

MARCH 2021

CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Monthly Updates from Bethany Presbyterian Church

Pastor Update

BY: PASTOR BRIAN JANSSEN

Making sense of Lent has always been a struggle. Sure, the liturgical color is the same as Advent, assuming one notices such things, but it can be difficult to come to grips with what we are anticipating. In Advent we anticipate so much; the birth of the savior, the celebration of Christmas, the beginning of a New Year. Lent, the word comes from an older word meaning to lighten, since the days are getting longer, is used ironically in my view. We know that Jesus is going to the cross. We know that the story is not unfolding the way we would want it. We see the ending and want to slow Jesus down and ask him to play the game just a little bit. But he does not.

Of course, for the Christian, even though the days outside are getting longer, our time with Jesus on earth shortens as we head to the cross. It is important for us to occupy a spiritual space where we are able to come to grips with this reality. That moment in the apostles Creed reminds us that Jesus, "was crucified, dead, and buried." Christmas might make some sense without the season of Advent though I am glad we have it, but Easter would make no sense without Lent. It would mean ignoring the very confrontation with the principalities and powers of the world that occurs throughout Jesus' ministry, which is why he is put to death. It would mean ignoring the seeming victory of death, a victory that still seems very real to us today. Yet, we know through the witness of the church and through faith that death does not have the final say or victory.

I am glad we will experience this season together this year. I am glad and I rejoice that we will have more opportunities to be together in fellowship soon. Even as we join one another on this journey to the cross we know that we do not go on this journey alone. We do so as the church. We do so in the Power of the Spirit. We do so knowing that the journey Jesus is on is our journey, too. We do not back away or live in fear of displaying God's righteousness to the world. We recognize the full humanity and dignity of our neighbors, and we welcome the stranger. We do this because this is what Jesus did. It is risky, even dangerous, but it is good!

Wishing you a Blessed Lent!

HERE'S WHAT'S UP!

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3 - GOD IS SELF EXHISTENT

4 - YOUTH GROUP

5-8 - NEWS, UPCOMING EVENTS, BIRTHDAYS

Music Notes

BY: JOHN HENNINGER

Ministry Opportunities

At the end of February, Sunday morning worship at 10:45 saw the addition of a few singers each week. The hope is that we can gather in small groups of 3 or 4 on Sunday mornings and practice a selection to offer during the 10:45 service.

We are doing this on a rotating basis – if you would like to be included, please let me know and we can get you scheduled. You do not have to be a choir member to participate – all are welcome.

BETHANY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEEDS YOUR "SELFIE"

The membership team has restarted the "selfie" directory project. If you did not participate in the photo directory or if you would like to replace or update your professional photo, we are asking for you to send your photo or "selfie" to the office email office@bethanypresby.org as soon as possible so that we may get you into this years' directory. Simply snap a shot or have someone else take your photo and forward it along with your name to the office to be included in the next update.

New Members Class: Also we are still in the prospect/re-confirming stages but would like to have a spring new member's class once we know more interest. If you know of anyone who would like to join the Bethany family, please contact Bill Paviol at 412-722-3102 or paviol@yahoo.com

SPREAD CHEER WITH EASTER AND GREETING CARDS

Let's brighten the day of Country Meadows residents by sending them Easter or greeting cards! The mission team is collecting any sort of card (pre-printed messages, blank or homemade) to spread some cheer. The cards can be signed with personal messages and/or left blank for others to sign and complete and can include notes, pictures (possibly of your family or favorite pet) and handmade or colored pictures from children. Your effort will be much appreciated by those who are feeling isolated from their families. A collection box will be available by the back door or up by the nursery on Sunday for donations. Help us put a smile on their faces!



God is Self-Existent

BY: DOUG BOVARD

God was under no constraint, no obligation, no necessity to create. That He chose to do so was purely a sovereign act on His part caused by nothing outside of Himself, determined by nothing but His own mere good pleasure. – A. W. Pink

Scripture Readings: Psalm 90:1-4; Romans 11:33-36; I Corinthians 8:5-6; Revelation 4:8 One of the most difficult characteristics of God for human beings to come to understand is His aseity – self-existence. Unlike us, God has neither beginning nor end, and He is not dependent upon anyone or anything. God has always been in existence and has always ruled over His universe (Ps. 93:2). Because God is completely self-existent, He is not caused by or dependent upon anything outside Himself (John 5:26). Before the creation of time and space, the triune God existed eternally – satisfied in fellowship and delight with the three persons of the Trinity. God did not lack anything and was under no obligation or constraint to bring anything into existence. When God created, it was an act of love that displayed His majesty and glory.

As God's creatures, our physical life, spiritual life, and even eternal life all have Him as their source (Acts 17:28). All things are "from Him and through Him and to Him" (Rom. 11:36). Explained as follows:

- That all things are "from" God expresses that He is the source of all things.
- That all things are "through" God expresses that He is the means of all things.
- That all things are "to" God expresses that He is the goal of all things.

We are finite children of an infinite God – made to live in fellowship with Him. The great church father Augustine articulated this when he said, "Thou has made us for thyself O God, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee." The greater our understanding of who God is, the more our own hearts become filled with contentment and satisfaction with Him.

Though we are insignificant in comparison to God, He invites us to bring all of our concerns to Him and trust Him in everything. Does God care about the small things in our lives or only the big things? When you think about it, compared to almighty God all things in our lives are small; yet, God invites us to come to Him anyway. Remember that God is all-sufficient, we can know that there is not a need in our lives that He cannot supply.

I'll conclude with some questions to ponder and discuss. Imagine that an unchurched friend asks you what you are learning from this article. How would you explain God's eternal and self-existent nature? Explain the statement "if anything exists, then something has always existed." What does this mean, and why is it important? Do you struggle with bringing "big" and "little" matters to God? How can a biblical understanding of God shape the way we present our needs and desires to God?

Youth Group Updates

We're only two months into 2021, but BYG has been very busy!

At the end of January, we held a lock-in for the senior high students. We played some great games with the best one being the "get the Oreo cookie from your forehead to your mouth" game. There was a lot of laughter and food, but absolutely no sleep. Our youth spent time cleaning out the youth lounge and cleaning and organizing the sports equipment closet in the great room.

Valentine's Day we started our time together with a lesson on "love chapter" from the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13. We had a discussion on how God loves us unconditionally and how important it is to do everything God gives us to do with love. Then the party began with games and decorating Valentine boxes. But most importantly, the hot cocoa bar with the best hot cocoa ever provided by leader, Mark Morelock.

This past weekend we took advantage of the snow and canceled BYG. The leaders decided to do some sled riding at Scott Park and invited the youth to join us. It was a beautiful sunny day and the sledding was perfect!

Every other Wednesday, at 7:30 pm we have a Zoom meeting of "casual conversation." Reach out to Joan Kundra if your youth would like to join in on the Zoom link. The upcoming dates are February 24, March 10th, and March 24th.

Keep checking the church website under the Youth Group and on the Bethany Youth Group Facebook page for any further news and updates! See you at Youth Group!



Upcoming Events

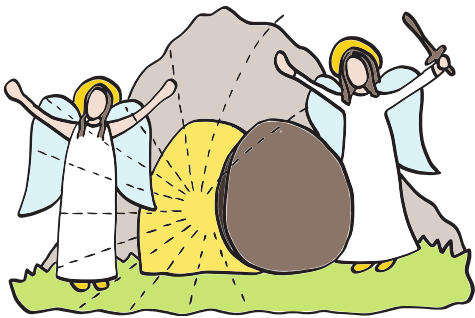
**All events subject to change. Please look on the Bethany website for the most up to date calendar of events.*

CHURCH LEADERSHIP MEETINGS FOR MARCH:

- Deacons – March 1, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
- Session Teams – March 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
- Session Meeting – March 22, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

PARTICIPATE IN THE SPRING SESSION OF SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School is now in session! If you are still interested in joining us, it's not too late! Registration is ongoing for both the in-person and virtual classes from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. We welcome you to join us! Register Today: www.bethanypresby.org/sunday-school



FAMILY EASTER EVENT: RESURRECTION GARDENS - MARCH 14

Celebrate the Easter season by building your own Resurrection Garden. Come with your family or friends after the 10:45 a.m. worship service to celebrate the season together. There will be crafts for all ages and sweet treats to enjoy. This event will follow Bethany's health and safety procedures. We hope to see you there! Register Today: www.bethanypresby.org/gardens

GOLDEN OLDIES ST. PATRICK'S DAY LUNCHEON - MARCH 18

Join the Bethany Golden Oldies for a luncheon to celebrate St. Patrick's Day on Thursday, March 18 at noon. Oldies officers and their helpers are anxious to see everyone. Wear something green and get ready to have some fun.



BETHANY BLOOD DRIVE: SAVE LIVES - FEED FAMILIES - MARCH 21

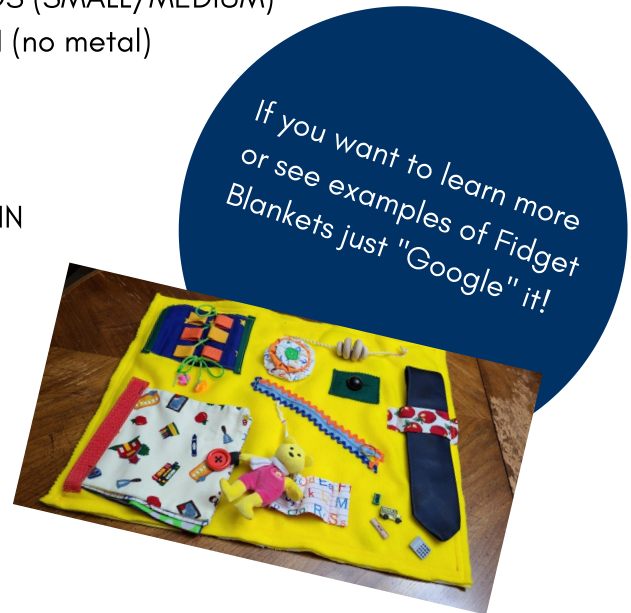
Bethany is partnering with Vitalant to host a "double donation" blood drive campaign, Save Lives – Feed Families. When you sign-up to donate blood, a donation will also be made to the Bridgeville Community Food Bank. Each contribution will feed as many as 25 families experiencing food insecurity. As an added bonus, Vitalant will also be testing successfully completed blood donations for COVID-19 antibodies. Sessions will be available from 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 21. Sign-Up Today: www.bethanypresby.org/event/blood-drive

News and Announcements

FIDGET BLANKET SUPPLIES COLLECTION

There will be an ongoing collection of supplies for making fidget blankets for the Alzheimer's and dementia patients at Country Meadows. There will be collection baskets at the door to the church and in the Welcome Center. Take a look around the house and see if you have any of the following:

- BRAIDS
- BUCKLES (NOT HEAVY)
- BUTTONS (UNBREAKABLE)
- CLASPS
- ELASTIC
- KEY RINGS
- KEYS
- LACES
- POCKETS
- POM POMS
- RIBBON
- SEQUINS
- SNAPS
- STRINGS
- WOODEN BEADS (SMALL/MEDIUM)
- ZIPPERS 7 INCH (no metal)
- ZIPPER PULLS
- CORDUROY
- FAKE FUR
- FLUFFYLAMBSKIN
- RIBBED
- SILKY
- SATIN
- SMOOTH
- SUEDE
- VELVETY
- YARN



FOOD BANK STATISTICS

The Bridgeville Community Foodbank continues to be a pillar within the community. Thanks to your donations, we have helped 129 families, including 45 children, 91 adults and 92 elderly during the month of February. To learn more about the Foodbank, please visit: www.bethanypresby.org/food-bank

PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Bethany Preschool is now accepting applications! Spots are limited, but all interested applicants should fill out the enrollment form to express their interest in the upcoming school year. www.bethanypresby.org/pre-school

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Each week, Pastor Brain will be sharing his thoughts and milestones from the week. Videos will be available on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and on our website at: www.bethanypresby.org/blog



Pastoral Concerns

CONDOLENCES

Joyce Bierman went home to our Lord on February 1, 2021

BIRTHS

Congratulations to Alexandra and Jay Jones on the birth of their son Oliver Edward on January 8, 2021.

Please keep all of the family and friends of our recently departed members in your prayers. To be added to the prayer list, update your families information, change your address or submit a request, please call the church office 412-221-5132 or email prayers@bethanypresby.org



March Birthdays

3/01 Peggy Patterson	3/09 Kerri Kane	3/18 Madison Turnbull	3/26 Carrie Emerson
3/01 Molly Regan	3/09 Sarah Paviol	3/19 Camden Gullo	3/26 Robert Grossi
3/02 Darcie Biancini	3/09 Kelli Watson	3/19 James Jenkins	3/26 Casey McCaffre
3/02 Brandon Postler	3/10 Nicole Beighey	3/19 Elise Ramous	3/27 Darren Deemer
3/02 Amy Ramage	3/10 Alec Heiskell	3/19 Hailey Sabin	3/27 Jake Hanich
3/02 Lorelei Smith	3/10 Lori Jablonski	3/20 Brad Bowman	3/27 Elmer Heaps
3/03 Joann Johnston	3/11 Roman Baronio	3/21 Taylor Barbaryka	3/27 Jordan Krieger
3/03 Nicklaus Lytle	3/11 Omar Chaudhry	3/21 Marlene Brown	3/27 Tanner Lacher
3/04 Casey Jackson	3/12 Dawn Lane	3/21 Robert Joesbury	3/27 Jesse Wilhelm
3/05 Kelly Gilmore	3/12 Angelo Poiche	3/21 Kelly Kain	3/27 Millie Wolstoncroft
3/05 Anthony Naples	3/12 Amelia Smith	3/21 Richard Pyle	3/28 Nicole Ciaramella
3/05 John Ramage	3/13 Victoria Beattie	3/21 Mason Tumulty	3/28 Eli Franchi
3/05 Madelyn Rutkowski	3/14 Sarai James	3/21 Sarah Verduci	3/28 Thomas Gilmore
3/05 Janice Teller	3/15 Charles Lacher	3/22 Thomas Clarke	3/28 Bill Paviol
3/06 Rebecca Borra	3/16 Dominic DiDomenico	3/22 Adriana Romanelli	3/28 Kylie Turner
3/06 Laura Dugan	3/16 Wilma Zavodnik	3/22 Casey Sisk	3/29 John Crawford
3/07 Mary Bressanelli	3/17 Allison Galbraith	3/23 Ruth Bedner	3/29 Edward Stewart
3/07 Bruce Carman	3/17 Kristin Gricar	3/23 Dawn Dunlap	3/30 Connor Gricar
3/07 Calin Kane	3/17 Marlene Knapp	3/24 Annabelle Fulton	3/31 Alexis Padgelek
3/07 Anita Myers	3/17 Patricia Mishizen	3/24 John Hunter	3/31 Randall Rastetter
3/07 Meredith Stewart	3/17 Scott Trimmer	3/24 Andrew Sommerfield	3/31 Maria Reynolds
3/08 Malia Colwell	3/18 E. Dianne Fiorentini	3/25 Jeffrey Nowak	3/31 Steve Smith
3/08 Aubriella Furman	3/18 Ann Griffin	3/25 Carl Suppo	3/31 Presley Venum
3/09 Barbara Crawford	3/18 Robert Rahr		3/31 Arthur Wells

Holy Week Information

DRIVE-THRU PALM DISTRIBUTION - MARCH 27

Not able to attend Palm Sunday service, but would like to have palm at home? Bethany will be distributing palms on Saturday, March 27. Drive by the church any time between 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and collect your palm without having to leave your car! If you are unable to make it to the church, we can arrange a delivery time on the same date. Please call the office at 412.221.5132 to make arrangements.



HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE



Palm Sunday: 8:15 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. (livestream available)

Maundy Thursday: 7:00 p.m. (livestream available)

Good Friday: 7:00 p.m. (livestream available)

Easter Sunday: Sunrise Worship 6:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
at Bethany (livestream available)

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