

## HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 10/10/2022

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

***ONE AT ONE*** – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, October 11 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, continue to pray for the spread of the Kingdom of GOD. Thank GOD for the faith you and others in your family have. Ask the HOLY SPIRIT to lead you to those who need the invitation to come and meet JESUS.*

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Many have some familiarity with the Amish and their intentional rejection of modern conveniences and behaviors. They do not use electricity or telephones, they wear no jewelry or other adornment or coloring of clothing, they ride in black buggies, and they plow their fields using only horses. But much of what we think we know about them is often sketchy and superficial.

The Amish religion is based on JESUS' Sermon on the Mount and the teachings in it including the humbleness of the Beatitudes, warnings against certain behaviors, peaceful response to enemies, supporting those in need, and much more. (If you want to review all that is contained in the Sermon on the Mount, read Matthew 5-7.) They do not believe in any intermediaries between GOD and the individual. They do not worship in churches, but rather in homes. When the congregation becomes too large for a house, they split into two groups.

Pastors are chosen annually by lot from among the men of the congregation. The bishop places a marker inside one of a group of hymnals, and then each man chooses a book. The one who takes the book with the marker is understood to have been selected by GOD to serve as the leader for the next year. Pastors keep track of congregants and make sure the community knows of needs that arise among the members so that the community can help. Bishops, who oversee two-to-four congregations are chosen in the same way from among the pastors. Bishops are considered servants and mediators, and they are called upon to help resolve disputes or issues that arise, but otherwise have little authority.

For worship, a large black wagon delivers benches to the designated home that will host the service. Women sit on one side and men on the other. No one knows in advance who will preach the morning sermon. At the beginning of the service, the preacher is chosen by lot or by consensus. How would you like to be the one chosen at the beginning of one of our services to bring the message to the congregation?

One may wonder how members could be prepared to give a sermon when they don't even know if they will be called upon. The answer is very simple. The Amish always have to be prepared to share a gospel message. Wouldn't that be wonderful if each of us was ready to tell someone else about JESUS?

There is a story about an Amish farmer who asked if he was a Christian. The farmer thought about it and then asked for the questioner to wait a few moments. On a piece of paper, he wrote down some names and handed it to the person who asked. He said the one who inquired, "Here is a list of people who know me best. Please ask them if I am a Christian." Think about the people who know you best. What would they say about you if asked about your faith?

In CHRIST'S love,

Pastor Jeffrey