

NOVEMBER 2021

CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Monthly Updates from Bethany Presbyterian Church

Pastor Update

BY: PASTOR BRIAN JANSSEN

Any discussion of November invariably brings with it a discussion of giving thanks. It is one of those things that happens every year and, I can't help myself, I am thankful for it. It isn't just the changing leaves and the cooler temperatures or even the one Sunday when I will feel as though I got to sleep in a little bit, no it is the fact that I have so much to be thankful for. This will be our first Thanksgiving traveling to GA since 2019. It is a time when we get to see our family in the South. So much has happened in the two years since we were last down there. I am thankful for all of it.

For many of us this will be our first Thanksgiving back with family and we will need to relearn so much of what that looks like. Sure, the food will be much the same but we may need to spend some time in prayer, not only giving thanks, but also because we might be filled with a new appreciation for all we have been given. When it comes to giving thanks, I am often reminded of what someone once told me about the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve couldn't stop staring at the one tree which they knew they should not eat from, we can be sad only because we know that they eat from it and lose their place in the garden, but also because they stop noticing all the other trees.

I think what was meant by that is this: we can too often become fixated on the one blessing we do not have and lose sight of all the blessing around us if we took time to look. This is not simply power of positive thinking but allowing ourselves to remember that even our first parents did not get all the blessings. Thanksgiving, if it is to be construed as a Christian holiday, must be looked at in these terms. What does it mean not only to give thanks but to remember the great gift we have in believing in a God who is not distant but is with us in Jesus Christ, a God who prepares a table for us, and only desires that we show up to the feast.

I hope all of you have a wonderful Thanksgiving, I hope that is filled with food, laughter, and family. I know that for many of us it will also be filled with memories of those who cannot be with us. In those moments be unafraid to voice your grief, and in the midst of it, give thanks for the hope we all have in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I am Thankful to be your Pastor!

HERE'S WHAT'S UP!

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Music Notes

BY: JOHN HENNINGER

MAKE MUSIC TO THE LORD

Advent is right around the corner! Advent is a season of preparation, of 'getting ready'; of waiting and watching. The Bethany Choir is busy preparing for our Advent and Christmas worship services. If you would like to help lead worship, we would love to have you join us.

We practice on Wednesday evenings beginning at 7:00 pm with a short devotional. Come and sing for a limited time, you can join us for the Advent Cantata presentation on December 5 or join us for the Christmas Eve service at 7:00 pm December 24. Come, and Worship...

News and Announcements

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

NOVEMBER SPECIAL OFFERING: MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT FUND

The special offering envelope for November supports the Membership Support Fund. This fund benefits Bethany members in need of assistance. You can donate to this special offering either by selecting "Membership Support" in the online giving portal or noting that your donation is for the Membership Support Fund on your check or a pew envelope. Thank you for your contribution to Bethany members in need through the Membership Support Fund!

Give Online: www.bethanypresby.org/giving

OCTOBER FOOD BANK STATISTICS

During the October 16th distribution, 129 families were assisted which included 40 children, 66 adults and 95 of the elderly.

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY OFFICE SCHEDULE

The church office will be closed on Wednesday, November 24. The church will be closed on Thursday, November 25 and Friday, November 26 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

Pastoral Care

CONDOLENCES

- To the family of LuAnne Pattison who passed away on October 13, 2021.
- The sympathy of the congregation is extended to former members, Brian and Val Bartels, on the death of their daughter-in-law, Kathleen "Kat" Bartels on October 10, 2021.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS BOX: DROP OFF DONATIONS BY NOVEMBER 7

It is that time of year again when we spread God's love in a tangible way to children around the world! Operation Christmas Child boxes are available on Sundays during worship –OR– weekdays at the back-door between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Completed boxes must be returned to the Church by Sunday, November 7. Pick yours up today!



GOLDEN OLDIES TRIP: IMPORTANT NEWS

The Golden Oldies will be leaving for their trip to see Esther and Mamma Mia on Tuesday, November 3 from the parking lot of Holy Child, instead of at Bethany. Please be there by 8:45 a.m. This is because of the construction that has started in our back parking lot.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN - THANK OFFERING SERVICE

Join the Presbyterian Women as they present their annual Thank Offering Service on November 7. "Happy is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors." Proverbs 8:34

Thanksgiving Meal Delivery

Bethany Presbyterian Church and Crossroads Church are teaming up again to deliver special Thanksgiving meals to families in the community! Last year, our efforts fed more than 1,000 people!

This year, we are seeking volunteers to donate food, assist with the meal preparation, and deliver meals. The packaged meals will be available for pick-up between 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 24 and must be delivered that same day between 6:15 - 8:15 p.m. All volunteers must have access to a car and be able to physically load the meals into your car. Volunteer Now: www.bethanypresby.org/thanksgiving

ACCEPTABLE DONATIONS

You can purchase donations online or drop them off at the church in a box labeled for the event before November 14.



SAM'S CLUB

Applesauce	2/64 oz
Cranberry	6/14 oz
Turkey Gravy	3/18 oz
Corn	1/106 oz
Corn Mix	1/40 oz
Green Beans	1/101 oz
Stuffing	3/16 oz

GFS

Applesauce	1/106 oz
Cranberry	1/106 oz
Turkey Gravy	1/50 oz
Corn	1/106 oz
Cornbread Mix	1/40 oz
Green Beans	1/106 oz
Stuffing	1/31 oz



Church History – The Diet of Worms

BY: DOUG BOVARD

To my knowledge, this is one diet that has never been tried! If you have tried this diet, please let me know! All joking aside, this diet is a moment in church history that is the paramount event of the Reformation for many reformed protestants. The Diet of Worms occurred in April of 1521 – 500 years ago. These Germanic words are pronounced ‘deet’ and ‘Verms’. In the late middle-ages, a ‘deet’ was an assembly of major political and church leaders for the purpose of resolving government and church matters within the Holy Roman Empire. This particular ‘deet’ was held in the German City of ‘Verms’ along the Rhein River. The causa Lutheri (the teaching and writing of the German reformer Martin Luther) was one of the agenda items. However, church clergy had no desire to invite Luther – wanting the diet to simply endorse the recent excommunication of Luther along with the banning of his writings.

But not so fast, Frederick the Wise (some historians today call him ‘Frederick the Savvy’), the elector of Saxony and Luther’s political authority, managed to get the emperor to issue an open invitation for Luther to come to Worms and give his side of the story. Government and church leaders were now very nervous knowing that Luther was very intelligent, a persuasive speaker and popular with the common people, so they set an ambush of sorts.

Luther was remarkably brave to come to Worms. He was courageous to resist the pressure to make peace for himself and others by recanting his teachings and submitting to what the church had long taught. He knew he could be declared an outlaw by the state. He knew that the reformer Jan Hus who came before him was burned at the stake for teaching the same. But Luther committed his cause to God, who alone could help him. So along with friends, he took the two-week trip to Worms. So, what was all the fuss about? To begin with, Luther always said that the church made him a professor of the Bible and had made him swear to teach the Bible faithfully, and that was what he was doing and had always done. His conscience was captive to the Word of God, which was his only ultimate authority. The Bible alone was true and never contradicted itself. The Bible alone was the utterly reliable authority of Christ in the church. Where the Bible spoke, the Christian must believe and follow.

In contrast, the church in Rome had insisted that man’s conscience submit to its teaching. The medieval church believed that Scripture, tradition, church councils and the pope served as authority structures that would teach and bind the consciences of Christians. These authorities had been accepted for centuries in the Western church. But Luther and other reformers were showing that popes, traditions and councils could not withstand Biblical scrutiny. How could they have the authority of Christ and be in error and obvious conflict with Scripture?

Now, add to that, the invention of the printing press. The printing of many works from church history scholars showed that the popes, church councils and official teachings had contradicted each other and/or simply differed from the Scriptures. Because of the printing press, these differences became widely evident. Luther was called before the Diet of Worms late in the afternoon on April 17, 1521. Well over 10,000 people had traveled to Worms for this show-down but few would witness it. In a relatively small meeting room, Luther stood before emperors, princes, counts, ambassadors from other nations, church bishops, cardinals, etc. It was impressive group and no doubt intimidating to Luther. Twenty-five of his writings were placed on a table in the center of the room. As mentioned above, the clergy had set an ambush of sorts, and that led to an awkward beginning for Luther. Luther entered the room with a swagger and cheerful expression, but soon found his demeanor did not suit the protocols of the emperor. Immediately, he was asked if the writings on the table were his and if he would recant of the false teachings in them. Luther surveyed the table and acknowledge authorship. He then tried to engage them in what false teachings they were referring to. He was told that he was a professor of theology and knew full-well what false teachings were in front of him. At that moment, the event seemed to overwhelm Luther. His voice softened and he appeared subdued. He asked for 24 hours to think about it and the emperor granted his request.

On the following day, Luther entered the meeting room filled with the same regal entourage. Luther made it clear that Scripture was the authority for his theology and writings. He had not been broken and this may have been the paramount moment of the Reformation. While historians are not certain of his exact words, it is believed Luther concluded his address as follows:

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Holy Scriptures or by evident reason – for I believe neither pope nor councils alone, as it is clear they have erred repeatedly and contradicted themselves – I consider myself convicted by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, which is my basis; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus, I cannot and will not recant, because acting against one’s conscience is neither safe nor sound. Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me. Amen.

Luther had been promised safe passage from Worms. Frederick the Wise knew that probably would not happen, so he arranged for a kidnapping of Luther by his men. Frederick’s men took Luther to a castle, gave him the clothes of a knight and a new name – Junker George. Bored to death in the castle, Luther decided to translate the Bible into German. He was a scholar in Latin, Greek and Hebrew and he poured himself into this endeavor, making the Bible accessible to the ordinary man. Translations like this would be emulated throughout Europe in the years that followed. It is important to note that our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters have come a long way in the last 500 years as have protestant. Seeds of reconciliation are being planted every day in shared mission, new understandings about the commonality of our theology, and so much more. While we are today many denominations across many states and nations, it is always the church’s hope, as it was Luther’s hope, that we will one day be again, a universal, sent church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Note: Sources for the above include articles by R. Godfrey and H. Selderhuis April 2021 edition of Tabletalk Magazine; The Legacy of Luther by R. C. Sproul and S. Nichols; and Martin Luther by Eric Metaxas.

About Presbyterians and Halloween

BY: JEAN ROEMER

In the September Newsletter, we introduced the ways that the coming of Jesus changed attitudes and the minds and beliefs in our work ethic. This month we look at some of the history and traditions of All Saint's Day and a bit about the Halloween tradition.

In what is now Ireland, U.K., and northern France there began a Celtic festival known as Samhain. This holiday, more than 2000 years ago, was a practice that included bonfires, and costumes to keep ghosts away. The celebrants believed that on the night before the new year, the boundary between the worlds of the living and dead blurred, which they celebrated on October 31st, the time when they believed that ghosts of the dead returned to earth. They made prophecies, built bonfires, sacrificed animals and crops, wore costumes of animal heads and skins, and told fortunes.

Later, in 43 A.D. the Roman Empire had conquered the Celtic territory and Christianity was building. All Souls' Day combined with Samhain traditions and subsequently All-hallows or All-hallowmas (meaning All Saint's Day) evolved. All Saints' Day has been celebrated on November 1 since the year 835 AD. The tradition is that All Saints' Day is a time to rejoice in all who through the ages have faithfully served the Lord. The intention is to remind us that we are part of one continuing, living communion of saints.

In the Reformed tradition of the Presbyterian Church, All Saints Day holds a different philosophy. While we give thanks for the lives of those who led the way ages past, the emphasis is on the ongoing sanctification of the whole people of God. Rather than putting saints on pedestals as holy people set apart in glory, we give glory to God for the ordinary, holy lives of the believers in this and every age. This is an appropriate time to give thanks to members of the community of faith who have died in the past year. We also pray that we may be counted in the company of the faithful in God's eternal realm.

To rejoice with all the faithful of every generation expands our awareness of a great company of witnesses above and around us like a cloud (Hebrews 12:1). It lifts us out of a preoccupation with our own immediate situation and the discouragements of the present. In the knowledge that others have persevered, we are encouraged to endure against all odds (Hebrews 12:1-2). Reminded that God was with the faithful of the past, we are reassured that God is with us today, moving us and all creation toward God's end in time. In this context, it is appropriate for a congregation on All Saints' Day to commemorate the lives of those who died during the previous year.

On a personal note, Bill and I thank BPC for the many kindnesses, prayers, cards, meals, calls and concern through a very rough time of surgery and complications for me, and COVID for him. We are doing much better and appreciate your every kindness.

The Omnipotent (Almighty) God

BY: DOUG BOVARD

But however strong may be the purposes either of angels or of men, whether of good or bad, whether these purposes fall in with the will of God or run counter to it, the will of the omnipotent God is never defeated. – St. Augustine

Scripture Readings: Isa. 40:28–31; Eph. 3:20–21; Jer. 32:27; Job 42:2; Isa. 14:27; and Isa. 43:13

Don't we all love power. Power gives us home heating and cooling, hot and cold water and electricity. Engines produce power for our cars and trucks. Recently, a young man displayed his power on the football field! He tackled anyone who dared run in his direction; swatted away opponents passes with his powerful arms; shoved away would-be blockers; and with the game on the line, sacked the opposing quarterback while stripping him of the ball and setting-up an easy game winning score. You know who I am talking about – the Steeler's powerful T. J. Watt. Of course, no engine nor man can compare with God's power. Just how powerful is our God? It is my hope that this month's article will instill humility and encouragement in us as we consider our omnipotent God. Humility in light of His infinite power – encouragement by knowing we pray to a God who can do all things.

God's power is without limits and bounds. He always has the means to carry out His every desire and nothing is too difficult for God to accomplish (Jer. 32:27). All human power and ability belong to God. T. J. Watt's power is a gift from God. Even Satan's power is allotted to him by God. God's power does what humans cannot do, including changing hearts and minds, saving sinners, directing history, ruling nature and prevailing over human rebellion and Satanic resistance. Knowing that God's power is without limits and bounds should encourage us to pray to Him boldly and persistently! God's power is irresistible. God's purpose cannot be thwarted or undermined. (Job 42:2; Isa. 14:27; Isa. 40:29–31). God never struggles to bring about His will. God never depends on human action to achieve His goals. There is no tug-of-war between God and Satan – nor is there a stalemate. God always wins! And He does it all effortlessly!

God's power does not diminish over time. It is inexhaustible power. God is never tired (Isa. 40:28). This inexhaustible power and strength are given to His people (Isa. 40:29–31). Scripture tells us that we can do all things through the strengthening power of Jesus Christ (Phil. 4:13). As we trust in Christ, God exchanges our weakness for His strength. This strength empowers us to carry out what He calls us to do.

God's power is far beyond human understanding. It is incomprehensible. God is "able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20). God's power works in perfect conformity with His other attributes. He acts consistently with His holiness, love, immutability, and other attributes of His character. Consider the power God has delegated to you. How does this affect your relationships with others in the workplace, family, or among friends? How can consideration of God's omnipotence provide you with encouragement when you pray for and witness to those who may be hostile to the gospel?

Youth Groups Update



BYG has spent the month of October discussing friendships: the qualities that are important in friends, the importance of having friends who are good influences, and how to be a friend to others who seem to have no friends. We talked about some of the friendships in the Bible. What are the qualities you look for in a friend?

It's not all serious talk at BYG! We like to have a lot of fun and games too! A classic to some, but new to others, Ga-Ga Ball is always fun and never disappoints! Saturday the 24th started out as a rainy day, but the rain cleared in time for the senior highs to head to Kennywood for "Fright All Night" part of the Phantom Fall Fest. Some riding, potato patching, scaring good time was had by all!

The 25th was the annual Halloween Party. Special thanks to Celina Farabaugh and Kelly Gilmore for providing our extra special party snacks. Our costume contest winners were: Most Creative - Bella as the Zookeeper; Funniest - Ami Layne as the Inflatable Minion; Best Overall - Katelyn G. as Winnie-the-Pooh.

We thank you all for your continued prayers and support for the youth of the church.

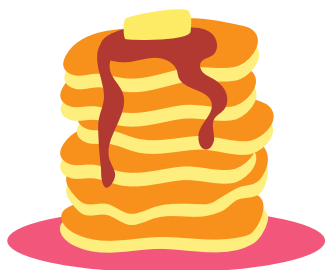


Upcoming Events

**All events subject to change. Please look on the Bethany website (www.bethanypresby.org/events) for the most up to date calendar of events.*

CHURCH LEADERSHIP MEETINGS FOR SEPTEMBER

- Monday, November 1: Deacons Meeting
- Monday, November 8: Session Team Meetings
- Tuesday, November 9: Budget Team Meeting
- Monday, November 15: Session Meeting



ANNUAL PANCAKE BREAKFAST AND SAUSAGE FEAST - NOVEMBER 7

Boy Scouts of America Troop 2 invite you to attend their Annual Pancake Breakfast and Sausage Feast. The event will take place from 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 7 in Bethany's Great Room. The entry fees are Adults - \$6, Senior Citizens - \$5, and Scouts in uniform or Children <5 - \$3. Come hungry!

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING - NOVEMBER 21

The Annual Congregational Meeting of Bethany Presbyterian Church will be held on November 21, 2021 at 9:30AM (between the two morning worship services) There will be no Adult Sunday School that day. The purpose of the meeting is to elect Elders, Deacons, Auditors and the 2022 Nominating Committee, and to approve the 2022 Terms of Call for the Rev. Dr. Brian Janssen.

FRIENDSGIVING LUNCHEON AND ADVENT WREATH EVENT - NOVEMBER 28

The Discipleship team has decided to extend the Thanksgiving holiday by hosting a "Friendsgiving" luncheon directly following the 10:45 a.m. service on November 28. Bethany will provide the main entree but asks that you bring a side, drink or dessert to share (please note what you plan to bring when you RSVP). Attendees will also have the opportunity to make an advent wreath. Let's gather together as a church family to kick-off the Advent season.

KIDS NIGHT OUT: SANTA'S WORKSHOP - DECEMBER 4

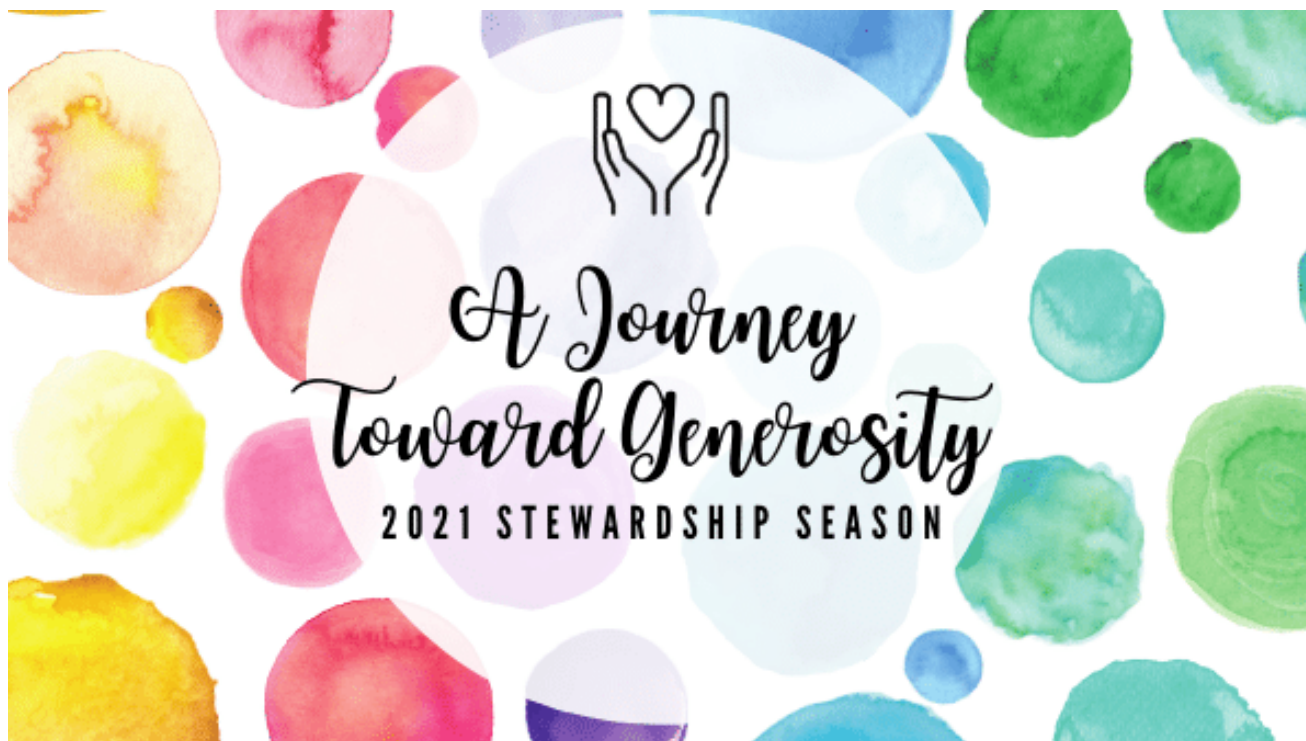
Bethany will be hosting a Kids Night Out at Santa's Workshop from 5:00 - 9:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 4. Children of all ages are invited to attend to do some Christmas shopping (they will need their own money to purchase gifts), eat dinner, and watch an age-appropriate Christmas movie with popcorn and concessions!



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN CHRISTMAS GATHERING - DECEMBER 11

The Presbyterian Women will be hosting their Christmas gathering on Saturday, December 11th. All women of Bethany Church are invited to attend.





Dedication Sunday is Sunday, October 31, 2021. On that day we will make a joyful noise to the Lord, worship the One who is worthy of praise, and together express our gratitude to God as we continue our journey toward generosity.

Each gift matters a great deal. You can make your financial commitment by submitting a commitment card to the church office or simply going online.

We are thankful for your continued support of Bethany Presbyterian Church. Your support has assured that the vital work of ministry in the name of Jesus continues here. As many of our programs get back into full swing, we continue to seek and be found by God in worship, discipleship, and fellowship.

Watch the video and get a commitment card: www.bethanypresby.org/stewardship.



Hear why giving is important to these Bethany members...

We are here to help!

Did you know that Bethany has a Pastoral Care team? The team regularly meets with shut-ins and handles a variety of concerns for the broader congregation. If you or someone you know has a concern or needs help, please let us know.

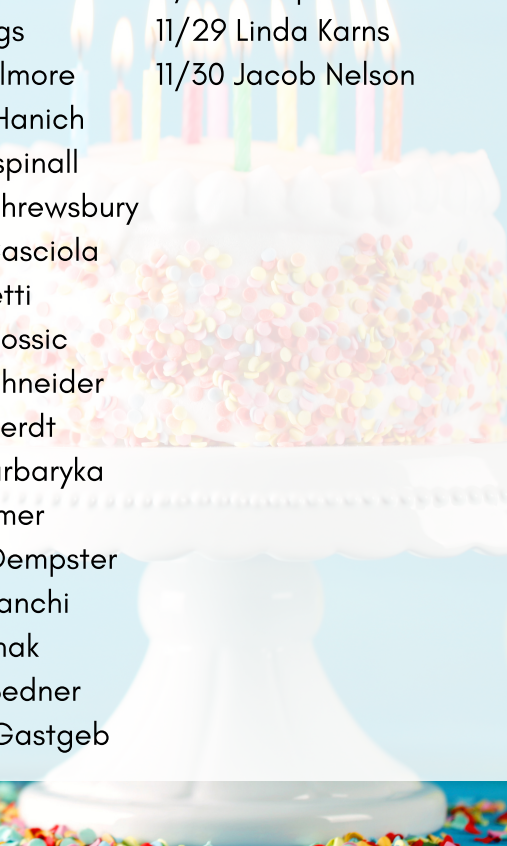
We can only help if we are aware of the situation. Your church family is waiting with open arms so that you do not have to walk alone.

Please call the church office at 412-221-5132 or email prayers@bethanypresby.org



November Birthdays

11/01 Tanner Zissis	11/08 Katie Regan	11/19 Alice Montagna	11/28 Mackenzie Timco
11/01 Grace Rock	11/09 Logan Leigh	11/19 Malia Padula	11/28 Antonio DePaoli
11/03 JaCoby Davis	11/09 Haley Nicholson	11/20 Hunter Hoffman	11/28 Joseph Underwood
11/03 Brandon Dempe	11/10 Robert Matusic	11/21 Taryn Briggs	11/29 Linda Karns
11/03 Carrie Stitch	11/11 Bonnie Hendershot	11/21 Katelyn Gilmore	11/30 Jacob Nelson
11/03 Carl Skerl	11/12 Ava Orosz	11/22 Maxwell Hanich	
11/04 Kitty Rackley	11/12 Geri Phillips	11/22 Carole Aspinall	
11/04 Samantha Berton	11/13 Andrew Shrewsbury	11/22 Tawyna Shrewsbury	
11/04 Rocco Matusic	11/13 Enzo Franchi	11/22 Sandra Casciola	
11/04 Sharon Salvini	11/13 Gregory Pitzer	11/23 Leo Vighetti	
11/05 Austin Gossic	11/13 Steven Lower	11/23 Landon Gossic	
11/05 Raymond Browner	11/15 Amy Miklavic	11/24 Grace Schneider	
11/05 Phillip Carman	11/15 Erica Anderson	11/24 Olivia Goerd	
11/05 Sean Carman	11/15 Sydney Niecgorski	11/25 Michal Barbaryka	
11/05 Aaron Timco	11/16 Aiden Harding	11/25 Jean Roemer	
11/06 Jeanine Rainone	11/17 William V. Gray	11/25 Heather Dempster	
11/06 Garnet Mikush	11/17 Michele Rutkowski	11/26 Roman Franchi	
11/07 Amanda Doty	11/18 Judith Davidson	11/26 Becky Yanak	
11/08 John Evans	11/18 Brandon Davis	11/26 Melanie Bedner	
11/08 Arthur Rutkowski	11/18 Nancy Hartz	11/27 Michelle Gastgeb	



Loving with the Heart of Jesus

Bethany Presbyterian Church is a community of over 700 members drawn together by our faith in Jesus Christ, our need for His grace, our joy in His worship and our passion to serve him.

Our unique blend of members has helped build a church that has deep roots in Bridgeville and surrounding neighborhoods.

We invite you to join us for worship on Sundays at 8:15 and 10:45 a.m. or participate in the coffee hour that happens between services. Come and connect with your church family.



BETHANY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
740 Washington Avenue
Bridgeville, PA 15017

Phone: 412-221-5132
Fax: 412-220-9107
office@bethanypresby.org
www.bethanypresby.org

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