



# COLLENBROOK UNITED CHURCH LINK -N-TOWER



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## Melanie Lawrence-Caldwell, Pastor



### FROM THE PASTOR



June is in full swing and for many people and June is PRIDE month. What does that mean and what does it have to do with us, a faith community? Why should we care and why should we celebrate and support the LGBT community?

In 1969 there was a small bar in New York City called the Stonewall Inn. It was a tiny, battered place that was continually harassed by the police. There was nothing really special about this bar and was much like many other bars across the country that catered to those who were labeled "deviant", "queer", "fag", "cross dresser", "dyke". Back then, places that catered to these people were constantly being raided and people arrested. Most times names would be placed in the local newspapers in order to embarrass and shame. This went on for years and years. And then.....

On June 28th, 1969 the police conducted a raid on the Stonewall Inn late at night. There were undercover officers inside the bar and paddy wagons standing outside. The dance lights flashed, warning about the raid. People were roughly handled as they were tossed into the paddy wagons. A crowd started to gather outside the bar, watching. As police were attempting to put a woman into one of these wagons she screamed out to the crowd, blood running down her head "why don't you do something?" and the crowd did.

This uprising took place over several days. It was led by several "drag queens" and others who had had enough of the harassment and violence conducted against them. The following year, in June 1970, the first gay "pride" march was held in New York City. Other cities soon followed.

Today, 50 years later, LGBT people are still fighting for their right to exist as full human beings. Here in the U.S. people can still be fired from their jobs, lose their homes, are not allowed to be foster parents or adopt. Why? Because there still are no federal protections in place. Today, transgender people are not allowed to serve in the military and are fighting for their right to relieve themselves in public restrooms. In other parts of the world, you can be thrown in prison for years and executed...yes, executed.

So, why the parades, the festivals, the rainbow flag all over the place? When you are told your whole life that you don't have the right to exist as you are, are not granted the same rights under the constitution as straight people, when many churches and other houses of worship close their doors on you, when families kick you out or send you to a "conversion therapy" program....but you know you DESERVE THE RIGHT TO EXIST AS YOU ARE....to CELEBRATE WHO YOU ARE....TO TELL THE WORLD YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD....these are just a few of the reasons for the parades.

So now you may be asking yourself why you should care about any of this and what does this have to do with me and my church? First, we are all brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ. We are all interconnected by God. Jesus teaches us to stand up for those who may not have a voice or who are not being heard. Colleenbrook decided many years ago to be an open and affirming church. That means that we not only love and accept our LGBT siblings but stand with them on the front lines when they are being harassed, spit on, discriminated against, called ugly names, kicked out of their homes and churches....to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly (Micah 6:8).

Colleenbrook United Church has actively participated in the Philadelphia Pride Parade for the last several years. This year we again will be marching, along with a small float so that people who cannot make the long walk can join us. All are welcome to give support to our LGBT siblings....to let them know that they are CHILDREN OF GOD and we will not let them walk alone.

## Therapy Center of Philadelphia June Mission of the Month

Therapy Center of Philadelphia is a community-based, mental health nonprofit founded on the belief that psychotherapy and trauma work do not have to be pathologizing, stigmatizing, or unaffordable. TCP offers an alternative mental health model of healing that attends to people's identities and experiences of oppression within the therapy relationship and the client's life. To honor this mission, TCP strives to be financially accessible, racially equitable, and trans-affirming in all of its services and operations. It offers this framework to over 350 adult women, transgender, and gender nonconforming clients a year.

TCP was founded as the Feminist Therapy Collective (FTC) in 1972. A group of visionary feminist therapists sought to challenge social inequities that existed in the mental health field at the time. Since then, TCP has existed as a non-profit organization providing therapy to adult women. In 2011, TCP expanded our mission to also serve transgender and gender non-conforming communities. We have augmented our historical understanding of women's issues, patriarchy, and sexism, incorporating an analysis that recognizes the intersections of feminist and transgender experiences of gender-based oppression and struggle.

TCP is committed to maintaining diversity of experience and identities in our staff across clinical orientations as well as race, age, class, gender identity, culture, immigration status, and sexual orientation. As part of our mission to making quality therapy accessible, TCP offers a sliding fee scale for services that allows clients to seek out the support they need.

<http://www.therapycenterofphila.org/>



The rainbow flag was created by Gilbert Baker in San Francisco. Harvey Milk, an activist (assassinated Nov. 1978) challenged Baker to come up with a flag to symbolize the LGBT movement. The original flag was first flown at the San Francisco Pride Parade in June, 1978. After Milk's assassination there was a huge demand for the flag and quickly became the most recognized symbol of the LGBT movement.

Summer is upon us and that means that Pastor Melanie will be taking a vacation for 3 weeks starting after service on June 23rd. It also means that choir and handbell choir are on hiatus. The newsletter will not be published again until August which will be chock full of information about the coming fall activities and how you can participate in the life of the church. Please make our guest Preachers feel welcome as only Colleenbrook can do.

July's Mission of the Month is RIP MEDICAL DEBT. Purchase Hospital and Forgive for Low Income. Medical debt is purchased for pennies on the dollar and then paid off and there is no tax liability for the recipient. There will be more information on this worthy cause next month in church.

## Collenbrook's New Music Man

It is official William "Bill" Byrd is Collenbrook's new Music Director. He is responsible for performing during services, coordinating the Music program with the Pastor, caring for and maintaining our equipment, directing the Choir, working with the singers and musicians who are members. In short everything musical at Collenbrook is his responsibility.

Bill comes from a long line of church musicians; both his father and grandfather were music directors in the Philadelphia area. His introduction to learning music began at age 3 when he was sitting with his father at the organ during practices. He began lessons at age 7 and play at his family church for the first time at age 13 when the organist became sick and he was drafted.

His more formal education was under three giants in Philadelphia area music. Mr. James Townsend, Harry Spenser, and Dr. H. Wilkerson of West Chester University. Each one had an important impact on Bill's approach to music.

He has worked in several churches through his 40+ year career. His longest tenured was a Greater Exodus Church in Philadelphia supporting Dr. Herb Lusk (former Eagle) for 16 years. More recently, he comes to us after several years at New Life United Methodist Church of Drexel Hill.

The best way to meet someone is to talk to them. So below are excerpts from an interview that L&T had with Bill last month.

L&T: We will start with an easy question. What's your favorite Hymn?

Bill Byrd: Praise Ye the Lord Almighty (Blue 482, Black 22)

L&T: Here is another softball question. Who is your favorite composer?

Bill Byrd: Johan Sebastian Bach.

L&T: What do you think of Collenbrook's use of two hymnals?

Bill Byrd: As a choir director/organist I love it. Cannot have enough music at your disposal. The Blue hymnal uses traditional language, whereas, the Black hymnal uses more inclusive language. Many hymns are in both hymnals.

L&T: What do you think about Collenbrook's music equipment?

Bill Byrd: It is brand new. It is obvious that the church has decided to invest in its musical instruments, new keyboard, new piano, new sound system and the great new organ. Each week during practice and services I am learning more and more on how to use that wonderful organ to its fullest.

L&T: What has been your biggest surprise at Collenbrook so far?

Bill Byrd: There are so many wonderful voices and musicians. I see it is my job to utilize them. Add to that Collenbrook is a friendly place. I feel welcomed.

L&T: What is your Music Philosophy?

Bill Byrd: ENGAGE the choir and congregation in the services, make it ENJOYABLE for all. Support the EXCHANGE of knowledge and ideas. EXPAND on what Bill Lowden has left and promote EXCELLENCE in our program.

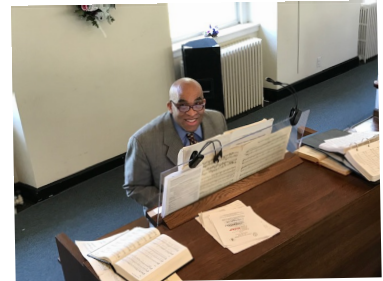
L&T: What are some of the musical events we can look forward to in the future?

Bill Byrd: Sept 29th Music Ministry Kickoff. We will have a continental breakfast beforehand. There will be a Hymn/Praise Sing, a Choir Concert, and a Organ Recital. Fellowship hour will have a music theme.

Dec 8 Advent Hymns and Lessons

Dec 22 Christmas Hymns and Lessons

Final note to the congregation, Sunday June 2nd is the Welcome our new Choir director day. Come and join us.



**COMMUNITY DINNER June 27th and July 25th  
5-7 PM**





## Helping Hands Wish List

Helping Hands is a humanitarian program that reunites unaccompanied youth from Central America with family that already resides in the USA. Bethany provides them with a safe place to live and grow until they are reunited with their families. They are currently in need of the items listed below, as many of the youth will arrive with just the clothes on their backs. Their ages are from 5 – 14 years.

**Your support in helping to provide them a brighter future is so appreciated!**

### Boys Sizes – Sizes Small and Medium

Socks  
Boxer Shorts  
Jeans (all sizes)  
Sweatpants  
T-Shirts – Solid Colors  
Sneakers (all sizes)  
Church attire and shoes (all sizes)  
Coats  
Sweaters  
Pajamas  
Shorts

### Girls and Misses – Sizes X-Small, Small and Medium

Socks  
Sports Bras  
Panties  
Jeans (all sizes)  
Shorts  
T-Shirts – Solid Colors  
Shoes – all sizes  
Sneakers – all sizes  
Pajamas  
Sweat Pants  
Church attire and shoes (all sizes)  
Sweaters  
Coats

Bibles – Spanish Version  
Kids Craft Projects and Kits  
Markers, Crayons, Colored Pencils  
Coloring Books  
Soccer Balls  
Spanish Books  
Games for all ages

Pillows and Pillow Cases  
Twin Blankets  
Fleece Throws  
Blankets  
Bath Towels  
Kid Friendly Soap, Shampoo and Conditioner  
Toothbrushes and Toothpaste  
Hairbrushes & Combs

**WE KINDLY ASK THAT ALL ITEMS ARE NEW. WE CANNOT ACCEPT USED ITEMS. THANK YOU!**

**If you are considering a monetary donation, please make checks payable to “HELPING HANDS”.**



1863 Bethany Road, Womelsdorf PA 19567

The official registration and financial information of Bethany Home Inc. and Bethany Children's Home Inc. may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.