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Hampden Heights Sentinel

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Want your child to succeed? Get involved!
Page 1
- The Plan of Salvation is a salvage operation, with God desiring to rescue as many as possible.
Page 2
- Cultivating friendships can open doors for Christ.
Page 3
- How is your health? Surprising survey results.
Page 4
- A lot of church activity to report.
Page 5
- A mini Bible trivia quiz.
Page 6

INDEX:

RJA News Corner	1
Alabaster Box	2
Going Deeper	3
Path to Better Health	4
Church Board Minutes	5
Children's Page	6
Church & Newsletter Information	6

The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ~2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 NIV~

RJA News Corner

by Lee Stahl, Principal



Creating Your Own Beach

by Kathryn Federowski

For months, our 5th and 6th-grade class has been looking forward to April 21st. Maggie Kargbo turned 12, Wednesday, April 21st, and her parents organized for the company, "Painting with a Twist" to come teach us how to paint a beautiful beach sunset! We also enjoyed pizza, cake, and goodies. What a fun, in-school, field trip and experience! Thank you, Maggie's parents, family, and "Painting with a Twist", for involving us in her special day.

Parent Involvement Increases Student Success

The most accurate predictor of academic achievement is not the socioeconomic status of the student. It is not determined by the school the child attends or the teacher the student has. Rather, the best predictor of student success is the extent to which families encourage learning at home and involve themselves in their child's education. That is not to say that socioeconomics, schools, and teachers don't factor into a children's academic success. However, the research strongly suggests that when parents are engaged with their children's education there is greater academic success, and they are more likely to develop a love for learning.

Research also supports other conclusions as a result of positive parental involvement in

children's education. Parental involvement leads to better classroom behavior. Reading together at home greatly improves student's reading skills. Parent involvement lifts teacher morale, and it also improves parent and child relationships. Children develop self-confidence and are more motivated in the classroom.

The responsibility for parent involvement is not solely on the parent. Teachers and parents need to share in that responsibility. Teachers can assist parents by providing them with opportunities to be engaged with their child. This could be in the form of offering parents to participate in field trips, class projects, or volunteer in the classroom. It can also be suggesting learning activities or resources that parent and child can work on together.

Frequent communication between teacher and parent also helps foster more parental involvement.

So, what are some tips for being and involved parent. Below is a list of some suggestions.

1. Read with your children and talk with them about the books and stories you read.
2. Offer help or to review your children's homework assignments.
3. Organize and monitor your children's time.
4. Tutor your children with materials and instructions provided by teachers or found on the internet.
5. Attend and actively support school activities and parent-teacher conferences.
6. Volunteer in classrooms, on field trips, or for special events.
7. Talk with your children about school on a daily basis.
8. Be an advocate for your children to make sure their needs are being met.

(continued on page 6)

Alabaster Box by Dave Taylor

Accepting When God Says "No" (2 Sam 12:15-25)

After Nathan the prophet reveals to King David the consequences that will befall him as a result of the chaos he has sown into the house of Uriah the Hittite, David and Bathsheba's newborn child becomes very sick (2 Sam 12:15). Pointedly, the scripture does not refer to the mother of the infant by her name Bathsheba, but here, even after the marriage of David and Bathsheba, the mother is referenced as "Uriah's wife." The verse explains the cause of the infant's sickness by stating "the Lord struck the child." In our humanism-tainted thinking, we may recoil in horror at the thought of God striking an infant. But, by faith we see the execution of God's perfect judgment and accompanying punishment, a work described by Isaiah as God's "strange act" (Isaiah 28:21). How do we reconcile this situation with the time Jesus placed a little child in the midst of the crowd and assured the people that "it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish" (Matthew 18:14)? It is sometimes difficult for us to understand the dichotomy between the mercy and the justice of God Almighty.

David, heart-broken over the impending loss of his infant son, beseeches God in prayer and fasting (v16). He humbles himself before God, and sleeps all night upon the ground, resisting the assistance of his servants, who try to lift him up from the ground and give him food (v17). This scene plays out day after day and night after

night for seven days until the child dies. Fearful of the effect this tragic news might have upon the mental and emotional health of the king, the servants are reluctant to inform him of the child's death. They reason; that if David behaved so inconsolably while the child was alive, how much more extreme might his behavior become upon the news of his son's death (v18). However, the servants' hushed whispers among themselves unintentionally unburden them of the decision as to when and how to inform David. Though weakened by hunger and a shortage of adequate sleep, David remains perceptive enough to recognize that the sight of whispering servants is an ominous sign. David asks, "Is the child dead?" With deep-seated concern over the impact their revelation may have on the King, the servants report that the child is indeed dead (v19).

This news does transform David's behavior, but not in the way that his servants feared. David gets up and washes himself, then puts on fresh apparel. After attending to personal hygiene, his first order of business is to go into the house of God and worship. Only afterwards does David return to his home to break his fast (v20). The servants are so mystified by David's actions that they cannot refrain from asking him to explain it. "Why did you fast and weep while the child was alive, but rise and eat when the child died?" they inquire (v21). David has a deep understanding of God's mercy and grace, and he believes in the power of intercessory prayer. David thought, "Who knows whether

God will be gracious to me and let the child live" as a result of my supplications? (v22). But after the child dies, it is clear that God has made His final decision on the matter. David pragmatically accepts the divine judgment as an action he can no longer influence or alter. "I shall go to [my son], but he shall not return to me" (v23). David understands that without divine intervention, death is a one-way trip. One day he will join his infant son in death, but his son will not return to join the living on this earth. At David's time in history, no dead person had ever been resurrected to continue their life in this world. The first scriptural record of such an event was when the prophet Elijah resurrected the son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17-24), but Elijah was not born until more than half a century after King David died.

Are we still struggling with the fact that God struck down this innocent victim? Perhaps we can better understand possible explanations for God's judgment here if we consider the question, "What would have been the result if the child had lived?" It should be noted that the answer to this question is not clearly revealed in scripture. Therefore, this thought experiment is highly speculative, and no firm conclusion can be reached. However, this investigative activity may be a worthwhile exercise if it provides possible insights into the character of God, and reaffirms our faith in the One who does not err.

Could the survival of the child have led David and Bathsheba to minimize the enormity of their sin? Might David have been emboldened to repeat this type of sin in another situation? God's curse upon the infant left no doubt about the seriousness of David's law breaking. To the extent that the infant's death served as any type of punishment, it was a punishment for David and Bathsheba, not for the child. God laid the child to sleep until the last day. The plan of salvation is a salvage operation, with God desiring to rescue as many as possible. It is not unreasonable to think that David's infant son will be a part of the first resurrection and grow to manhood walking the golden streets of heaven. Would the survival of the child have prevented Solomon, the younger brother, from ascending to the throne of Israel and Judah? This could have been problematic and politically destabilizing, since God had promised David that one of his descendants would always sit on the throne (2 Sam 7:16). Although the child was in fact a descendant of David, this may not have been widely known by the King's subjects. Indeed, David himself had tried to promote the storyline that the child was the son of Uriah. Finally, if we still have questions about God's judgment in this episode, we should take a look at David's response. Although David lost a son, he still accepted God's decision and fully maintained his faithful relationship with the Lord.

Shall we do any less?

Going Deeper by Barbara Snyder

Absolute Friendship

There is a story about a man in the 12th century, Richard of St. Victor, who wrote about what others have called Absolute Friendship. He said that the Trinity can be summed up as mutual friendship between three.

In essence, he said, for God to be good, God can be one. For God to be loving, God has to be two, (because love is always a relationship between giving and receiving.) The real foundation of God, though, is that for God to be joy-filled, love spilling over and generating life and energy to creation, God has to be three. Delight comes, he says, from two together enjoying and planning, and creating together, which is, in the Holy Spirit, the expression of God.

Now, I'm not trying to "teach" anyone an idea of theology, that is not my purpose. What I have written is about the thoughts of a thinker of long ago, who had an insight of his own. That is all. My purpose in telling you this is that, if this visual can be used by individuals to live the Trinity, then it is of worth, and it places friendship right at the heart of God. "... but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father." John 15:15. Jesus calls us all to welcome strangers and treat them as friends. "Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for your friends, even though they are strangers to you." 3 John 1:5. [The Message](#)

Invite others into companionship over a cup of tea and conversation, or over the fence talking about home

improvements. Ask them questions. Display unexpected interest in them, their traditions, their beliefs, and their stories. Learn why they left what they left, why they stay where they stay, why they love what they love. Enter their world, and welcome them into your world, without judgment. If they reciprocate, welcome their reciprocation; if not, welcome their non-reciprocation. Join together and plot for the common good together.

But a cross-cultural perspective on Jesus as friend says a lot about the meaning of community. For in community, be it the neighborhood, the city, the country, the world, friendship goes both ways. It involves give and take. Since Jesus is holding hands with the world, so to speak, then intimacy with Jesus extends far beyond personal needs. To befriend Jesus means carrying, in fellowship, the responsibilities of friendship that He carried, and that He gave to each human being He met.

A person should always offer a prayer of gratitude for the love that has been awakened in him/her. When you feel love for Jesus and His love for you, you should offer the warmth of your love and friendship as a blessing for those who are damaged and unloved. Send that friendship out into the world to people who are desperate, to those who are starving, to those who are trapped in prison, in hospitals, and into all the dark places in tormented lives. When you send that friendship out from the magnitude of your own, it reaches other people. This is

the deepest power of prayer. Prayer for another is an act of love and friendship and the presence of this sent to others enables people to heal, and to have purpose, and to gain strength to properly care for themselves and others. When there is God-like friendship in your life, you can share it spiritually with those who are pushed to the very edge of life. It is there even if you feel that you are at the edge of your life. You might have little to give but in the kingdom of love and friendship there is no competition; there is no possessiveness or control. The more you give away, the more you will have.

In the context of worldwide community, (different than cultural diversity) being friends with Jesus is hard work. For when followers of Jesus walk beside Him, He leads them in directions they would rather not go, into neighborhoods they would rather avoid, and to meet other friends of His they might not normally know. As the scriptures and history show, to be a friend of Jesus means loving others just as He does. This is the soup kitchen kind of friendship, the "don't leave them stranded" kind of friendship, the prison ministry and the fostering of migrant children ministry, and everything in-between.

Now these next sentences are my thoughts from the 21st century. I believe that God always uses all experiences, good, or bad, to show His friendship to us; likewise, we are given the grace, should we accept it, of using all our experiences, good or bad, to demonstrate, through friendship, God's character.

At times, if we had not had the negative experiences, we would not have the seeds of grace to demonstrate His character in specific situations. As Paul said, "All things work together for good for those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28.

Normally we look at Romans 8:28 and try to make sense of our "bad" experiences. But the experiences are not just what happens to us, but what we have done to ourselves. If this includes sin (a turning away from God) then our neglect of His law, of His love, of His friendship would be our death, except for the true meaning of Romans 8:28. It means because we failed, God has not failed to: give us something to draw on, to identify with, and to offer friendship to people in places we have been whether we have been spiritually successful in those places or not. When we fall and fail, we need the gift of friendship, both to receive and to give away. It is our witness. If you think about it, it might be hard to grasp. But, again, it is our witness.

So be it.

The Path to Better Health by Leo Pena

A Health Survey; What the Data Revealed

As society begins to return to some normalcy after the pandemic, and as we enter into the warmer days of the year, several of our church ministries have teamed up to begin outreach in our neighboring community. We have chosen to follow in our teacher (Jesus) footsteps. He often first ministered to the physical needs of the person before bidding them to follow him. As we have been going out to the community of Stony Creek Mills, we have identified a field in need of ministry. To be able to reach them effectively, we need to know more about them. So, we decided to conduct a health survey. In this month's article, I'm going to share what the data revealed and how it compares with the rest of Berks County.

Surveys are an important means of collecting health and social science information from a sample of people in a standardized way to better understand a larger population. There are many methods used to conduct surveys, including questionnaires and in-depth interviews via phone, traditional mail, email, and in-person.

Survey research allows researchers to collect practical data in a relatively short period of time. Depending on the design and scope, surveys can collect data on a representative sample of people.

Survey research, like all research approaches, can have drawbacks. It can be hard to get detailed information in a survey, and

sometimes people choose not to answer difficult questions, or they cannot remember important details correctly, or at all (recall bias). Surveys can have low response rates, and those who do not have access to the medium through which the surveys are distributed, are excluded. For example, homeless people may be excluded from a survey conducted via mail, and those without health insurance who cannot afford to see a doctor may be excluded from surveys conducted by health care providers.

When designing surveys, it is important to design questions carefully so that they are clear and understandable to the respondent, produce results relevant to the purpose of the survey, and are not a 'leading' question, or questions that prompt a specific desired answer.

In our survey we wanted to target only health topics in which we could offer help or solutions to the community, based on the findings.

These were the questions we asked:

1. How would you rate your health from 1 to 5?
2. How would you rate your stress level on a scale of 1 to 5?
3. From 1 to 5, how worried are you about the future?
4. Has your employment or finances been affected by the pandemic?
5. Would you attend a free health seminar presented by a doctor in your community?

We wanted to compare people's answers to a public health statistic for Berks County, that they had published. I have to admit our survey data was not what I expected. For example, we surveyed 60 homes, and of those 60 homes, 42% thought they were in excellent health. Of those surveyed, only 15% thought they were under max stress, 19% were very worried about their future, 71% were not affected financially by the pandemic, and only 38% were willing to attend a health seminar. We expected the questions to show that there was high levels of health issues, and a high level of fearfulness. I definitely thought there would be more financial issues due to the shut-down of the economy. But this is the data that we now have.

So, what is the next step? On May 16th, our church will be holding a one-day health seminar in a community center in the neighborhood. Our own Dr. Jason Shives will be the main speaker. We are going to have a wonderful afternoon, so we invite you to attend.

Now, here is what the latest health statistics show for Berks county:

Overall, Berks County residents are in good health. However, heart disease is the leading cause of death, followed by all forms of cancer (including female breast cancer), stroke, lung cancer, and female breast cancer. In addition, many adults suffer from obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and untreated mental health conditions.

For example: Nearly one-third of adults (30.2%) are obese, and more than one-third (35.9%) are overweight. One-third of adults (33.4%) have been diagnosed with high blood pressure; this percentage represents 105,400 adults. One in seven adults (13.9%) has been diagnosed with diabetes; and although 14.6% have been diagnosed with a mental health condition, only 38.5% of those are receiving treatment for their condition. Residents of the City of Reading, Blacks, and Latinos are in poorer overall health. They are also more likely to be obese, to have diabetes, high blood pressure, or a mental health condition than other residents. But there are many smaller suburban and rural areas of the county where low-income residents in particular, are in poor health.

Unmet Needs

Health care is unaffordable for many Berks County residents. Forty-four percent of survey respondents identified the cost of health care, including insurance coverage, co-pays, and deductibles, as the most common health concern. For example: One in seven adults aged 18-64 (13.3%) is uninsured, representing 33,000 uninsured adults. This percentage has increased from 8.7% in 2008, to 13.3% in 2012. Among the uninsured in Berks County, one-quarter (24.8%) visited an emergency room for care in the past year, due to a lack of health insurance.

Health data from: The Research and Evaluation Group Public Health Management.

Summary of Church Board Minutes From 4-19-21 submitted by Wayne Johns

MEMBERS PRESENT: Pastor Shawn Shives, Lee Stahl, Paulo Acosta, Juliana Acosta, Eric Blackerby, Jason Mclean, Dwight Edris, Lorraine Edris, Leo Pena, Bob Kondracki, Cheryl Cherington, Nancy Stump, Arleen Johns and Wayne Johns.

Quorum declared by Clerk @ 7:23

MEMBERS ABSENT: David Beard, Donna Knarr, Wendy Hughes.

Guest: Ashley Richards

Opening Prayer: Wayne Johns

Devotion: Pastor Shawn – Romans 15:4 Do I have the right attitude?

Clerks Report: Minutes for 3.15.21 reviewed.

Motion with 1st and 2nd To accept minutes as presented.

Motion was approved.

Treasurers Report: Treasurer's report provided an overview.

Motion with 1st and 2nd To accept Treasurer's Overview.

Motion was approved.

Shalom Church temporary rental

Motion with 1st and 2nd To consider renewal of lease dated 7.18.20 to 7.17.21 requesting the Finance committee review and update the lease considering an additional 6 months in consultation with the Shalom Church.

Motion was approved.

Department Reports

Personal Ministry's – Interest Coordinator and Personal Ministries have discussed IIW for mailing again. Advertise in newspaper for interested parties for Bible studies. We are posting our services via media and working on additional formats using media to spread the gospel. Supporting other ministries such as health and prayer ministry's as we contact the community.

Interest Coordinator – COVID has made things challenging, but we have been keeping in touch via text/phone and interests has been expressed to meet again when weather permits/COVID reduces. We are inviting people for dinner, making personal contacts and showing Jesus working through us. All church members can be helpful in some aspects. Reported pleasing results with past weekend door-to-door activities. There were 30 individuals that expressed interest in meeting, but also expressed concerns regarding COVID. This is a team effort.

4.8.21 Motion with 1st and 2nd for

Health Ministries to receive two separate checks (1) \$150.00 refundable security deposit, provided facility is clean upon completion of seminar, (2) \$300.00 for rent for the building for May 16, 2021 to use Antietam Recreation Center @ 4:00 pm. Check written to AVRCC. Nancy will deliver checks for use of facility to Antietam Recreation Center for dinner with the doctor.

Motion was approved.

Prayer Ministry's – Sent a report attached below.

Three departments scheduled to report next month: Sabbath School – Social Committee – Health Ministries

Social Committee looking at July 11 for a social activity that will be announced. We will secure flowers for Mother's Day in May.

MPC will need to meet. Stahl's are leaving and need to replace their positions. Leo volunteered to help with Earliteen/Juniors.

FYI: Plant Manager reported he found air handlers for fellowship hall at a cost of \$12,000.00 for both units, instead of \$20,000 per unit. A church member volunteered to provide labor without cost provided he had assistance. Recommended Finance committee review new information.

FYI: Conference wide day of prayer during May with a focus each day on a topic.

Camp-meeting registrations are up for sites and dorm usage. Dates 6.11 to 6.19.21. Speakers: Carlton Byrd, Sean Boomstra.

October evangelist meeting still being planned.

Conference office ground breaking ceremony was held today.

BENEDICTION: Eric Blackerby

ADJOURNMENT: 9:00 pm

Prayer Ministry

Our activities have been limited due to Covid-19 over the past year, but we were successfully able to maintain our two regular prayer times—Sunday mornings and prayer meeting Wednesday and Thursday evenings—through Covid with the use of the church's conference call line.

Sunday Morning Prayer Group

- Meets at 8:30 am each Sunday
- Attendance has doubled in the past year (from 3 to 6-7 attendees).
- This group emphasizes prayer for our church's families, church leadership, world leaders, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and special requests as they arise.
- **Proposed expansion:** *Announce from pulpit during announcements to grow awareness.*

Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting

- Meets at 4:30 p.m. each Wednesday evening
- Begins with a soup supper
- Core group of approximately 7 people up 15 at times
- All participants enjoy and Faithfully attend
- Often study Sister White books and scripture
- Prayer time
- As Covid lifts they are rejoining for session in their home.
- **Proposed Expansion:** Meet in person again, announce meetings in bulletin and promote regularity through announcements.

Thursday Night Prayer Meeting

- Meets at 7:00 pm each Thursday
- Core group of approximately 5 people (occasionally more; larger attendance when in-person)
- All participants enjoy & faithfully attend
- Studying the book of Acts alongside prayer time
- **Proposed expansion:** *Meet in person as weather warms, announce meetings in bulletin, and promote regularly through announcements*

Vespers

- Held once last summer (play about Jonah & a social planned with the social committee)
- Good turnout (approximately 30 attendees)
- Interest was expressed in regular Sabbath night vespers
- **Proposed expansion:** *We would like to establish a monthly vespers program each Sabbath night with family focus, including plays and other fun ways to learn about Jesus. (Open to further programs planned jointly with social committee to include game/movie nights, etc.)*

Agape Feast

- We were unable to hold our annual Agape Feast last year due to Covid.
- Traditionally this service includes light snacks (bread, grapes, dates, almonds, etc.), music, foot washing & communion service, and a short sermonette.
- Past participants expressed that the service was meaningful, special, uplifting, etc. Many look forward to the service each fall.
- This service makes poignant the significance of communion, draws the church, as one, to God, and builds a sense of community within our church body.
- We would like to reestablish this event in 2021.

Increased Prayer Ministry Involvement Proposal

- Implement changes to expand current offerings (Sunday/Thursday prayer, vespers program)
- Agape Feast – outside in summer to accommodate Covid restrictions
- Prayer Brunch – outdoor, early fall
- Institute prayer sessions to blanket evangelism in prayer—either through existing prayer times or a special meeting time (will work with pastor to identify timely and specific prayer needs)
- Reestablish use of prayer box on a regular basis
 - Elders would encourage use of prayer box during the congregational prayer
 - We would lead a group in prayer over requests each Sabbath directly after the service.
 - We will keep a journal of prayer requests coming in and note answered prayers.
 - We will provide a monthly prayer update to the church (including testimonies).
- Prayer Ministry is open to any other recommendations from the pastor and the church board.

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The Children's Page by Tina Kondracki

Fix the Verses of Revelation

- 1- Of the tribes of gade, were sealed twelve thousand (rev7:5)
- 2- In those days men shall seek death, and shall and find it;(rev 9;6)
- 3- And the kings of the earth, and great men, and the poor man(rev6:15)
- 4- I am in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed n sackcloth down to the foot. (Rev1:13)
- 5- And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the names of the one was Oprah, and the name of the other was Ruth: (ruth 1:4)

2- Who's body did the Archangel Michael and the Devil argue about? (Jude1:9)
A-Adam B-John
C-Aaron D- Moses

3-Jesus changed Simon the son of Jonas name to?
A-Phillip B-Nathanael
C-Cephas D-Paul

4- Who was the mother of Jacob? (Genesis 27:6)
A-Barak B-Sisera
C-Deborah D-Rebekah

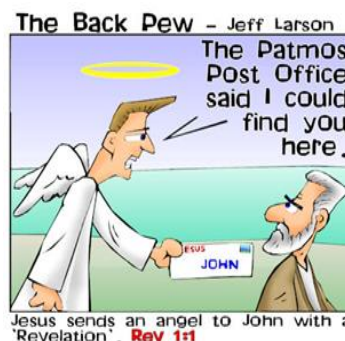
5-Who are the children of Keturah? (Genesis 25:4)
A-Ephah B-Eldaah
C-Epher D-Abidah

6-How old was Moses when he told Pharoah to let the Israelites go? (Exodus7:7)
A-50 B-80
C-75 D-120

7-Where did Paul and Barnabas preach together in the synagogue? (Acts14:1)
A-Canaan B-Iconium
C-Galilee D-Nazareth

True or False

- 1-In the book of Revelation, John saw a river of life, clear as a Diamond. (Rev.22:1)
- 2-Where did Paul go after leaving Athens? He went to Corinth..(Acts19:1)
- 3-John said silver and gold I do not have. (Acts3:6)
- 4- Did the Galileans welcome Jesus? (John4:43-45)
- 5-There were twelve gates of gold (Rev21:21)



Bible Trivia

- 1-Who is the Prosecuted church? (Revelations 2:8-11)
A- Ephesus B-Smyrna
C- Pergamos D-Sardis

RJA News Corner (continued from page 1)

- 9. If problems arise quickly address them with the teacher.
- 10. Advise teachers of any issues at home that may affect your children's school performance.
- 11. Encourage your children on successes and support them on poor performances.
- 12. Continue to be involved with your children through middle and high school.

Scholarships for 2021-22 School Year

Applications for Opportunity and Education Tax Credit Scholarships from the Berks County Community Foundation for the 2021-22 school year will take place beginning May 15-31. Once again, Mr. Stahl is willing to assist any parent with the on-line application process. Parents can begin calling the school starting May 5 to schedule an appointment to complete the application.

Most appointments last 10-15 minutes. When coming to the appointment, it is important that the parent brings a copy of their **2020 1040 Tax Return** (paper or digital form). It is also important that the parent knows the password to their email account, since verification may require logging into the account using a computer and not on their smart phone. You can reach the school at 610-777-8424.

Reading Junior Academy... Educating Today and for Eternity!