

The Bethany Letter

SUNDAY ~ FEBRUARY 6, 2011
Rev. Stephen Gehlert, Senior Minister

VOLUME 2011

ISSUE NO. 5
Rev. Mark Steiner, Visitation Minister

You Are the Light of the World!

In the gospel for February 6, Jesus tells his disciples they are two things. He says, “You are the salt of the earth,” and, “You are the light of the world.” I chose to preach on our being “salt.” Now, I’d like to reflect on our being “light.”

When Jesus says, “You are the light of the world,” he’s saying that we, his disciples are identified are the ones in whom God’s promise and calling to Israel are being fulfilled. “I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind.” Light is an image of life, and thus also of salvation. God begins the task of ordering the world by creating light, and John speaks of the light of the word of God as being the life of humanity. The shining forth of light in darkness therefore means the salvation of humanity from death.

The disciples follow Jesus because they see in him the light of life: “the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” As they follow him and give themselves to the work of God’s kingdom, the light of God shining in Jesus shines through them to bring light to the world.

But Jesus’ way leads us into the darkness of death, for it’s a way which culminates in the death and darkness of the cross. Jesus is light and salvation specifically in the midst of sin and death, not in spite of them. God’s light shines in the face of Christ crucified, and his community is light only as it also loses its own life - for the sake of the gospel.

That’s why we’re always tempted to hide our light “under a bushel.” We do this by refusing to follow the way of the light into the darkness and death, but instead trying to attain life and light for ourselves apart following Jesus into the places of darkness and death. We do this by seeking glory for ourselves, but wanting nothing to do with the way of the light of life which doesn’t fear the darkness. No light shines from such disciples; they only leave the world in darkness.

Light is good. We can’t find our way without light, nor see God or our neighbor without it. But Jesus speaks of light in terms of lamps. Lamps are used to bring light where it’s needed; lamps presuppose darkness to be overcome. They bring light into darkness, in order to confront and overcome darkness.

Light means hope – hope in the darkness! Matthew spoke of Jesus by recalling Isaiah’s words, that “the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light.” Those who feel lost, in despair, or confused: “on them light has dawned.” In Jesus, we find our way, and in turn, we’re called to be his body in the world: to let our light shine before others,” to let the good things that we do, radiate God’s goodness and love to others. We must not give in to the temptation to bury our vocation as disciples under a bushel either because we’re afraid of not having enough or greedy about getting more.

That’s not easy! Thomas Long says, “The church for all its vision is overpowered, outnumbered, and often overlooked. It’s a challenge to be a minority, trying with mixed results to live an alternative life, set down in the midst of a fast-changing culture that neither appreciates nor understands us. The hardest part is daily faithfulness, maintaining confidence in what, for all the world, appears to be a losing cause, and remembering that what we do really counts.”

So we listen with that first group of disciples to hear that we, too, are “the light of the world.” While Jesus is telling us who or what we are, his metaphor about being “light,” is dynamic, calling us to take the light somewhere – into the darkness! He’s pointing to our unique capacity as his disciples to bring forth goodness. But he’s also saying that we may lose that capacity by forgetting that we are to challenge the way things are by valuing the outcasts, caring for those who grieve, seeking to do justice, showing mercy, having integrity, being peacemakers, and standing for our faith.

William Temple said, “The church is the only organization that exists for those who are not its members.” For the light to be seen, we must be willing to go into the darkness, to engage and walk through it, so that, in time, light can overcome it. We must go into the dark places, bearing the light of Christ. The light is not given for our own enjoyment!

With Gratitude for being the Light – Together!

New Approach for Lent

We frequently begin Lent by asking ourselves "What do I want to give up" which symbolizes the sacrifice that Jesus gave for our salvation. One alternative to consider is asking "What do I want to DO" to honor his sacrifice for us. The Chancel Choir welcomes anyone who wants to answer that call by singing with us during the season of Lent, which includes participating in the cantata, Lenten Sketches, which will be shared in worship on Palm Sunday. We rehearse on Thursday nights from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

SCOUT SUNDAY – February 13th

The Boy Scouts of America annually celebrates its founding based on the program started by Lord Baden Powell in England on August 1, 1907. The



Scout Sunday tradition was started to make people in houses of worship aware of Scouting, and to allow Scouts to live out their "Duty to God" pledged each week. The Scout Law says that a "Scout is Reverent" and the Scouts of all ages promise to do their "Duty to God". These values strengthen youth character in their family, community and faith. We want to thank Boy Scout Troup #160 who will be joining us February 13th in worship.

Children's Sunday School

Sunday, February 13th

Valentine Parties!



Confirmation – February

2/13	11:30 am	Meal / Talk with Mentors
------	----------	--------------------------

Youth Fellowship – February

2/13	11:30 pm	Deliver Valentine Cookies
2/20	5:00 pm	Prepare Family Promise Meal
2/27	2:00 pm	Depart "Walk a Mile in My Shoes" (Family Promise)

Men's Breakfast

The men of the church meet once a month (the 3rd Wednesday of the month) for breakfast, fellowship and to help the church custodians with some simple chores. These men are a big help each month ~ we are all grateful. The next breakfast is **February 16th** at 8:00 a.m. All men are welcome! Also, anyone can help make this time possible by providing breakfast for 8-10 men once during the year. If you'd like to help call Nancy Read at 330-928-3002.

Remember to bring in your Acme Receipts

**Acme Community Cash Back Program
ENDS - February 19, 2011**

Bethany Kitchen

Saturday, February 19th 11:30 a.m.

Bethany Kitchen provides a **free luncheon** for those in the community who need a meal. Help is always needed for food preparation, serving and cleaning up. **All are welcome** to join us and enjoy food and fellowship.



Combined Sunday School Classes

Sunday ~ February 20th

9:15 to 10:20 a.m.

Sunday School Classes (children and adults) will be combined **Sunday, February 20th** and meet in the social hall ~ please plan accordingly. Our guest, Lindsay Bonilla, is presenting

"Lily and the City of Light."

It is a book she has written about a young girl who wants to travel to the "city of light" but the only way there is to make a great sacrifice. Come and meet the colorful characters along the way and see if Lily can do the one thing that will allow her into the city of her dreams. We will be taking a free-will offering that will be given to Family Promise.

Host Week



Our next Family Promise/IHN Host week is February 20 - 26. Please consider

volunteering to help and contact one of our team leaders: Carol Clemente - meal preparation, Carolyn B. Hofmann - overnight and family center volunteers, and Frank Read - van drivers. Thanks to our many volunteers who help make this week possible.



Mark Your Calendar!

Consistory Retreat

Saturday, March 5th 9:00 a.m.

Shady Hollow Shelter

Future Events

Bethany & New Trinity

Please mark your calendar and join the fun!

We're excited about lots of fun and exciting ways to witness our oneness in Christ with New Trinity. Here are a few ways...

- Feb. 27 **Walk a Mile in My Shoes – Together!**
- Mar. 12 New Trinity Bowling Party
- TBA Swim Party at Falls YMCA
(for children/youth)

Watch for more EVENTS in the months ahead!



IHN's Walk a Mile in My Shoes

Walk a Mile in My Shoes will be held on **Sunday, February 27, 2010** at Fairlawn West UCC at 2950 West Market Street. Registration is at 2 pm with the walk to follow. This event is being held in February so our participants can think about the homeless families that are on the streets in the winter months enduring the cold weather. The focus of this event is to bring together the families from our twenty-eight congregations to celebrate the success of our IHN mission. This is also a fund raiser for IHN and we are encouraging all Bethany members to ask for the support of their family, friends, neighbors and collect pledges for the walk. There is no registration fee for the walk. If you are not able to collect pledges, you are still welcome to participate and join in the fun. Please come out and support this important event as a walker, pledger or volunteer. Thank you for the support you have given to this mission.



Relay For Life



Team F.A.C.E. (the Bebout Family) is recruiting new team members for 2011.

We proudly gave rise to a new team this year and need to replace the members that we lost. If you would be interested in joining our team in our effort to help the American Cancer Society to eradicate Cancer, please contact any member of our family.

Thank you!

Dear Bethany Family,

Sending a blessed thank you to all for your kindness in the many cards I have received while trying to improve my health. Also, a special thank you to Rev. Mark Steiner for his many visits to give Ken and me communion. Our church is like a friend who reaches for your hand and touches your heart. *Blessing and love to all, Shirley Cleary*

Please remember in your prayers...



- † Bruce Wurgler, home
- † Bobbie Berie, Falls Village
- † Nancy Zucco, Gardens of Western Reserve
- † Jim Lipinski, home

Cleaning for a Reason!

If you know any woman currently undergoing chemotherapy, please pass the word to her that there is a cleaning service that provides **FREE** housecleaning – once per month for **FOUR** months while she is in treatment. All she has to do is sign up and have her doctor fax a note confirming the treatment. *Cleaning for a Reason* will have a participating maid service in her zip code area arrange for the service. This organization serves the entire USA and currently has 547 partners to help these women. It's our job to pass the word and let them know that there are people out there that care. Be a blessing to someone and pass this information along. www.cleaningforareason.org/

Ways to Use Less in 2011



Use Less Energy Energy consumption is at the forefront of many environmental discussions these days. While you may think cutting your energy use won't make that big of difference, by using cold water to wash your clothes, you can save 90 percent of the washing machine's power utilization. That's a lot of energy for a simple step.

Use Less Packaging Packaging can create a tremendous amount of trash. Try buying from bulk bins where there's less packaging required, and you can take only what you need.

Use Fewer Disposables Using less disposables goes hand-in-hand with creating less trash. Try using canvas shopping bags instead of plastic bags and earth-friendly plastics that biodegrade or are made from recycled content.

Remember to pick up your
Newsletter Sunday mornings in
the Social Hall.

Cheerful Givers

Excerpt from 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

“God loves a cheerful giver.”

Reflection by Martin B. Copenhaver

God loves a cheerful giver,” says the Apostle Paul. But is there any other kind? In my experience givers are cheerful. I have never known any truly giving person who has not been a person of cheer. Joy is one of the indelible characteristics of the giving person. I am not referring to the kind of reluctant, sharp-penciled, let-me-figure-out-what-my-share-is kind of giver. Rather, I am thinking of the open-handed, open-hearted givers. They not only spread cheer and share joy, they obviously know cheer and experience joy. We might wonder which comes first: Do these people know cheer and joy because they are givers, or are they givers because they are people of cheer and joy? The question seems strangely moot, however, for in the lives of such people the two are inextricably intertwined. Joy and giving flow from one another in a sure and blessed way. Think of it as the endless echo of grace. Among the reasons why givers are cheerful is that, in giving to others, we are acting in accordance with God's intentions for our lives. After all, we are created to be givers, meant to be givers. So when we close in on ourselves in self-concern, we are departing from what God intends for us, and there is no joy in that. So Paul enjoins us to give, to borrow the words of Jesus, “so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.”

Prayer ...

God, help me to take my part in the echo of grace, where giving and joy flow from one another. Amen.

**Need a ride to church?
Call the church office for
more information!**

**Calendar for additions to ~ or ~ changes to the
2011 monthly calendar mailed to you.
February 7th to February 20th**

- 2/07 7:00p Green Team Meeting (Lounge)
 2/08 9:00a Staff Meeting
 7:15p ~~Finance Committee~~ **canceled!**
 2/09 9:00a Bible Study (CE)
 7:00p Bell Choir
 7:30p Consistory
 2/10 7:30p Chancel Choir Practice
 2/11
 2/12

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

Sunday ~ February 13, 2011

† **Nursery Available 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.**
 † **BOY SCOUT SUNDAY**



Volunteers for February 13th

- 8:00a 7thDay Practice
 8:30a Worship
 9:15a Church School for All Ages
 10:30a Worship/ Children's Sunday School
 11:30a Social Hour Host: Bible Study (CE)
 11:30a YF Deliver Valentine Cookies

- Altar Flower Delivery: D. Gehlert / D. Larkins
 Greeters: Boy Scouts
 Lay Reader: L. Rorrer
 Special Music: 7thDay / Chancel Choir, Bells
 Nursery: M. Peyak, T. Jensen, A. Lorentz, E. Zeller, C. Eberhardt
 Ushers: J.&S. Mancinelli, F. Read, S. Truby, S. Ward, H. Koudela, B. Pletzer, J. Bebout, Scouts
 Van Driver:
 Visitor Outlook: N. Read

- 2/14
 2/15 9:00a Staff Meeting
 7:30p Kerygma
 2/16 8:00a Men's Breakfast
 9:00a Bible Study (CE)
 7:00p Bell Choir Practice
 2/17 7:30p Chancel Choir Practice
 2/18
 2/19 *Esperanza Mission Trip Begins*
 11:30a Bethany Kitchen



Sunday ~ February 20, 2011

† **Nursery Available 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.**
 † **FAMILY PROMISE GUEST WEEK**

Volunteers for February 20th

- 8:30a Worship
 9:15a Combined Children and Adult S.S. Class
 10:30a Worship/ Children's Sunday School
 11:30a Coffee Hour
 5:00p YF – FP Meal Preparation
 6:00p FP Meal (SH)

- Altar Flower Delivery: E. Frederick / M. Trostle
 Greeters: F.&M.Clark / M. Crichton, M. Trail
 Lay Reader: J. Welfley
 Special Music: / Chancel Choir
 Nursery: H. Bowman, H. Bedillion, M. Ferda, S. Keenan, J. Nielsen
 Ushers: T. Hermann, H. Walker, J. Grazulis, J. Seymour, N. Buck, H. Bowman, J. Nielson, L. Sheppard
 Van Driver: B. Read
 Visitor Outlook: R. Schreiber