share with you all as well. On my actual birthday, last September, I gave myself a wonderful present by spending the afternoon applying to the University of Edinburgh to pursue a Masters in Theology and History degree. On the day before Ash Wednesday (what many in the church call Shrove Tuesday), I received my unconditional offer of acceptance for study in the Masters in Theology and History Program at the New College School of Divinity, the University of Edinburgh commencing this September. For those of you who came to my presentations on Scotland, this is the school that I showed pictures of and have my heart set on attending.

Doubtless, some of you may think it silly for me to pursue, and earn, a third master's degree instead of going straight for the doctorate. While ordinarily I would agree with you, there are many benefits to pursuing this course of action:

Firstly, it will qualify me to teach history courses on the College, University and Seminary level, a qualification which I do not already hold; so, this is a plus by means of broadening my credentials and may even provide a means by which academic doors will open in the future.

Secondly, just because I want to study in the British Isles does not mean that I do not love my home country – the USA; the truth is that I love America, but I do not love our needlessly expensive and lengthy doctorate programs in theology. I can get the same degree from a British school, which is just as good if not better than our American programs, in half of the time or less that it would take me to do it in the USA for about a third of the price or less per year that it would take in the USA. For example, I can earn a doctorate in theology from the University of Edinburgh for about \$20,000 per year, or the University of Manchester for \$12,000 per year, over the course of two, three or even four years, as compared to Princeton (at \$45,000 per

year for 6 years [\$270,000 in total]), Yale (at \$60,000 per year for 8 years [\$480,000 in total]) or the University of Chicago (at \$100,000 per year for 10 years [a cool \$1,000,000 in total]). Therefore, it is of greater value to my time and my money to go work on my advanced degrees in a British institution of higher learning, just as many other American graduate students do.

Thirdly, although I probably could get into a doctorate program at some institution like the University of Manchester, Queens University Belfast or the University of Aberdeen, it is my heartfelt desire to study at the University of Edinburgh, which is not only one of the best schools in the world, but it is also, in my not so humble opinion, the best theology school in the United Kingdom. If you doubt me, then please feel free to do your own research online so you can form your own opinion. The doctorate programs at the University of Edinburgh are extraordinarily difficult to get into; one way around this is to go there and do exceptionally well in one of their own master's programs and then continue into their own doctoral program. This is my plan.

Fourthly, American doctoral programs forbid their graduate students from working outside their academic institution during their time of PhD studies. To the contrary, British schools encourage their theology graduate students to work outside of school to keep them grounded in the church and provide an income to help defray their expenses. Currently, the Church of Scotland, as with most denominations in the United Kingdom (the Church of England, the United Reformed Church, the British Methodist Church, etc.), is desperately short of ministers, so all things being equal, I should have only minor difficulties finding pastoral work in Scotland again.

Fifthly, the Principal of New College, the Reverend Professor Doctor David Fergusson, is the man I truly want to study with and the program at New College is the program I want to complete so I can earn the degree I want. Believe it or not, he's quite keen on having me work under his supervision at Edinburgh; I know this because we've been in regular communication about doing so since December of 2012. Yes, 2012; this has been a long, multiyear process and it's not over. Once I earn my doctorate in theology from New College Divinity School, the University of Edinburgh, with David Fergusson as my Supervisor, I should have no true difficulty going and teaching wherever I want to (or so I hope).

Therefore, please accept this news with a humble apology. I did not share it because I was waiting for an advantageous time to share it and my time at Sampson's Mills slipped by all too fast. Therefore, please forgive me for not sharing this sooner or in person.

Moreover, if you are a fan of education and would like to contribute towards helping me in my educational endeavors, on top of my saving my income/earnings and applying for every scholarship under the sun, then please feel free to send any donations to my parents' home during this time of transition. Their address is:

2121 Lebanon Drive  
McKeesport, PA 15135

Once again, thank you one and all for every blessing and good wish you have bestowed upon me!

Until our next encounter. 😊

With every blessing and good wish, your most recent former Pastor, Scott

## MAY SESSION NOTES

It is with deep regret that we accept the resignation of Deb Artim as Music Director. It will be impossible to find anyone that is as talented as Deb in organ, piano, conducting the choir and bells. Deb will be sorely missed. George Lepsch will chair the committee to select a new Music Director.

Pastor Scott will be permitted to attend social events so long as he is in the area. He will also be allowed to conduct funerals until a new pastor is found.

Devin Tomko is working diligently to keep our church in operating procedure and is saving us tons of money.

There will be no Carnival this year.

Becca will be permitted to attend the Youth Cartel, using professional development days at no expense to the church

Looks like we will not be having a Farmer's Market on Wednesdays, 6-8 pm.

We approved the spending of up to \$500 for expenses incurred in hiring a new pastor (moving expense, etc. as usually done).

Thanks you Steve Lawrence (who is going off session) for all your hard work on behalf of the church.

**Pastor Scott, you will be missed. Good luck to you where the Lord takes you.**

**Nancy Swanson, Clerk of Session**

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	<b>Open</b>	<b>Close</b>	<b>Offering Counters</b>	<b>Greeters</b>
<b>June 4</b>	N. Swanson	N. Swanson	R. Peters, K. Tomko, F. Gilchrist	V. Pompe,. S. Staszak
<b>June 11</b>	N. Swanson	N. Swanson	R. Peters, K. Tomko, F. Gilchrist	V. Pompe,. S. Staszak
<b>June 18</b>	N. Swanson	N. Swanson	B. James, S. Lawrence	V. Pompe,. S. Staszak
<b>June 25</b>	N. Swanson	N. Swanson	B. James, J. Williamson	V. Pompe,. S. Staszak

## DEACON NEWS

Thanks to all volunteers who made soup and sold soup this Election Day. We made over \$500 which will help to fund Christmas gifts for the Salvation Army families. All the soup was awesome and appreciated by the patrons who have come to rely on us for soup sales.

Save the date for Worship in the Park. This year we will be at Magnolia Grove on July 16. A sign up sheet for covered dish picnic food will be available this month.

Please welcome new Deacons to SMPC Board of Deacons: Nancy Sylvander, Rich Peters, Carol Rost, and returning members Valerie Pompe and Marcia Nelson. Our next meeting will be June 4 at 11:00 a.m. in the overflow room.

Calling all graduates. If you are or know a graduate who is a member of SMPC we would like to honor you after church on June 11. Please tell Bev Ekaitis or call Val in the office before June 4<sup>th</sup> to let us know. Congratulations to those who graduated this year. Blessings on your future endeavors.

Thanks to Pastor Scott for his Leadership and support in the past year. We will miss you and your steady confident ways. God bless you in your new work and home life.

Deacon Co-Moderators, Beverly Ekaitis and Heather Butker

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## FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY TEAM NEWS

**PASTOR SCOTT'S FAREWELL RECEPTION** ... We said a sad farewell to Pastor Scott. The reception was a huge success. I am so very happy all his hopes and dreams are coming true. Thank you for everything you have done for us Pastor Scott, you will be missed indeed.

**MEMORIAL DAY PARADE** ... We had a wonderful time selling hot dogs, tacos with cheese, popcorn .... I want to give a special thanks to Lisa Addington and Rebekah Little for helping us. We think it would be great to make this an annual event!

**CONGRATULATIONS TO NANCY SWANSON** ... she was the winner of the Jolly Rancher Contest.

**Zumba Class** ... Zumba Class started on Thursday, June 1. It was a tremendous success! There were 27 people in attendance. Tina, the instructor, thanked me for doing a wonderful job in getting the word out and advertising the class! For those who attend, there will be no class on Thursday, June 15, due to the Strawberry Social.

We had inquiries from people asking if there was a fee per class, so Tina and I discussed it and decided to have a \$4.00 fee per class. Also, there is interest in a babysitting service while the parent works out.

A fun, easy hour of fitness for all ages with certified instructors. No matter your age or gender, Zumba is a great way to get fit and stay fit. Just a one-hour class, twice a week, will engage every muscle in your body, and help you to achieve your own personal fitness goals. Cost is \$20 per month for unlimited classes per

month. And best of all 100% of money collected will be donated to the church. Classes will be every Monday and Thursday from 7:15 to 8:15 pm.

Valerie Pompe, Fellowship Ministry Team

## CUPBOARD STRETCHERS NEWS



Cupboard Stretchers would like to profusely thank the Boy Scouts Troop #916 for their food drive and contribution to our food bank. They come through every year with a significant amount of food.

Also, the Letter Carriers National Food Drive broke all previous records in food contributions. We are so appreciative of the extreme bounty!

We will need volunteers once again the week of our June distribution to help sort food. Stay tuned!

Blessings,

Jolene Keefer,

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## OTHER NEWS

Thanks to the help of John Williamson and one other unknown benefactor Meditation Garden has been tidied and 2 Box Wood shrubs planted in the urns. It's a shady, leafy retreat for reflection and meditation. A few orders for bricks have been placed and we will soon have 4 new honorees added to the garden.

Lois Jean Rhodes  
Hobart Rhodes

Nellie Jane Keefer  
Devin Tomko

Thank you to all that contribute with donations, labor and prayers. Please take a moment from your busy lives to relax and enjoy this quiet retreat.

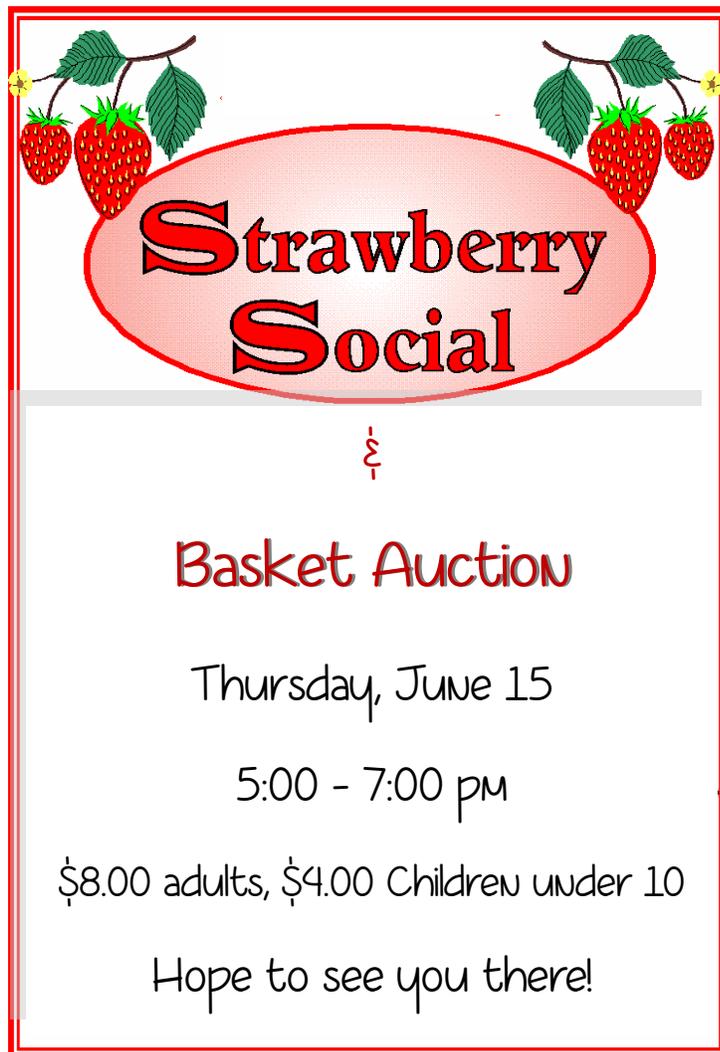
To order a brick or answer questions phone Billie Kissel 412 678-5229

Blessings,  
Billie Kissel

**LADIES BREAKFAST CLUB** ... Please join the Ladies Breakfast Club on the first Monday of each month at 9:00 a.m. at Denny's in North Versailles.

**MEN'S BREAKFAST FELLOWSHIP** ... Please join the Men's Breakfast Fellowship on the first Tuesday of each month at 8:30 a.m. at King's Restaurant on Route 30. All are welcome.

**THE MILLER'S DAUGHTERS BOOK CLUB** ... The Miller's Daughters Book Club meets the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.. Call Linda Lawrence for more information.



The poster features a red border and a central pink oval containing the text "Strawberry Social" in a large, red, stylized font. Above the oval are two illustrations of strawberry branches with green leaves and red fruit. Below the oval is a red ampersand symbol. The text "Basket Auction" is written in a red, cursive font. Below that, the date "Thursday, June 15" and time "5:00 - 7:00 pm" are written in a black, cursive font. The ticket prices "\$8.00 adults, \$4.00 Children under 10" are listed in a black, cursive font. At the bottom, the phrase "Hope to see you there!" is written in a black, cursive font.

**Strawberry Social**

**Basket Auction**

Thursday, June 15

5:00 - 7:00 pm

\$8.00 adults, \$4.00 Children under 10

Hope to see you there!

**Strawberry Social**

**Basket Auction**

If you are able to donate a basket for the auction this year it would be greatly appreciated. Please drop off a the church office by Wednesday, June 14, or call Linda Lawrence (412) 896-9548.

If you would like to contribute something; donations towards supplies would be appreciated to defray costs. See any choir member.

*Church Fundraiser*

*Sampson's Mills*

*LulaRoe Pop-Up Boutique Multi-Consultants*

*Saturday, June 10, 10:00 am-1:00 pm*

JOIN US FOR A



simply comfortable

FUNDRAISER

DRESSES • SKIRTS • LEGGINGS • TOPS • KID'S CLOTHES • & MORE

Come join us this summer for  
Vacation Bible School!



July 10-14, 2017

9:00 am-12:00 pm

Register your 3 year old through finishing  
5th grader online ([vbs.pro/p/sampsonsmills](http://vbs.pro/p/sampsonsmills))  
or call 412-678-5355



# Sampson's Mills Presbyterian Church

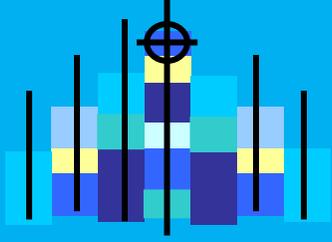
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White Oak, Pa 15131

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[www.sampsonsmills.org](http://www.sampsonsmills.org)

[facebook.com/sampsons.mills](https://facebook.com/sampsons.mills)

[sampsonsmillspc@verizon.net](mailto:sampsonsmillspc@verizon.net)



Worship Sunday at 11:00 am  
The Reverend Scott E. Dennis

## Summer Worship Hours

Begin June 4

10:00 am

