

SEPTEMBER 2020

CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Monthly Updates from Bethany Presbyterian Church

Pastor Message

Open O Sea

Last week, I had the very pleasant experience of gathering with so many of you at Blanket Fest. What a wonderful evening it was with 50 of you as we looked for life and celebrated together. Just hearing the happy voices and children's laughter eased our troubles. As the sun sauntered to the west, everyone was visibly able to relax and enjoy the wonderful music provided by the Praise band. With the exception of masks and having to stay in seating pods, it was spectacularly normal!

I am so impressed with each of our families as they talked with a bit of humor about the challenges they face. Whacky school schedules produced jokes about whether kids would be able to tell which days not to sleep-in. Employment uncertainties were shared along with stories of opportunities to do other things. Child care challenges were being worked out with a lot of creativity.

Simply coping, with a can-do attitude of hope, inspires me. This is the nitty gritty of faith in a Savior named Jesus. Our backs are against the wall, avoidance is no option. So we marshal the resources of strong relationships, and confidence that God is going to divide the sea somehow, and lead us through.

Standing on the threshold of September, we're pretty sure that it's going to be even more unpredictable than August. With school out, many of us managed to piece together a routine. But we know we will have to adapt on the fly to the unpredictable changes ahead.

Bethany leaders are working hard to build new routines for being together. I'll be doing a "Daily Dose of Prayer" virtual gathering beginning September 1 at 7:30 a.m., for early birds. We continue to evaluate and adapt the Sunday morning schedule hoping to make room for more live attendance as people feel comfortable. Confirmation classes will begin. Special projects to bring a connecting touch to our scattered church are in the works. In the meantime, let's watch for the chaos to open a path, as we step into our calling to love and serve with the heart of Jesus.

Can't wait to see you in church, Pastor Bill

HERE'S WHAT'S UP!

**2, 3 - MESSAGES FROM
OUR PASTORS AND
MUSICAL NOTES**

**4, 5, 6 - UPDATES AND
EVANGELISM**

**7, 8 - SEPTEMBER
BIRTHDAYS, UPCOMING
EVENTS**



Musical Notes

By: John Henninger

Ways to Make Music

We are told by doctors and choral professionals that it is not safe to sing together in groups during the outbreak of COVID-19. Does that mean we cannot make music? No! Here are some ways you can get involved if you are interested in helping us make dynamic, music-filled worship for those worshipping in person and those worshipping virtually.

Some ideas to consider...

- **Song Leaders:** Each Sunday, song leaders help us by singing the hymns and service music. It has been a great way for those present, and worship from home, can hear the words of the hymn as they hum along.
- **Vocal Recording:** For the adventurous singer, I'd encourage you to sing from home. I would provide an accompaniment that you can sing to and send the recording to be played during worship.
- **Virtual Choir:** We would love to pursue a virtual choir this fall. If you are interested in participating, or have any technical capabilities that could help us achieve this goal, please let me know!

PROPERTY TEAM

We have acquired an electrostatic sanitizing device that vastly speeds up the cleaning of the building. We received the device on August 11th and it has been in use since then. We are continuing to look for other ways to improve the safety of our church building to protect staff and everyone attending services.

BETHANY GOLDEN OLDIES

Bethany Golden Oldies is still hoping to meet on September 17. As of now, we do not have permission to meet for our luncheon. Please look in the church bulletins or online to see the latest updates for Oldies. We hope this finds each and every one of our members happy and healthy. GOD BLESS AMERICA AND KEEP EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING SAFE FROM HARM AND DESTRUCTION.

Associate Pastor Update

By: Pastor Jae Cho

This summer, although different than previous years, was filled with wonderful memories. From biking the Montour Trail to watching Madagascar at the Dependable drive-in movie theater and serving on a mission right in our own backyard, the BYG rallied together to grow in our faith and serve Jesus.

The Orosz family welcomed us into their backyard for the BYG BBQ. What a wonderful evening welcoming new BYG members, meeting this year's youth teachers and kicking-off the new school year.

Heading into the fall, we will continue to meet both in-person and virtually and have a few new exciting offerings for confirmation classes and Sunday School. Keeping everyone safe and healthy will continue to be our primary concern.

In other exciting news, Luke is already eight months old and continues to grow and develop every day. He's starting to stand and balance by himself and we can only imagine that he will very soon be walking.

Intentionally connecting with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ is more important now than ever before. I encourage you to continue to worship with us every Sunday, either in-person or at home and pray for our church, pastors, and the PNC as they continue their search for a new senior pastor. The church has reopened for office hours, so if you would like to connect personally with me, just let me know. May God bless you richly as you seek Jesus every day.

Fall Classes and Offerings

- **Confirmation Class:** A hybrid class with youth group will be offered this year and will use the confirmation curriculum. Classes will begin on Sunday, September 13.
- **Youth Group:** Our fall season will use the Experiencing God student edition curriculum and will kick-off from 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 13. We will be alternating between in-person and virtual options every other weekend.
- **Sunday School:** This fall, classes will remain virtual. Information and resources can be found online.
- **Adult Sunday School:** Classes will resume in-person this fall starting on September 13. Stay tuned for more information.
- **Race Relations in America:** An adult study taking a tour through the biblical and historical realities of race and racism as a foundation for asking difficult yet necessary questions about where we stand today and where we must go from here.

SUPPORT OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN HAITI

The people of Haiti continue to suffer from the negative consequences of the political unrest in the country. Ongoing drought has resulted in no crops to harvest and COVID-19 has shut down all the open-air markets. The people are dying of starvation every day and need our help!

Considering donating to help the LaCroix Haiti Mission supply food to its children and their families living in Lacroix and the villages where the other six schools are located. The Mission team will be matching all donations up to \$2,500. Every little bit helps to support our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

Donate Now (please select LaCroix Haiti Mission from the drop down option):
www.bethanypresby.org/mission-outreach



SERVING WITH THE HEART OF JESUS



This past August, seven Bethany Church members traveled to West Virginia to participate in an adult mission trip. Led by Rev. Joan Steward and Summersville Presbyterian Church, the group worked diligently over the week to build a new ramp for a local family.

"What a wonderful way to spend a week, doing God's work for beautiful people. I feel so blessed right now, I can hardly contain it," said Connie Segelon, church member and mission trip participant.

Read more about their experience here:
www.bethanypresby.org/blog/wv-mission-trip

BACK TO SCHOOL WITH BETHANY

More than 100 students showed up to receive their Blessing Bags at our Back to School event. What a blessing to be able to provide our students with supplies and a prayer as they begin their new school journey this year. A little bit of rain couldn't stop the fun! See more pictures from the event:

www.bethanypresby.org/blog/back-to-school



LOOKING FOR LITE - BLANKET FEST 2020

What a blessing to be able to gather together after months apart to enjoy outside music, safe fellowship and praise to our Maker! Blanket Fest gathered families on a beautiful evening to remind everyone that we are, in fact, OK.

See more photos from the event:

www.bethanypresby.org/blog/blanketfest



Regeneration: The New Birth

By: Doug Bovard

Scripture Reference: John 2:6-11; John 3:1-21; John 7:50-52; John 19:39

When God saves a sinner from His wrath and curse, He creates a new person. Yet in this life we will never be perfect. In fact, we may feel like we are getting worse as we understand God's holy nature and the depths of our sin. We should remember that the forgiven sinner is free from patterns of sinful behavior and a powerful and breathtaking transformation is taking place. Although we may wrestle with sin and doubt, we should remember what scripture proclaims (2 Cor. 5:17) the old has gone and the new has come! In this month's article we will see that the new birth is transformational. We will look at transformed lives in the Bible and examine characteristics of the regenerate soul.

We start with Nicodemus in John chapter 3 coming to Jesus in darkness and unbelief. He did not want to be associated with Jesus and he did not understand the identity and mission of Jesus. He was spiritually lost but was face-to-face with Jesus (that is powerful!). Let's fast forward to John 7:50-52. Here we see the chief priests and Pharisees wanting Jesus arrested. They are angry with the temple guards for not arresting him and with the ignorance of the crowds listening to him. Defending Jesus,

Nicodemus makes a point of law that these judges must be unbiased and listen to the accused and the accusers. Was Nicodemus beginning to understand who Jesus was? Was the Holy Spirit transforming his heart and mind for the new birth?

Now read John 19:39. Joseph of Arimathea received permission from Pilate to take away the body of Jesus. Joining him and bringing myrrh and aloes was Nicodemus now openly associating himself with Jesus at a time when it was very dangerous to do so. Nicodemus had been brought to an understanding of who Jesus was, and his actions clearly show that the Holy Spirit had transformed him and birthed him into the kingdom of God. Nicodemus had gone from darkness to light - from death to life!

There are many examples of transformational change in the OT and NT and even a prefiguring of this change. In John 2:6-11 the transformation of water into wine prefigures the spiritual transformation of those who are born again. In John 1:41-42 Simon was transformed in the presence of Jesus and given the name Peter which was an important turning point in his life. In John 4:1-26 the woman at the well is transformed

by Jesus; consider the adulterous woman at John 8:1-30; or Zacchaeus at Luke 19:1-10; or Saul of Tarsus at Acts 9:1-19. In the OT Abraham, Moses, and the prophets were transformed. Hebrews chapter 11 lists many who were transformed and born again.

Finally, what are the characteristics of a regenerate soul? 1 John 2:29 describes everyone who practices righteousness as born of God. 1 John 4:7-8 says whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 1 John 5:1-5 we see that everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God; that everyone who is truly born again cannot walk away from Jesus; and that those who obey His commandments show that they have received the new birth. Addressing this matter, The Belgic Confession, Article 24 reads:

We believe that this true faith, produced in us by the hearing of God's Word and by the work of the Holy Spirit, regenerates us and makes us new creatures, causing us to live a new life and freeing us from the slavery of sin...So then, it is impossible for this holy faith to be unfruitful in a human being, seeing that we do not speak of an empty faith but of what Scripture calls "faith working through love." Yours in Christ, Doug Bovard

If you are interested in attending Adult Sunday School, please contact Doug Bovard at dbovard@verizon.net or call/text 412-979-9324.

Membership Updates

Condolences:

- Harvene McAuley, mother of Arnie McAuley, passed on August 20, 2020.
- Helen DiGiovanni passed on August 21, 2020.
- Marie Findley passed on August 16, 2020.
- Sue Anne Spahr, sister of Judy Gardner, passed on August 14, 2020.
- William Blocker, brother of Carrie Emerson, passed in early August.



Please keep the family and friends of those recently passed in your prayers.

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you." -Isaiah 43:2

**Please call the church office (412-221-5132) if you have any updates to your family's information or if you have a change of address.*

September Birthdays

09/01 Thomas Patterson	09/07 Joshua Smith	09/14 Michele Zwigart	09/24 Dean Karns
09/02 Tiffany Doyle	09/07 Clyde Davis	09/14 Darla Lower	09/24 Heather Beattie
09/02 Ava Fulton	09/07 Zander Nowak	09/14 Thomas Lesnett	09/24 Kaley Kilpatrick
09/02 Debbie Abel	09/07 Kevin Dady	09/14 Daniel Furman	09/25 Laura Werner
09/02 Vivian Lesnett	09/09 Geraldine McDonough	09/15 Jennifer Smith	09/25 Michael Segeleon
09/03 Ryan Black	09/09 Sandra Fricker	09/16 Patrick Rush	09/25 Louis Schinosi
09/03 Deborah Perkins	09/09 Bethany Edwards	09/16 Judith Gardner	09/28 Gavin Orosz
09/03 Samuel Naples	09/09 Leo Vighetti	09/17 Layla Powell	09/28 Elizabeth Murray
09/03 Janeen Lacher	09/10 Kevin Cox	09/18 Kevin Strouse	09/28 Reilly O'Connor
09/04 Paul Eichler	09/11 Dawn Williams-Zabicki	09/18 Susan Puel	09/29 Maxine Berton
09/05 Linda McCaskey	09/11 Reginald Frye	09/18 Arianna Lower	09/29 Marlene Haley
09/05 Jessica Deemer	09/11 Michael Suchoza	09/19 Christopher Foltz	
09/05 Laura Edwards	09/11 Collin Wilhelm	09/19 Tammie Suppo	
09/05 Paula Naples	09/12 Amanda Schwotzer	09/19 Muhammad Chaudhry	
09/05 Aidan Krieg	09/12 Katherine Joesbury	09/20 Alexis Byers	
09/05 Lietta Danilo	09/12 Christine Furman	09/21 Blake Vollmer	
09/06 Jacqueline Witwicki	09/12 Owen Veneski	09/22 Kenneth Cook	
09/06 Paul Figura	09/13 Paul Rinald	09/22 Nancy Yenchik	
09/06 Gretchen DeRoss	09/13 Jamie Baldridge	09/22 Pastor Santos	
09/06 Michael Unghajer	09/13 Jamie Martinelli	09/23 Kevin Shildt	
	09/13 Peggy Wolstoncroft	09/24 Joseph Verduci	

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Upcoming Events

Race Relations in America: 12-Week Adult Study Series This adult study series on Race Relations in America is off to a great start. The series will take a tour through the biblical and historical realities of race and racism as a foundation for asking difficult yet necessary questions about where we stand today and where we must go from here. The course is designed to help start faithful, honest and free conversations about race and racism. If you'd like to join in the conversation, register today!

www.bethanypresby.org/events/race-in-america

Daily Dose of Prayer and Inspiration: September 1, 7:30 - 7:45 a.m.

Kick-start your day with the Lord and fellow believers! The Daily Dose of Prayer and Inspiration will be starting back up again on September 1. This jammed packed 15-minute session will include a word from our Lord and some thoughtful, heartfelt discussions. There is no homework, no study, just quality fellowship and fun. Join us Monday-Thursday either by video or phone. Register today!

www.bethanypresby.org/events/daily-dose-of-prayer