

The Pipe Line

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November 1, 2023



We hadn't seen Chip, our chipmunk friend, much this summer. A neighbor cut down a bunch of trees near Chip's den and for a couple of weeks afterward the buzz of the chainsaws would have been scary for him. It looked like Chip decided to move. I

was mowing the grass in the backyard when I noticed the entrance to his den had been filled with dirt. It made me sad, expecting to never see him again. But as I was looking out our plate-glass window a couple of weeks ago, I saw a hole and Chip popped out his head. His den was still intact beneath the ground, and the new entrance hole was just a few feet away from the other one. I called for Jennifer to come watch, and we accidentally banged the window when we pulled the blinds back, and Chip dived back down his hole. But we kept watching and he'd poke his head out, retreat, and pop back up. We didn't see him scamper all across the yard like he used to do, but he seemed to stay right in the hole of his den. I cut up some apple slices for him, and set them down just outside his den entrance, and went back inside to watch. Sure enough, he came out and picked up an apple slice. He tried to go back down the hole with it, but the apple was too wide. So he sat there and chewed it up some, turned and took it down his hole. He repeated that each time: tried to go down the hole with an apple slice that wouldn't fit, then turned and chewed it down until he could take it inside his den. He seemed a good bit plumper than before. It made me feel he was healthy and well-fed for the winter.

I've had some other fair-weather friends that have surprised me this past season. I met them when I was raising the window in the office, because the direct sunlight makes it so hot, even with the thick curtains closed. As I raised the window, a wasp flew into the office. I was able to keep the window cracked just a bit and shoo him out. That's when I discovered the paper wasp nest hanging off the window frame, just outside the glass, but inside the opaque plastic covering over the window. The nest was about two inches long, with open and enclosed combs. Wasps make nests by chewing up wood fiber and mixing it with saliva. A similar nest had been built in the newspaper tube beneath my mailbox a couple of years ago. I found it when I went out to get the mail, and got stung. It was an easy decision to get a stick and knock that nest down. I like honeybees, but really dislike yellow jackets, and have an aversion to wasps. But I didn't see any reason to knock down the nest outside the window. You could see why they'd built it there: the plastic covering offered protection from the elements and predators, yet there was plenty of open space to come and go, and to allow for air circulation.

A funny thing happened as I watched the wasps most days for these past few months. I felt like they

became my friends. I enjoyed watching them interact. There were about a dozen or so that would cling to the nest at any one time, and they stayed active. Every once in a while one of the wasps would fly up carrying a big glob of a golden sap-like substance, and two other wasps would immediately go to it and plunge their little forelegs into that goo and start mixing it. Other days, the wasps on the surface of the nest seemed to be dancing, like honeybees do, and I wondered if they were giving directions to each other. I'd see a wasp plunge face-first into one of the cells, and perhaps he was feeding a larva. Some of the other cells were sealed, where a larva was becoming a pupa, the last step before it became an adult wasp that would emerge from the nest. On a hot morning, I saw one of the wasps stand and beat his wings rapidly for several minutes, a technique they use to fan and cool off the nest. I looked forward to watching them for a bit, and checking in with them every morning.

One day I looked out and there was a woolly worm on the flat back of the nest, and all the wasps were crowded together on the comb side. It made me mad. I guessed the woolly worm was a predator and was going to eat the wasps, but then I thought maybe they'd stung him and were going to eat him, but then I wondered how on earth they got him up onto the nest. I was looking up woolly worm/wasp interactions on the Internet, trying to figure out how to help my friends. When I looked back out, I noticed the woolly worm had left the nest and was clinging to the brick of the building. I raised the window a bit, and used a stick to nudge him off into the grass below.



I worried when I went to North Carolina for a few days that when I got back, a cold snap would have killed the wasps off. But the weather didn't stay cold long. When it did get cold they huddled together on the nest, just as they did during summer rains. I don't know if the queen is still alive, but if so she must be nearing the end of her life cycle. Any newly-hatched queens have probably already flown off to hibernate. I think the opaque covering over the window has acted like a greenhouse to keep the colony alive longer than it would have been, but I know winter is coming, and my friends will die soon.

It was always easy for me to like Chip, who is so cute and stripey. I had to get to know the wasps to see how industrious and cooperative they are, how caring they are for their young. I've read about how beneficial wasps are to the environment, pollinating plants and flowers, cleaning up dead bugs, getting rid of harmful insects. I realized they had qualities I'd never realized.

Being around each other helps us see others in a different light. Learning about others helps us live at peace with those we may have feared or held a prejudice against. I'm talking about wasps. I don't know if that applies to humans. Probably.

God bless you!

Monte





MEMORIAL GIFT FUND

We are grateful for the following Memorial Gifts:

--In Memory of **Bernard Hurtt**: by Mr. & Mrs. John Lester, Ms. Kathie Thornhill, Ms. Judith Ragland and Ms. Ann Harkins.

--In Memory of **Marcia Fairlie**: by Mr. & Mrs. John Lester, Ms. Kathie Thornhill, Ms. Annette Rojek

--In Memory of **Bill Bailey**: by Mr. & Mrs. John Lester

--In Memory of **Scott Taylor**: by Mr. & Mrs. John Lester

--In Memory of **Michael and Bobbie Richmond**: by Mr. Ray Richmond

SAVE THE DATE!



Save the Date for our homecoming celebration and luncheon on Sunday, August 11, 2024. This marks the first recorded use of the sanctuary building, which was under construction in 1923, and ties in with our Centennial

Celebration. We plan a worship service with special music, and a meal to follow in the fellowship hall.

WEST VIRGINIA TECH

The WV Tech nursing students will conduct a health screening 2-6 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 8, in the fellowship hall. Organizing and conducting the screening is part of their training toward graduation.

LECTIONARY READINGS

November 5

Josh. 3:7-17 and Ps. 107:1-7, 33-37;
Micah 3:5-12 and Ps. 43:
1 Thess. 2:9-13;
Matt 23:1-12

November 12

Josh. 24:1-3a, 14-25
and Ps. 78:1-7;
Amos 5:18-24 and Ps. 70;
1 Thess. 4:13-18;
Matt 25:1-13

November 19

Judg. 4:1-7 and Ps. 123;
Zeph. 1:7, 12-18 and Ps.
90:1-8 (9-11), 12;
1 Thess. 5:1-11;
Matt. 25:14-30

November 26

Christ the King
Ezek. 34:11-16, 20-24
and Ps. 100; Ezek. 34:11-
16, 20-24 and Ps. 95:1-7a;
Eph. 1:15-23;
Matt 25:31-46

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- 01 Lena S. Cox
- 02 Drema Davis
- 04 Jennifer Mitchell
- 22 Jody Clowers
- 23 Makayla Young
- 24 Luke Feldhake
- 27 Marie Richmond



TIM ZIMMERMAN AND THE KING'S BRASS

Beckley Presbyterian Church will host a community Christmas concert at 7 p.m. Wednesday, December 6, by Tim Zimmerman and The King's Brass, a nine-piece band featuring trumpets, trombones, tuba, keyboard and percussion. Admission is free. A freewill offering will be collected for the band during the concert.



BPC WOMEN'S CIRCLE

The BPC women's circle will hold their next meeting on Thursday, November 9th at 10:30 am in the church Fellowship Hall. We will be putting boxes together for Operation Christmas Child. We will also have a brief lesson from the gospel of Luke and lunch from Fruits of Labor. Any questions can be directed to Valerie Hartling at 304-255-1030 or Nancy Hageman at 304-255-2336.

NURTURING FAITH IDEAS

November 5: In Matthew 23:1-12, Jesus criticizes the Pharisees for laying heavy burdens on others and then not lifting a finger to help. He says they do this by accusing others of doing things that they are guilty of themselves. Can you think of a time when you might have inadvertently laid a heavy burden on another? Have you lifted a finger to help?

November 12: In Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25, the people recommit themselves to God by reminding themselves of all the ways God has taken care of them. In times of doubt and distress, we can learn from their example. We can remember that God will be with us now and in future for the simple reason that God has always been with us in the past.



November 19: In the challenging parable of the talents, (Matthew 25:14-30) Jesus teaches us how important it is that we use what we've been given for the glory of God. Take an opportunity this week to use one of the talents you've been given to show love and honor to God.

November 26: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24, describes God's ultimate promise of seeking out the lost and scattered sheep, so that all can be brought together under the care of the one Good Shepherd. How can we help God in this project? As disciples, we should take it upon ourselves to seek out the lost and scattered of the flock, to welcome them, and to show them that they have a home with us.