

JULY 2020

THE BEACON

Monthly newsletter of Bethany Presbyterian Church

Welcome Back!

Reopening Our Doors for Worship

Sunday, July 5, is a big day for Bethany Presbyterian Church! A real-time, physical gathering will be added to our livestream worship time! I phrase it this way on purpose. In churches everywhere, the expansion of the worship experience beyond sanctuary walls has changed the way we do church. And things may never be the same again.

Our leaders are reopening the sanctuary for worship gatherings starting at 10:45 a.m., Sunday, July 5. Here are some answers to questions you may have about attending.

Will I be safe? Yes. We are asking each person to bring a mask. We are encouraging those who are sick or close to someone who is sick to stay home. Anyone who feels anxious or vulnerable may wish to stay home. There will be a

temperature check at the entrance to ensure safety. Attendance will be recorded in case notifications need to be sent out.

Out of love for one another, we are exercising every precaution to maintain safe distancing in a joyful atmosphere. Music will not require group singing. Seating is staggered. People will exit the building following worship. Every aspect of the gathering has been considered from a safety perspective. Livestreaming will continue for those who will not be in attendance. Media capabilities have been added to the sanctuary, so we can continue to enjoy congregational participation in leading worship via pre-recorded video.

HERE'S WHAT'S UP!

**2, 3 - MESSAGES FROM
OUR PASTORS**

**4, 5, 6 - MUSIC NOTES,
SESSION UPDATE,
EVANGELISM**

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

Why should I attend? Each of us will have a unique motivation to come to church for worship. Some will find it adventurous or empowering to leave home. Others will be inspired by the sight of friends, and a feeling of normalcy. The worship experience can have more spiritual impact in person as compared to watching on a screen. In many, there is a unique, unspoken need that can be met by gathering together with others to draw near to God.

We humans have a deep sense of spiritual place that is often undergirded by a physical place. Bethany Church wants to honor that need. I encourage you to join in the grand regathering as it feels right for you. Looking forward to seeing you in church.

Pastor Bill

Things to keep in mind as you prepare for worship...

- **Limited Capacity:** To adhere to the social distancing requirement of keeping six feet apart, only 100 individuals will be allowed in the sanctuary at one time.
- **Personal Protective Equipment:** All persons attending service will wear a mask that covers both the nose and mouth. In accord with CDC guidelines, children over the age of two (2) will be asked to wear a mask for their safety.
- **Entrance:** Everyone will enter through the back door near the parking lot. All other entrances to the building will be locked.
- **Temperature Scan:** Upon entering the building through the back door, we will do an infrared forehead thermometer scan. Hand sanitizer will also be available at every entrance.
- **Records:** We will keep a record of all who attend, in case notices of infection need to be sent out. You will also be asked if you are experiencing any of the COVID-19 symptoms.
- **Collections:** A basket will be available prior to entering the sanctuary to collect all donations.
- **Sanctuary:** Ushers will guide you to seating that maintains a six feet distance from others. Ushers will also conduct an orderly exit, maintaining safe distancing as we leave worship. You will be asked to leave the building directly, and avoid gatherings following worship.
- **Nursery:** The nursery will remain closed and there will not be a coffee hour in the welcome center following the service.
- **Singing:** We are aware of significant infection hazards from group singing and will adjust our habits to minimize these.

Associate Pastor Update

By: Pastor Jae Cho

As the nation continues to navigate a global pandemic and social unrest, now more than ever, we need to lead in unity through the diversity in One Spirit. The dividedness in our country was at the forefront of my Pentecost sermon and my hope that we can put aside our differences and show the world how united we are by not tolerating social injustice.

To aid in that mission, we will be providing resources this summer, like our RightNow Media discipleship videos, to promote inclusion. It is also my pleasure to announce that Mr. Ralph Lowe, Pittsburgh Presbytery Justice Ministry Director will be joining us on July 19 as a guest speaker during worship.

Ralph B. Lowe Jr. is currently attending seminary at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and the Director of Justice Ministries for Pittsburgh Presbytery. He is also serving as pulpit supply for the Beaver Butler and Pittsburgh Presbytery. He enjoys spending time with his family and in his spare time reading, jogging, and golfing. Ralph is married to Kelli Lowe, who is a school teacher in the Pittsburgh Public School District. Together they are raising four amazing boys Joshua, Jonah, Koen and Korey.

In June, baby Luke turned six months and we celebrated his baptism. We look forward to watching him grow not only physically but also spiritually as well. I pray that you would still stay safe at this time and may God bless you abundantly Bethany Church family.

Bethany Youth Group

This summer, the Bethany Youth Group will meet on the first and third Sundays from 4:00 - 5:30 p.m. Additionally, we will be holding our Prayer Lunch on the second and fourth Wednesdays. Please let me know if you are interested in joining either of these events.

Congratulations to our new Youth Group leaders Grace Trotta, Emma Sysak, Cole Johnson, and Tyler Nicholson. These four students will help lead the Youth Group next year.

This August, we are planning to have a bonfire at the Orosz family's backyard and drive-in movie at the Dependable.



New Confirmands

Once again, I'd like to congratulate Bethany's four newest members: Carson Deross, Rachel Dunlap, Landon Smith, and Tyler Nicholson. You can rewatch their confirmation service here:

<https://bethanypresby.org/confirmation>

Discipleship

Our Discipleship team sent Bible Journeys to 100 of our youth in early June. We are also working on a way to provide a safe VBS this summer.

Sunday School will resume this fall for the 2020-2021 season and we look forward to working with our teachers and new teachers that come on board.

Musical Notes

By: John Henninger

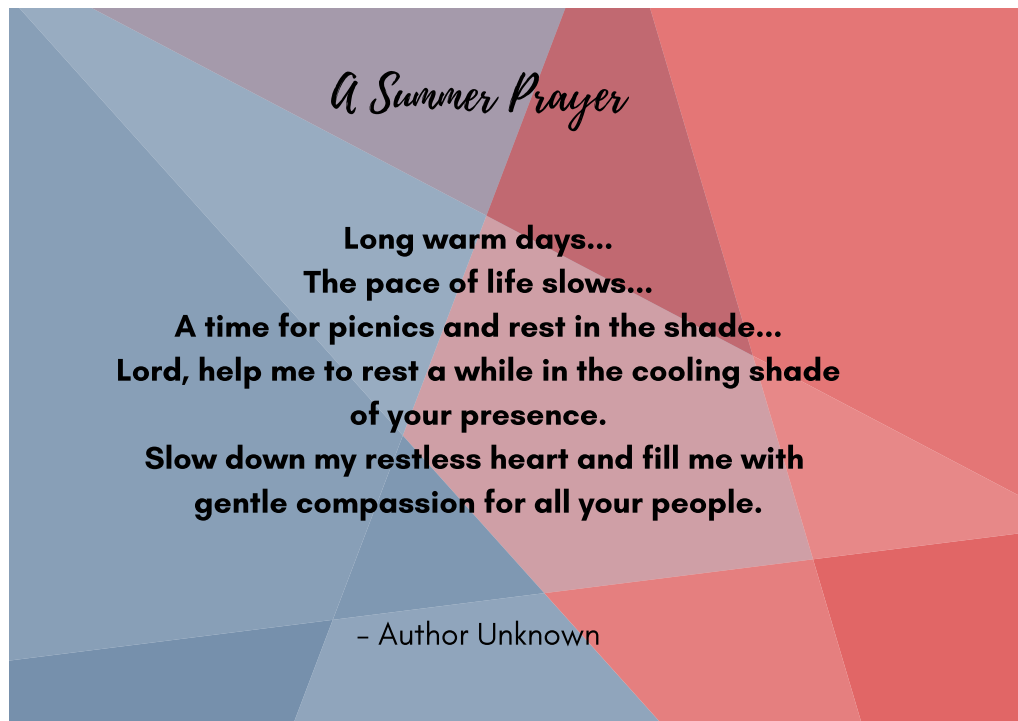
These words are from a hymn that might be familiar to a lot of us. It speaks of the joy that we have deep in our hearts, minds and souls, and on our tongues, the joy that we have been given through our faith in Jesus Christ.

We can sing even during the most trying times. These words have new relevance during this pandemic. We are told by medical professionals and choral professionals that it might not be safe to sing in large groups for a while.

What does this mean?

We will still have singing in church, and on our livestream, but we might be letting song leaders sing on our behalf. And we will still have the Bethany Choir; but it might appear in smaller groups to assure safe adherence to recommended public health guidelines.

The COVID-19 Task Force is working on making recommendations on safe in-person worship practices to present to the Session, and this has been part of the discussion. Whatever temporary changes we might need to make to our public singing, the SONG will still be in our hearts and on our tongues and in our souls.





Session Update

This letter is an official notification to the members of Bethany Presbyterian Church. For several years, PennDot has been working to increase the traffic flow at the intersections on Washington Avenue near the church. Any change to the traffic lanes and intersections on Washington Avenue would have impacts to our Bethany Church property lines. Consequently, our Bethany Church Property team specifically, and Session and Pastors secondarily, have been working directly with PennDot throughout this process.

PennDot has made a final decision on how to revamp the intersections, and it will not impact as much of the front property of Bethany as we had originally expected. The first four parking spaces on the creekside lot will be taken along with two in the back lot. A gas shut off valve, which is currently located on the other side of the creek, will be relocated to the front corner of the back lot bordering Church Street and private property.

We have received an official Offer to Purchase and Summary of Just Compensation from PennDot for the right-of-way required from our property for the transportation improvement and for the effects on our remaining property. The offer is intended to provide just compensation for our property interests. The amount offered is as follows:

Direct Damages: \$62,450.00

Temporary Easement: \$15,750.00

Total damages offered: \$78,200.00

Proceeds from the sale will be set aside into a separate fund for future property needs. We do not know, at this time, when the construction will actually begin. We will provide that information, along with any expected impacts to our church and side street traffic flows, as soon as we have it. If you have any questions, please email us at clerk@bethanypresby.org, and we will forward your question to the person most able to answer your question.

Regeneration: The New Birth

By: Doug Bovard

Scripture Reference: John 3: 1 – 8 and 12 – 18

When you say God is sovereign over all things, most Christians will agree. However, when you say He is sovereign over all things including their salvation, most Christians today will bristle at the thought. They will talk about free will; about good and bad choices; about accepting or rejecting God's offer of salvation; and about man's choice as the final cause of salvation. The spirit of the day is one of self-determination and personal fulfillment in which people do what they want, be who they want to be, and make their own decisions. The theology of humanism reigns supreme but it is bad theology! Against this backdrop, the words of Jesus in John 3 must be shocking to many Christians. Shocking because Jesus teaches that the cause of salvation is God alone.

In this month's article, we will see that the new birth is a sovereign and monergistic birth. By describing the event of coming to faith as a spiritual 'new birth' from above, Jesus makes it clear that the initiative comes entirely from a sovereign God. Fallen humans are unable to gain spiritual life on their own. Likewise, the new birth is never a collaborative effort between God and man.

It is God's initiative and His work alone. Important scriptures to consider are Eccl. 11:5; John 1:12-13; 3:8; and Romans 11:33.

The imagery of being born again suggests that God is acting and humans are the ones being acted upon. What did you do to bring about your physical birth? Nothing, of course. You were helpless and dependent. The one giving birth is the one who took the sovereign initiative. Likewise, humans come to faith as the result of the life God creates within them. In a broader theological sense, God is changing the hearts of those whom He loved and choose before the foundation of the earth. Each time a person is born again, God's gracious and loving eternal plan is being accomplished. Please read Ephesians 1:4-12 and Romans 8:30.

Now please read John 3:8. The Greek word *pneuma* means both "spirit" and "wind". The wind in nature acts the same way the Spirit acts in the new birth. More great Biblical imagery! The wind has a mind of its own and man can't control it. Likewise, the Holy Spirit moves independently of human influence.

The Spirit moves upon one heart and passes over another.

Doug Bovard will be holding his Sunday School Class virtually. If anyone is interested in joining please email him at dbovardeverizon.net or call/text at 412-979-9324.

The Spirit cannot be stopped or contained because the Spirit blows according to the sovereign will of God.

The new birth is a monergistic birth showing God's pattern in dealing with His people. It is a singular work of God's grace. The roots of this word begin with the prefix *mono* which means one or single. The Greek word *ergon* refers to work. Please read Jeremiah 31:33-34; Ezekiel 11:19; James 1:16-18 and 1 John 5:1 and notice carefully that God is the initiator. God's action is monergistic and there is no joint effort (*synergism*) between God and man. God is active and man is passive. Albeit man will respond immediately upon receiving a spiritual new birth.

God's use of the word birth to describe regeneration is perfect. One of the greatest Christian intellects of the 17th century was the Puritan John Owen. Owen observed the birth-response pattern in both physical birth and spiritual birth as follows: "When a baby is born, he or she immediately cries out and gasps for breath. When a person is born spiritually, he or she immediately calls out to God for salvation and clings to Jesus Christ."

Membership Updates:

- Please keep the family of member Ken Kundra in your prayers. Ken passed away on June 1, 2020. Please remember to think of his wife Joan and son Jacob in your prayers.
- Congratulations to Michael and Xuelai Talerico on the birth of their son Lorenzo Tian-Yang Talerico. Lorenzo was born on June 13, 2020. Lorenzo joins big sister Clara.
- Congratulations to Pastor Jae and Ester Cho on the baptism of their son Luke on June 28, 2020.

**Please call the church office if you have any updates to your family's information or if you have a change of address.*



July Birthdays

07/01 Neva McAuley	07/09 Zackary Rutkowski	07/19 Bruce Haviland	07/25 Payton Miller
07/01 Georgina Townsend	07/10 Madison Galbraith	07/19 Landon Jackson	07/25 Nicolette O'Brien
07/03 David Calgare	07/10 Kim Hartnett	07/19 Joan Kundra	07/26 Chloe Doyle
07/03 Malinda Fink	07/10 Renee Rusko	07/19 Jan Underwood	07/27 Natalia Gonzalez
07/03 William Koch	07/11 Evelyn Barbish	07/19 Claudia Ziegler	07/27 Paige Morse
07/04 Hunter Briggs	07/11 Larry Poglein	07/19 Madison Zombek	07/27 Mary Wells
07/04 Ruth Jones	07/12 Thomas Jones	07/20 Deborah Gossic	07/27 Ellen Zissis
07/04 Tara Krieger	07/12 John Schneider	07/20 Victoria Segeleon	07/28 Robbie Best
07/04 John Talerico	07/12 Melina Shildt	07/20 Kyle Sharp	07/29 Aiden Sisk
07/05 Audrey Blackstock	07/12 Gloria Sinkovitz	07/21 William Miklavic	07/30 Nathan Gibson
07/05 Shirley Ellis	07/13 Mary Brubaker	07/22 Karin Cellone	07/30 Lane Martinec
07/05 Logan Rackley	07/13 SuEllen Dillon	07/22 David Colton	07/30 Shaun Martinec
07/05 Shawn Ruehle	07/13 Barry Fricker	07/22 Alexander Goff	07/30 Tyler McGinnis
07/06 Julia Casciola	07/14 Dean Nock	07/22 Emma Underwood	07/30 Zachary McGinnis
07/06 William Faulkner	07/15 Richard Bartolomeo	07/23 Michael Casciola	07/31 Ainsley Link
07/06 Samantha Faulkner	07/16 Diane Cook	07/23 John Hunter	07/31 Domenic Poiche
07/06 Jason Franchi	07/16 Courtland Marrow	07/23 Gabriella Schinosi	07/31 Alexandra Tumulty
07/06 Martha Gabelhart	07/17 Karina Rackley	07/23 Jason Sommerfield	07/31 Naomi Unghajer
07/06 Rebecca Lewis	07/17 Nolan Strouse	07/24 Deanna Lambert	07/31 Clara Talerico
07/09 Frederick Gerstacker	07/18 John Sienerth	07/24 Jessica Mendenhall	
07/09 William Just	07/18 Daniel Timco	07/24 Mark Rackley	
07/09 Dean Wolstoncroft	07/18 Hope Trotta	07/25 Robert Loebig	

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Upcoming Events

BYG EVENT - Local Mission Project - July 11

Join the BYG at Joan's home on Saturday, July 11 from 3:00-7:00 p.m. Dinner and water will be provided. Contact Pastor Jae for more details and to RSVP by July 7.

BYG EVENT - Montour Trail Outing - July 25

Join the BYG for some biking or walking along the Montour trail! The group will meet from 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Ice cream treats will be available! Please RSVP by July 21 to Pastor Jae.

WEST VIRGINIA MISSION TRIP - AUGUST 2-8

Bring God's love and blessings to the poor, elderly and victims of natural disaster. Engage in fun and fellowship with our Christian brothers and sisters in WV. Trip dates are August 2-8, 2020. Go for ½ week or the full week. See wvmaw.org for details. Contact Eric Gregory or Doug Bovard 412-257-8901 or dbovard@verizon.net.