

SEPTEMBER 2021

CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Monthly Updates from Bethany Presbyterian Church

Pastor Update

BY: PASTOR BRIAN JANSSEN

One of the things I love most about Paul's letters are his opening words. The repetition of the same formula – start with a litany of titles, announce he's an apostle, state that he is set apart for the gospel of God, and lastly give thanks – is comforting and an aspect that I love of Paul's writing ministry.

He gives thanks for the people to whom he writes. He understands God's grace is demonstrated in the saving power of Jesus Christ. He loves Israel's history and its fulfillment in Jesus. He desires for the church to be witnesses to the gospel. All of it, though, begins with thanks, "I thank my God through Jesus Christ, for all of you." (Romans 1:8a).

As we move into a wonderful and busy Autumn together, I want you all to know that I try to echo Paul every day. I give thanks to God for all of you. We know what the Autumn brings. It brings the beginning of school (which for some began the day I wrote this,) it brings hectic schedules, it brings football, and activities. Autumn for me always begins with giving thanks for the church. I am thankful for the saints of Bethany Presbyterian Church. Thank you for an amazing summer here, for worshipping with us, for joining us in mission work, and ministry. I love that Paul gives thanks because it reminds me to do so but also reminds me that all the work we do for the Lord is grounded in, and begins with thanksgiving. I have come to learn that giving thanks to God lowers anxiety and leads to a more fulfilling day.

It is easy during the Autumn season to lament all the summer things we didn't get done, to get bogged down in seemingly relentless schedules. But when we begin with the ritual of thanksgiving everything changes. Far from being pie in the sky, power of positive thinking, this grounding of our day in a ritual of thanks, opens us to God's grace, and makes us more receptive to it. Did I mention it lowers anxiety? We want the ministry we do here at Bethany to do that very thing, we want you to enter these doors, and more importantly to exit them after having experienced God at work in this place, full of hope and a new perspective on the world. I hope that September brings that very thing to you, I hope that you see God at work all over the place. I hope that you are able to give thanks!

HERE'S WHAT'S UP!

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Music Notes

BY: JOHN HENNINGER

SING A NEW SONG

A new choir season will be starting on Wednesday, September 8 beginning at 7:00 p.m. If you are interested in giving the choir a 'try', plan on attending. Anyone, including High School Youth, is welcome – you do not need to have any prior singing experience, and we will never make you sing alone (unless you want to!). We will start singing on Sunday, September 12 at the 10:45 service and will also be singing for the Installation Service for Pastor Brian at 4:00 pm on September 12. Please join us!

Haiti Update

BY: DEB PYLE

Haiti has continued to land in the headlines with one tragedy after the next. The government has completely lost power and now gangs and other criminals are in complete control. Kidnappings are at an all time high, especially of those who are trying to provide support. Though the fear can be crippling, the biggest issue plaguing Haitians is the lack of food and the food that is available costs a fortune.



Pastor Pierre has been in regular contact with Bethany's Mission Team. The LaCroix Mission did not suffer any loss or damage from the earthquake or Tropical Storm Grace. While they are thankful for these blessings, they continue to need our help and support. More than 1,500 families have received food distributions at either the Paul or LaCroix location. Our donations have helped ensure these families receive their only source of food.

The Bethany Mission Team is planning another collection of rice and beans. Donation forms can be found at the front desk. Any support would be greatly appreciated. Pastor Pierre also provided the following prayer requests for consideration:

- Peace over Haiti.
- Dedicated and committed coworkers.
- For the people in Southern Haiti hit by the earthquake and hurricane.
- Resources for new church building construction.
- 3500+ school children in our seven schools – including vocational school – spiritual educational & vocational skill growth.

God is Omnipresent

BY: DOUG BOVARD

Scripture Readings: Psalm 139:7-10; Jeremiah 23:23-25; and Numbers 6:24-26

When we are confronted with competing demands on our time, we often reply that we can't be in two places at once. God, however, can be in two places at once. In fact, He is everywhere at once. He is present in every part of the universe at the same time! As a spiritual being, God does not experience time or spatial constraints and is not barred from any location. Please take a moment to read Psalm 139:7-10 and consider the wonderful imagery and the comprehensive scope of God's presence. Can you understand this? God is everywhere but He is also transcendent – meaning He is above and beyond human understanding and power. Scripture attests that God rules from the highest places – He is enthroned in the heavens (Ps. 123:1); God is exalted over all seeming competitors, ruling all of the earth (Ps. 97:9); God's throne is high and lifted up (Isa. 6:1); and, God's throne room is in heaven (Rev. 4:1-2). Christians in all places and times can trust in the knowledge that God is in absolute control.

God is also immanent. What does that mean? Years ago, my mother would share a late morning coffee with Dorothy who was a young mother with four children. Dorothy would speak with confidence about the very presence of God while doing many simple and routine activities in support of her busy family. Dorothy understood the indwelling presence of God with His people. She understood immanence. Scripture teaches that God goes with His people in the valley of the shadow of death (Ps. 23:4); God dwells with the humble and lowly (Isa. 57:15); God will be with His children until the end of the age (Matt. 28:20); and, never leave or forsake them (Heb. 13:5).

I have heard hell described as a place where God is absent. But isn't that exactly what an unbelieving sinner desires – no God? Revelation 14:10 describes eternal punishment taking place "in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." The reality is that unbelievers in hell will be in the presence of an angry God.

God's omnipresence was a tremendous encouragement when I had cancer surgery late last fall. I felt His presence when meeting with my doctor; taking medical tests; entering the operating room; and during the pain and recovery afterward. God is with us in the midst of trial and adversity. He is committed to His people everywhere. Consider our adversary Satan, who is spatially finite and must rely upon his minions to wage spiritual warfare – no match for God. An understanding of God's omnipresence should help us overcome any fear of Satan.

Has there been a time in your own life when you have felt distant from God? Does understanding God's omnipresence comfort you? I'll conclude with this wonderful blessing from Numbers 6:24-26. May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord's face shine down upon you and be gracious to you; may the light of His countenance be lifted up toward you and give you peace.

About Work

BY: JEAN ROEMER

Today, and in the coming newsletters, we thought it might be interesting to consider various ways that the coming of Jesus changed attitudes, both in his lifetime and since. In the US most of us are aware that many Americans today are not working due to stipends and incentives to not work. So let's take a look at Christianity's teachings about one of those subjects, "work".

In a book written by Alvin Schmidt (How Christianity Changed the World, c.2004) there is a thorough discussion about the ethics of work. Schmidt states that during Christ's time, the Romans and the Greeks had a poor view of physical work although more cerebral and academic works were admired. Laborers were not! Yet, Christ came as a carpenter, who did not disdain labor. Schmidt suggests that the dignity and honor that grew with the coming of Christ stemmed from Jesus as one role model, and another from the Apostle Paul who was a Hebrew scholar and tentmaker, and who had admonished the Thessalonians saying: "if a man will not work, he shall not eat." (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Dignity of and in work was reinforced.

Work also can be a calling! Calvin taught that for the Christian, ALL work, if done to God's glory is a calling! There is a suggestion that Martin Luther's concept of work meant there is no low-status or high-status work so long as it is performed for the glory of God! Schmidt states "Luther saw work as the "mask of God" (larvae Dei)," meaning that God is in the work, although hidden. Given that God is hidden in one's work, to the Christian, he (or she) may not be aware that the Spirit of God is in the work itself. "Here Luther...echoed Johann Tauler, a fourteenth-century monk who maintained that "all work, no matter how low its status in society, was nevertheless providing a service to God and humankind."

On a personal note, I readily admit that I know that I was called by God to become a nurse, was lead down the path of many coincidences that only God could have arranged, and lived and loved what I did for over 40 years. It was a blessing indeed! Let's look at some Scriptures about work:

- "You shall work six days but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during plowing time and harvest , you shall rest." Ex 34:21
- "Commit your works to the Lord and your plans will be established." Prov 16:3
- "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your father who is in heaven." Mat 5: 16
- "...if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. Thes 3:10

Benedictine Proverb: "To work is to pray."

News and Announcements



SUMMER WORSHIP HOURS

Bulletin and Past Worship Services: www.bethanypresby.org/sermons

AUGUST FOOD BANK STATISTICS

During the August 21 distribution, 132 families were assisted which included 56 children, 86 adults and 90 of the elderly.

SEPTEMBER SPECIAL OFFERING: ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS

The special offering envelope for September supports Elementary Programs provided by Bethany. Thank you for your contribution to this great program for the youth of Bethany and the community! www.bethanypresby.org/giving

BETHANY MOPS MEETINGS STARTS IN SEPTEMBER

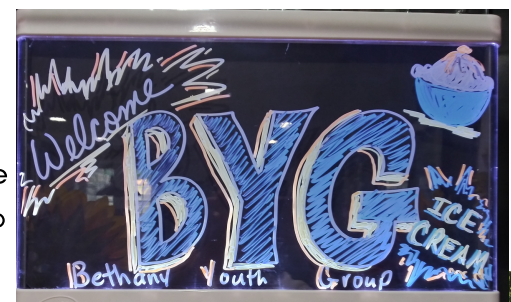
Bethany MOPS is doing something we've never done before....TWO groups to serve ALL our mamas. The evening session will meet from 6:30-8:30 p.m. on the first and third Thursdays of the month. The morning group will meet from 9:15-11:15 a.m. on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Childcare will be provided at both meetings! For more information email mops@bethanypresby.org.

WELCOME BACK MELINA ROBINSON AS NURSERY DIRECTOR

We are excited to welcome Melina back to her position as Nursery Director. Her first day back will be September 12. Please stop by the nursery to say hello on your way to worship.

BETHANY YOUTH GROUP

We might not have been officially in session, but the BYG did have a lot of fun this summer! From volunteering at VBS to hitting the Montour Trail the heat didn't stop us. We also had the opportunity to meet the newest adult leader, Denise Leigh. She invited us to her home to introduce herself and to host an ice cream social. It was great to come together, enjoy a birthday celebration, and use our memory skills for a game of "I'm going on a mission trip and I'm bringing a...." (amazing some of the crazy things going on that mission trip!). The leaders will be gathering soon to make plans for the Fall. Those in 6th-12th grade, watch your mail in early September for the latest calendar of events!



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 SEPTEMBER

- Monday, September 13: Deacons and Session Teams
- Monday, September 27: Session

PASTOR BRIAN'S INSTALLATION SERVICE - SEPTEMBER 12

We will officially be welcoming Pastor Brian as our Senior Pastor on September 12 at 4:00 p.m. Please RSVP online or contact the church office so we have a headcount for the dinner.

RSVP Today: www.bethanypresby.org/event/installation

GOLDEN OLDIES LUNCHEON - SEPTEMBER 16

Come and fasten your seat belts as we escape to Ireland as we enjoy some tasty food and Irish music.

Rebuilding Pittsburgh - September 25

Join our Mission Team in spending the day helping out a local homeowner with Rebuilding Pittsburgh on September 25 from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. All ages and skill levels are welcome. The last few years have been a fantastic experience and we are looking forward to blessing another homeowner this year.

Register Today: www.bethanypresby.org/event/rebuilding-together-pittsburgh

TRUNK OR TREAT - OCTOBER 30

Mark your calendar! Trunk or Treat is coming back this year and we are so excited to see everyone's creative trunk ideas!

GOLDEN OLDIES TRIP - NOVEMBER 2 AND 3

The Golden Oldies are going to see "Esther" at the Sight and Sound Theater in Lancaster, and "Mamma Mia" at the Apple Dinner Theater. We will be leaving on Tuesday, November 2, and returning on Wednesday, November 3. You do not have to be a Golden Oldie to come along. Two people sharing a room is \$325.00 per person. Reservation forms are at the reception desk.

Pastoral Care

CONDOLENCES

- To the family of Gloria Sinkovitz who passed away on August 3, 2021.
- To the family of Walter, Lisa and Stephanie Schultz on the death of Walter's mother, Rosemary Schultz, on August 21, 2021.

Church Picnic



September Birthdays

Thomas Patterson 09/01
 Ava Fulton 09/02
 Debbie Abel 09/02
 Vivian Lesnett 09/02
 Ryan Black 09/03
 Janeen Lacher 09/03
 Deborah Perkins 09/03
 Samuel Naples 09/03
 Paul Eichler 09/04
 Linda McCaskey 09/05
 Jessie Deemer 09/05
 Laura Edwards 09/05
 Paula Naples 09/05
 Aidan Krieg 09/05
 Lietta Danilo 09/05
 Jacqueline Witwicki 09/06
 Paul Figura 09/06
 Gretchen DeRoss 09/06
 Michael Unghajer 09/06
 Joshua Smith 09/07

Clyde Davis Jr 09/07
 Zander Nowak 09/07
 Kevin Dady 09/07
 Sandra Fricker 09/09
 Bethany Edwards 09/09
 Leo Vighetti 09/09
 Kevin Cox 09/10
 Reginald Frye Jr 09/11
 Collin Wilhelm 09/11
 Michael Suchoza 09/11
 Amanda Schwotzer 09/12
 Owen Veneski 09/12
 Katherine Joesbury 09/12
 Jamie Baldridge 09/13
 Jamie Martinelli 09/13
 Peggy Wolstoncroft 09/13
 Michele Zwigart 09/14
 Thomas Lesnett Sr. 09/14
 Darla Lower 09/14
 Jennifer Smith 09/15

Patrick Rush 09/16
 Judy Gardner 09/16
 Layla Powell 09/17
 Kaelyn Watson 09/18
 Kayla Jackson 09/18
 Susan Puel-Cox 09/18
 Kevin Strouse 09/18
 Arianna Lower 09/18
 Christopher Foltz 09/19
 Tammie Suppo 09/19
 Alexis Byers 09/20
 Robert Eichler 09/21
 Blake Vollmer 09/21
 Kenneth Cook 09/22
 Nancy Yenchik 09/22
 Kevin Shildt 09/23
 Joey Verduci 09/24
 Dean Karns 09/24
 Heather Beattie 09/24
 Brianna Pohodich 09/25

Laura Werner 09/25
 Michael Segeleon 09/25
 Louis Schinosi Jr. 09/25
 Gavin Orosz 09/28
 Elizabeth Murray 09/28
 Reilly O'Connor 09/28
 Maxine Berton 09/29
 Marlene Haley 09/29
 Tyler Deramo 09/30

Fall Sunday School Information

Sunday School is set to begin at 9:30 a.m. on September 12. We are excited for the return of some favorite classes as well as a few new subjects. Worship & Wonder will also begin that same day during the second service for kids ages 4 through 2nd grade. Pastor Brian will also be teaching a Confirmation Class for eligible eighth graders. This 24-session program will begin in October. This year's teachers will be commissioned during the 10:45 a.m. service on September 12. Please use the following form to register for your desired Sunday School class: www.bethanypresby.org/sunday-school-registration

CHILD CLASS OFFERINGS

www.bethanypresby.org/sunday-school

Age	Location / Start Date
2 & 3 Years	Room 239 (Toy Room)
4 & 5 Years	Room 240
Grade 1 - 2	Room 224
Grade 3 - 5	Room 225
Grade 6 - 8	234 (Old Stage)
Grade 9 - 12	Youth Room

ADULT CLASS OFFERINGS

www.bethanypresby.org/adult-classes

Sunday Offerings	Weekday Offerings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult Offering w/ Mark Hackley• New Testament Overview• Bad Girls of the Bible• Gospel of Mark	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Men's Huddle (1st Corinthians)• Beth Moore (2 Timothy)• Grandmothers of Jesus• Grief/Depression

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