

The Bethany Letter

SUNDAY ~ December 5, 2010

VOLUME 2010

ISSUE NO. 40

The Rev. Stephen Gehlert, Senior Minister

The Rev. Mark Steiner, Visitation Minister

ADVENT CONSPIRACY!

(Nobody Wants a Christmas Worth Forgetting)

I'm not a "conspiracy theorist." In fact, when people start talking about conspiracies, I usually have a hard time listening. But, recently, I heard about a different kind of "conspiracy," and what I heard excited and inspired me. It's a new movement that calls itself the "Advent Conspiracy!" Its members, frustrated by what our secular, consumerist culture has done to Christmas, are seeking to get back to the heart of this holy day. This is how they explain what they've pledged themselves to do:

- **Worship Fully**

It starts with Jesus. It ends with Jesus. This is the holistic approach God had in mind for Christmas. It's a season where we are called to put down our burdens and lift a song up to our God. It's a season where love wins, peace reigns, and a king is celebrated with each breath. Entering the story of Advent means entering the season with an overwhelming passion to worship Jesus to the fullest.

- **Spend Less**

Before you think we're getting all Scrooge on you, let us explain what we mean. We like gifts. Our kids really like gifts. But consider this: America spends an average of \$450 billion a year every Christmas. How often have you spent money on Christmas presents for no other reason than obligation? How many times have you received a gift out of that same obligation? Thanks, but no thanks, right? We're asking people to consider buying ONE LESS GIFT this Christmas. Just one! Sounds insignificant, yet many who have taken this small sacrifice have experienced something nothing less than a miracle: They have been more available to Christ during the Advent Season.

- **Give More**

God's gift to us was a relationship built on love. So, it's no wonder why we're drawn to the idea that Christmas should be a time to love our friends and family in the most memorable ways possible. Time is the real gift Christmas offers us, and no matter how hard we look, it can't be found at the mall. Time to make a gift that turns into the next family heirloom. Time to write mom a letter. Time to take the kids sledding. Time to bake really good cookies and sing really bad Christmas carols. Sounds a lot better than getting a sweater two sizes too big, right? Need a few ideas? Just check our website adventconspiracy.org and see what others have done.

- **Love All**

When Jesus loved, he loved in ways never imagined. Though rich, he became poor to love the poor, the forgotten, the overlooked, and the sick. He played to the margins. By spending less at Christmas we have the opportunity to join him in giving resources to those who need help the most. When Advent Conspiracy first began four churches challenged this simple concept to their congregations. The result raised more than a half million dollars to aid those in need. One less gift! One unbelievable present in the name of Christ!

Does this sound like a "conspiracy" worth joining? It does to me! I hope you'll think and pray about it.

With Hope for a Blessed Advent,

Youth Fellowship – *what's ahead*

December 5, 11:45 am Lunch, Advent Discussion
December 12, 6:30 pm Movie Night
December 19, 6:30 pm Ice Skating/Christmas Party



Confirmation – *the coming weeks*

December 5, 11:45 am Class and Meal
December 12, 11:45 am Mentor Meal
December 18, 10:00 am Help with Bethany Kitchen



Christmas Pageant Rehearsal

Saturday, December 11th 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.

For EVERYONE in Sanctuary,

Sunday, December 13th 2nd Hour Sunday School

Saturday, December 18th DRESS REHEARSAL
(snack/lunch) 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Reminder:

4th, 5th and 6th graders host the
Social Hour on December 12th!

...but 87 times he said, "Follow Me!"

Wonderful sharing by Bethany members, an inspiring and challenging message by Bryan Sirchio, and the work of the Holy Spirit within and among us has resulted in a very positive response to "Follow Me," our stewardship program for this year. As of November 29 we had received 154 estimate of giving cards totaling \$273,506. This is very hopeful sign for funding Bethany's ministry and mission in 2011. Of course, the final outcome depends on the response of every Bethany member. If you haven't returned an estimate of giving card, please prayerfully consider your reasons for gratitude and you are being called to "follow Jesus" in your financial support for his work here at Bethany. If you have made your estimate, we thank you, and ask for your prayers for the continued guidance of God's Spirit in all of our hearts in this process.

Men's Volunteer Breakfast

It is a great time for men of the church to get together to share faith, food, and fellowship together; as well as a few chores with which the custodians could use some help. The men gather the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 8:00 a.m. (Next breakfast **December 15th**.) You can help make this time possible by providing breakfast for 8-10 men once during the year. If you'd like to help in this way call Nancy Read at 330-928-3002.



Here a FA, There a FA, Everywhere a FALALA!

If you enjoy singing Christmas carols and want to share the Christmas cheer with members of Bethany – this is the invitation you have been waiting for! The All-Church Christmas Caroling, led by the Chancel Choir, is on Wednesday, **December 15th**. We will meet in the gathering area at 6:15 p.m. Hot chocolate and cookies await our return to the church in the social hall. Anyone, young and old, is welcome to sing songs of the season as we prepare for Christmas!

Falalalala La La La La

 Happy Birthday to...

Glenn Leiter

December 15th

201 Holl Road, NE #308, N. Canton 44720

gift cards



Bethany offers the opportunity to order and purchase gift cards for a variety of businesses as a fundraiser for the church. We hope that every month we'll have more and more people participating in this easy way to support our church. We invite you to take a look at the gift card order form on the table in the social hall. You can place an order with a check and your cards will be here for you the following Sunday. Try it; you'll like it!



Chancel Choir

Christmas Cantata

December 19, 2010

10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Celebrate the birth of our Savior by joining us for our Christmas Cantata. The Chancel Choir will present "The Winter Rose," a musical telling of the Christmas Story. What better way to begin Christmas week!



The church office will be
CLOSED December 27th, 28th
and again on
January 3, 2011

A church newsletter will NOT be published on the Sundays of December 26, 2010 and January 2, 2011. TBL will continue on a weekly basis with the January 9th issue (deadline 10:00 a.m. Tuesdays). Please plan accordingly.

Mark your Calendar!

Bethany Night at Donato's

Wednesday ~ December 29th
5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Esperanza 2011

Have you been thinking about going on the Esperanza Mission Trip? Have you been putting off making a decision? We still have openings for volunteers to go to Mexico and build simple homes next year, February 19th through February 26th. Any questions please call Bill Leas at 330-673-3389.

Year-end Contributions ...

... must be postmarked by **December 31st** to be included in your 2010 contributions.

**ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE
IN THE CHURCH OFFICE BY
JANUARY 9, 2011.**

**PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, GET THEM
IN ON TIME. Thanks!**



Funeral meals are one of the most important ways Bethany expresses love and care to the families of members in times of grief and loss. We are looking for one additional *Funeral Meal Coordinator* to work with a group of volunteers to prepare and serve funeral meals. If you might be interested in helping in this way, please contact Pastor Steve at 330-923-5277 or at pastor@bethany.ald.net. He'd be glad to arrange a time to tell you more about it.



Needed: Used Refrigerator(s)

The refrigerator in the Lounge kitchen has stopped working. It's very handy to have one there for events in the lounge. If you have a small (no more than 30 inches wide) refrigerator that you'd be willing to donate, it would be much appreciated. Also, the refrigerator in the rental house is on its legs. If you have one you'd be willing to donate (larger is OK) that would also be a great help! Just e-mail cwood@bethany.ald.net or call 330-923-5277.

Social Hour at Bethany

Each Sunday of the program year one of Bethany's committees hosts a social hour, which follows the 10:30 worship service. For the past year or so youth planning to go on the Esperanza mission trip cleaned up and washed dishes to help with their expenses. Since the number of youth going is smaller this will no longer be the case. Each committee will now be responsible for clean up and cup washing on their host Sunday.

Please remember in your prayers...

- † Jan Edwards, Akron General
- † David Dietz, home
- † Karen Butler, Traditions



In Sympathy,

We extend our Christian sympathy to the family of Bethany member, Evelyn Vance, who died November 18th.



Christmas Poinsettias



Please help celebrate the Christmas season with a beautiful poinsettia for the altar. The cost is \$12.00 for each plant. The deadline for ordering is **Friday, December 17th**. The poinsettias will be on the altar December 19, 24, and 26. The Ministry Committee will deliver the plants to those on our *Remembrance List* December 26th. The poinsettias can only be delivered to those on the list. Thank you for your help.

I would like to donate _____ plant(s) for the sanctuary @ \$12.00 each.

Total \$ _____ Check enclosed

In Memory/Honor of

Donor(s) _____

Bethany's Quilters – A Long and Loving Ministry

For more years than anyone knows for sure, Bethany women have been gathering weekly to sew patches of fabric into lovely quilts. Over the years these women, the Bethany Quilters, developed strong bonds of friendship, which was a blessing to all who were a part of their circle. Their generous sharing of all the funds raised by their work for various Bethany ministries (recently \$900 for our music program) made them a blessing to our whole church family as well. Though their numbers declined in recent years, they continued to gather for fellowship and service. Now, though, further decline in their numbers has led them to reluctantly decide to end their work together. So, now it's our turn to thank them for all that their ministry has meant to our Bethany family. They came together for blessing and were a blessing. For this we thank both God and them.

thank you

Bethany Kitchen

Bethany Kitchen served 120 meals for Thanksgiving and with out the help of our Bethany volunteers, this could not have happened. A special thanks to the kitchen crew for an outstanding job in preparing and serving the Thanksgiving dinner. Thanks to: Kathy Keenan, Martha Peyak, Harry Cool Cheryl McGraw, Nancy Buck, Marty Crichton, Lou Atleson, Carol Frederick, Bob and Carol Pletzer, Greg, Debbie, Kevin and Gracie Fratz, Cindy Kahn, Debbie Schreiber, Ed Frederick, Sue Mancinelli, Bob Peyak and George and Sue Jensen.

Our next dinner will be for Christmas on December 18th. The kitchen will be serving a ham dinner. Thanks to all who participated!
Harvey Koudela

“Thanks” to all who participated and attended the First Sunday of Advent Service. It was a wonderful way to begin the Christmas season. *C.E. Committee*

God Bless all the kind and caring folks at Bethany for their hard work on my yard. You are in my prayers and I am so very grateful.
Sincerely, Joan Porter

The Chancel Choir would like to thank our Bethany family and friends for supporting our recent bake sale! We will be using the proceeds to purchase some much-needed new music. Thank you, again, for supporting our music ministry!

Dear Bethany friends,

Warren wants to thank you for his beautiful birthday bouquet. It was still nice for his birthday dinner. They brightened up the table. Also, we want to thank Robert Tromp for delivering them, we enjoyed his visit. Thanks also for the many cards he received.

God Bless, Warren and Mary Jo Trail

Bethany's Advent - Christmas Season

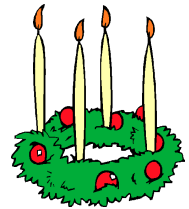
Advent is a very special season of preparation and anticipation for the coming of Jesus Christ.

This season is to remember the birth of Jesus as well as to anticipate his second coming.

We offer several special opportunities in the coming weeks to prepare for Christ's coming and celebrate his birth. Please join us!

Sunday – December 12th ~ Third Sunday of Advent

- 8:30 a.m. Fellowship Worship Service / 7thDay
- 9:15 a.m. Church School for Children and Adults
- 10:30 a.m. Worship Service / Baptisms / Chancel Choir, Bell Choir



Wednesday - December 15th

- 6:15 p.m. The annual **ALL church "Christmas Caroling"** night!
All are invited to join us for a fun evening of caroling, fellowship; & cookies!

Sunday – December 19th ~ Fourth Sunday of Advent

- 8:30 a.m. Healing & Reconciliation Worship Service
- 9:15 a.m. Church School for Children and Adults
- 10:30 a.m. Worship Service / Chancel Choir Cantata ~ The Winter Rose

Friday- December 24th, Christmas Eve

- 7:30 p.m. Family Worship Service and Children's Pageant ~
The Mystery of Simon Shepherd
- 11:00 p.m. Candlelight Worship Service

Merry Christmas!

Sunday – December 26th

- 8:30 a.m. Family Worship Service / Christmas Carol Sing / Baptism
- 10:30 a.m. Family Worship Service / Christmas Carol Sing



**Calendar for additions to ~ or ~ changes to the
2010 monthly calendar mailed to you.
December 6th to December 19th**

12/06
12/07 9:00a Staff Meeting
10:00a Newsletter Deadline
7:15p Finance Committee
12/08 9:00a Bible Study (CE)
7:00p Bell Choir Practice
7:30p Consistory
12/09 7:15p Chancel Choir Practice
12/10
12/11 9:00a Christmas Pageant Rhrl. -11:30a (snacks)

Sunday ~ December 12, 2010

† Nursery Available 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.
† Third Sunday of Advent

8:00a 7thDay meets
8:30a Worship (Fellowship)/ 7thDay
9:15a Church School for All Ages
10:30a Worship/ Children's S.S./ Baptisms/ 2nd Hr. Pageant
11:30a Social Hour Host: 4,5,6 Grades
11:30a Confirmation/Mentor Meal/Meeting
6:30p YF – Movie Night

12/13 9:30a Prayer Shawl Ministry
12/14 9:00a Staff Meeting
10:00a Newsletter Deadline
12/15 8:00a Men's Breakfast
9:00a Bible Study (CE)
6:15p *All Church Christmas Caroling*
12/16 7:15p Chancel Choir Practice
12/17
12/18 9:00a Pageant DRESS Rhrl. -12:30p (snack/lunch)
10:00a Confirmands help w/Bethany Kitchen -2:00p
11:30a Bethany Kitchen
1:00p Chancel Choir Rhrl. in Sanctuary

Sunday ~ December 19, 2010

† Nursery Available 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.
† Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:30a Worship (Healing & Reconciliation)
9:15a Church School for All Ages
10:30a Worship/ Children's S.S.
11:30a Social Hour Host: Property Committee
6:30p YF – Ice Skating/ Christmas Party

Names of **Sunday Volunteers** are published **AHEAD OF THE SCHEDULED** Sunday as a kindly *reminder* and early *thank you!*

If you are unable to volunteer the day you are scheduled, please remember to...

Find someone to take your place **... and then call the church office** so we may make the necessary changes on our schedules

Volunteers for December 12th

Greeters: R.&J. Charton / R.&R. Hibbard
Lay Reader: K. Fratz
Special Music: 7thDay / Chancel Choir, Bell Choir
Nursery: H. Bedillion, P. Cochran, M. Ferda,
S. Keenan, C. Bedillion
Ushers: L. Luginbill, H. Walker, J. Grazulis, J. Seymour,
H. Koudela, N. Buck, J. Sammons, C. McGraw
Van Driver: B. Read
Visitor Outlook: M. Crichton

Altar Flowers given in November by...

11/07 C.B. Hofmann in memory of parents, Helen and Gus Hofmann and nephew, Todd Hofmann; *and by* Fred and Mary Lane Clark in memory of mother, Esther May Clark
11/28 Ernie Albert in memory of wife, Marie, and family

Volunteers for December 19th

Greeters: S. Mellott / K. Mellott
Lay Reader: J. Edwards
Special Music: / Chancel Choir Cantata
Nursery: T. Ocepek, T. Jensen, S. Ferda, B. Read,
E. Sammons
Ushers: J.&S. Mancinelli, B. Charton, R.&M. Bowmaster,
R. Berie, J. Bebout, H. Bowman
Van Driver: F. Read
Visitor Outlook: M.J. Trail

Bethany's Missions for Christmas 2010

How YOU can support our missions!

THE GIVING TREE



This will benefit fourteen families at H.M. Life Opportunities and the families of Family Promise/IHN. The tree will be decorated with gift tags at the coffee table in the Social Hall beginning November 21 and the gifts are **due back** to Bethany **by December 13.**

Family Promise/IHN is an emergency shelter for homeless families and HM Life Opportunities provides transitional housing to families up to two years. Several of our IHN guests have gone to live at HM Life.

The Giving Tree will contain gift tags for certificates to area businesses for our Family Promise/IHN families when they move into their new homes. It will also have tags for requested gift items from members of fourteen families from HM Life that we have committed to support for the holidays. If you would like to provide for one of the gifts requested but don't want to do the shopping, the Mission Committee will shop for you. Look for members of the Mission Committee at the coffee table in the Social Hall beginning on November 21 and each Sunday through December 5.

How the Giving Tree Works:

- ☆ Take a tag from the Giving Tree in the social hall.
- ☆ Record your name and number of the tag on the list provided.
- ☆ Buy the item on the tag. If it is for a gift certificate to Marcs or Acme, get whatever amount works for your budget. We are encouraging members to buy the gift certificates through our program here at Bethany.
- ☆ Bring the gift back to the social hall **unwrapped** by December 13.

GIFTS OF THE HEART



The Mission Committee selected twelve of the mission projects Bethany supports. You can use this list to give a gift in someone's name or as a special Christmas donation you would like to make. You may want to write a card and tell the person this gift was given by you in their name. Return your list and check at the Mission table in the Social Hall, the offering plate or the church office.

GOOD NEIGHBORS



We are collecting items for Good Neighbors for Christmas through December 19. We will make a delivery before Christmas. Items can be placed in the back of the sanctuary or in the social hall on the table marked for Good Neighbors. Good Neighbors would prefer to not have clothing donations at the time. If you have clothing you would like to donate, please hold on to it until January. Thanks.

- ☆ Gift certificates to Giant Eagle or Acme to give to the families for a turkey or ham. We are encouraging members to buy the gift certificates through our program here at Bethany.
- ☆ Non perishable food items
- ☆ Paper products such as tissue, toilet tissue, and paper towels
- ☆ Household cleaning products
- ☆ Personal products such as deodorant and toothpaste
- ☆ Diapers
- ☆ Blankets

STEWARDSHIP COVENANT - 2010

Jesus Says, *Follow Me*, Calling Us...

- **To trust him** – because his love, grace, and abundant blessing are all we need for life.
- **To obey him** – because in serving him, rather than ourselves, we find true, eternal life.
- **To learn from him** – because his way of self-giving love is Truth and Life!
- **To become like him** – so, together, we can be his body, his living presence in the world.

When Jesus Says, *Follow Me*, He Means With Everything...

- **Our time** – because in living every day as gift of God, Jesus showed us that we don't lose time but rather gain "life" when we give the gift of our time.
- **Our talents** – because in using his many talents for God and others, rather than to lift himself up, Jesus showed us that we find joy and meaning in sharing these gifts for others.
- **Our treasure** – because in teaching that "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," Jesus showed us how to put our hearts right with God - put our treasure right first!

Hearing Jesus Call to *Follow Me*

We urge every Bethany member respond to Jesus' call to *Follow Me* by seeking to trust, obey, and learn from his way of self-giving, so that, through our shared giving, our church can more fully be his presence in the world. We trust that in committing ourselves to give gladly and generously of our time, talent, and treasure, God will work through us for good, and we will continue to know God's abundant blessing. So with gratitude, hope, and joy we invite you to join us in covenanting with God and each other to:

- Make a commitment to share in Dedication Sunday worship on November 14.
- "Follow Jesus" in looking for God's blessings and living with gratitude and generosity.
- Pray about how to express our gratitude by following Jesus with time, talent, and treasure.

In considering your specific gift we urge you to:

- Make an Estimate of Giving.
- Consider your estimate in terms of percentage of income.
- Seek to increase your estimate by one percent of your income.
- Make tithing your ultimate giving goal.

We hope and pray that the whole Bethany family will join us in this covenant.

The Stewardship Committee