

The Bethany Letter

SUNDAY ~ JULY 25, 2010

VOLUME 2010

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The Rev. Stephen Gehlert, Senior Minister

The Rev. Mark Steiner, Visitation Minister

On Giving and Receiving

One of the ways God's Spirit has clearly been at work at Bethany over the years is to nurture an active compassion for the needs of others. That's something to celebrate! It's also not something to be smug about. This article from Sojourner's magazine challenges us to see compassion in ways that we might not have considered before:

"I was just at church and they were praying for the homeless," Larry said, holding the day's belongings in a bag beside him. He quipped, "I decided that I should pray for the housed." Larry was sick of handouts, sick of condescension. To Larry, a long-time guest at the homeless shelter, Christian compassion seemed like little more than a masquerade, a power trip for those fortunate enough to be in the seat of the "giver" rather than the "receiver."

We remember Jesus' words in Matthew 25, that when one helps the hungry, stranger or prisoner – the "least of these" – then "you did it for me," for Jesus. But how do we live out this passage? How do we minister to Larry, who is tired of being "clothed" and "fed" by Christians who are all too aware of their good deeds?

For an answer, we can look at how this scripture was brought to life in a time of famine, disease, and suffering. In the fourth century, a famine struck and leaders such as Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa sought a Christian response to the tragedy. Basil challenged the rich, who "would rather burst themselves eating than leave a crumb for the hungry." The rich must empty their storehouses and give to the poor. "Give, therefore; don't market it or keep the grain in the storehouses. What good are heavy purses? You and all your wealth will share one death."

Basil's response to human suffering is exemplary. Yet, while his approach to poverty was important and necessary, his brother Gregory provides a way of embodying Matthew 25 that comes closer to addressing Larry's concern. For Gregory, a key issue is how we respond to the outcast. At that time, leprosy was cause for alienation. "Touch a leper and you will be contaminated," the thought went. So lepers must stay separated. Those who give charitably must give at a distance. They must give handouts of food and clothing out of pity for the sufferers.

Gregory starts by trying to bridge the divide between the healthy and the diseased. Rather than just seeing the sick and deformed limbs of lepers, we should recognize the common humanity we share with them. We all share the same human nature. Thus, to condemn the sick and the staving is to condemn the body, to condemn one's own self.

Moreover, the "healthy" should realize that they're not so healthy after all. Drawing upon Matthew 25, Gregory reverses the idea of leprosy as a disease that will contaminate others. To the contrary, to touch the leper is to take a step toward healing. Encountering a leper is not a threat, but a life-giving opportunity. "If we wish to heal the wounds by which our sins have afflicted us, heal today the ulcers which break down their flesh," he wrote. The persons who assist them (the lepers) may receive healing of their own diseases of wealth and greed. In this way the church needs contact with lepers in order to cure spiritual diseases. Yet lepers also need contact with the healthy to relieve their own very physical suffering." Thus, rather than just giving a handout and treating the poor as a mysterious "other," Gregory shows us how Matthew 25 offers a picture of fellowship and mutual interdependence.

People like Larry are tired of being treated as "poor," "homeless," objects of pity. They want help in caring for needs of food and shelter, but also to be treated as a person, who can befriend and give as they receive. Matthew 25 need not lead to condescending pity. It can do the opposite: It can awaken an apathetic church to realize that it needs to touch the hungry, the stranger, and the prisoner if it is to have its own spiritual diseases healed.

The way to break down the polarities between "givers" and "receivers" is to get close to one another – recognizing our common humanity – and then realize that God wants us to sit together at the table of the kingdom. We're all hungry, so let's serve one another at the table. But to do that, we have to have the humility to realize our need and to receive from the hungry, the stranger, and the outcasts among us.

With Gratitude and Hope,

How We're Doing

Month	Income	Expenses	Total +/-
JUNE	18,686	30,535	- 11,849
YTD	148,734	162,824	- 14,090

Camp Bethany / New Trinity

begins this week ...

July 25th through July 30th

Please keep the staff and campers
in your prayers.

Have a Favorite Hymn?

What a great treasure we, as Christians have, in the hymns of the church. Through them we give thanks and praise to God. Through them God comforts, challenges, and inspires us. We're going to celebrate that treasure in a special way with "Hymn Parade Sunday," when we'll be singing the "Top Ten" favorite hymns of our Bethany family. How will we know what those hymns are? **YOU** are going to tell us!



All through the summer, every Sunday, you'll have a chance to share your favorite hymn on your attendance card. One vote per week, use them as you choose: name the same hymn every week, or a different one each week; it's up to you. But one vote, per person, per week. Then, on September 5th we'll have a "Hymn Parade" count down in worship to celebrate what a gift it is to sing these songs together.

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Bethany's Ministry Continues Through the Summer

During the summer, many of our schedules get busier or at least take us away from home. At our home church the ministry and mission that we all share at Bethany doesn't stop or even diminish. In fact, several parts of it (VBS, Camp Bethany) happen only in the summer. This is why it's extra important for everyone to keep on giving toward his or her pledge during the vacation season. If you are not here for several Sundays, please feel free to put your offering in the mail or drop it off at the office. This will help us keep the work we share strong all through the year.



New Bethany Members!

Please extend a warm welcome to our newest members of the Bethany family...
† Mark Bair, Corinna Croskey, Cheryl McGraw,
and Marian Morris.



Miller Avenue UCC "Lunch on Us"

On Saturday, **July 31**, we (Mission) will be preparing and serving the meal to the neighborhood from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bethany members are encouraged and welcome to join the mission committee members with this project. **We are also collecting toothpaste, deodorant, toothbrushes, paper towels, tissues, and toilet paper to give to the guests when they come for lunch.** For more information, contact Carolyn B. Hofmann. Hope to see you there!

The first Sunday of each month, Bethany's volunteer nurses, Linda Goodwin and Holly Keenan, offer blood pressure tests during social hour. Look for them in the social hall.



Good Neighbors Annual School Supply Collection

The Mission Committee is requesting donations of school supplies for kids in Cuyahoga Falls who need a hand in preparing for the new school year. We are also taking financial donations to help purchase these supplies. We have listed items needed.



School boxes, glue/glue sticks, loose-leaf binders, pens/pencils, scissors, pocket folders, filler paper (wide rule), markers, rulers, erasers, small dictionaries, filler book bags, paper (college rule), protractors, pencil sharpeners, backpacks

Please drop off your school supply donations or financial donations at the box marked Good Neighbors in the Social Hall by **the end of July**. For more information, contact Carolyn B. Hofmann.

Welcoming Back a Good Friend



Sandy Hutchinson became a beloved friend of Bethany when she served here as Associate Pastor in the 90's. She's now serving as Chaplain at Chapel Hill

Homes. We're delighted that she's been able to arrange coming back to lead worship and preach at both services on Sunday, August 8th. Please mark the date on your calendar so you can join in welcoming her back to Bethany.

"The Bethany Letter"

To save on cost associated with the preparation and distribution of our newsletter, *TBL* will be ready on our website or you may pick it up at church on the following Sundays this summer:

August 8, 22 ... to continue weekly

TBL will be mailed (if not picked up) on the Monday after the above listed Sundays. Deadline for summer news articles: 10:00 a.m. the Tuesday before. Also, check out our website: www.bethanyucc.org

Children of Abraham: Members of One Family
A Retreat – October 2, 9:30 – 9:30
Furnace Run Metro Park

Please mark your calendar now! Abraham, who obeyed God's call to leave a settled life and go to a place that God would show him where in spite of his old age, would become the father of a people through whom all the world would be blessed, is the father of our faith. His obedience to God's call was the seed through which the Jewish faith, then Christianity, but also Islam, have grown. The Retreat Committee would like to invite members of the Bethany family to reconnect with these roots and also develop connections with others of God's children, who are also descendants of Abraham, from the Jewish and Muslim faiths. The retreat will include sharing by representatives of all three faiths, time for crafts and recreation, some great food, inspiring worship, and lively entertainment. It's being planned to be a special day for all ages. Watch for more information in the coming weeks.

Water Conservation

If you rely on watering to make your lawn grow and your garden productive, consider a more efficient system. There are several ways to improve the use of water.

Use Water Again

- ① When it rains, if no water recycling system has been planned, the water that runs off your house keeps on going to the storm sewer. By saving that water and reusing it on your garden or lawn later, you save energy and water. A simple recycling system directs water from eave spouts to a storage barrel. You fill a bucket with water from the storage barrel and carry the water to your garden.

Watering to Save Energy

- ① Whenever practical, water in the early morning. In arid climates, it's okay to water in the evenings and at night. You will lose less water evaporation than if you watered in the middle of the day, and the plants are less stressed and can take up the water more efficiently. Mulch or fiber cloth preserves soil moisture. Consider planting native species. They usually use little or no water beyond normal rainfall.

(Backyard Conservation Magazine)



River Valley Paper Company

fun facts

Recycling a single run of the Sunday New York Times would save 75,000 trees!

6/1 to 6/30/10 Bethany's recycled paper has had the following environmental impact:

28 trees
4,911 cubic yards of landfill
11,445 gallons of water
6,703 kilowatts of electricity



Thanks so much to all the staff and helpers of Vacation Bible School...

Dear Bethany Friends,
Thank you so much for your prayers and the cards received during my recent surgery. The surgeons were able to do a laproscopic procedure this time that really hastened my recovery, what a blessing. Special thanks to Rev. Steve and Rev. Mark for their prayers and visits, and to Maurine Renner for bringing me the Church flowers. *See You in Church, Bob Charton*

Dear Bethany,
Thank you for all of the flowers that I have received. Also, thank you for all of Rev. Steiner's visits. *Sally Mellott*

As Joanna Castro was leaving Bethany on Sunday morning, ending the week here with Interfaith Hospitality Network, she shared with me her excitement that she had looked at a house on Saturday and hoped to hear by Wednesday if her family had a new home. We said 'goodbyes' and she asked, 'pray for me'. Joanna is a good and loving mother. You can see this in her 5 wonderful children. They are kind, helpful, loving and hard working children. I saw this on Monday night, when, after dinner they cleared the table, and washed dishes without being told to help, and, in addition, they were always attentive of the little ones. Joanna's husband, Art, was in the kitchen during the last minutes at Bethany, washing up the dishes, and then asked for a mop to clean up the floor before they left. Thoughtfulness everywhere! I will, indeed, pray for Joanna, for her family, and Marty family, and others who are helped and supported by IHN. Thank you to all of the many volunteers who helped to make this week possible and for the numerous hours of dedication to this program. Know that the families are grateful. Please continue to keep them in your prayers. *Donah Gehlert*

Thanks
Thanks to everyone who helped our Family Promise (IHN) Mission by bringing in sets of twin sheets. We greatly appreciated these donations and your support.

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| PAT COCHRAN | SHARON OTTO |
| LYNETTE SHEPPARD | DEBBIE LARKINS |
| SARA MELVIN | KEVIN MELVIN |
| BOB PEYAK | KIM FRATZ |
| STEVE FERDA | VICKI MCVAN |
| TAMMY URASEK | BETH LEES |
| BETH MCDEVITT | LINDA GOODWIN |
| EMMA JENSEN | MANDY KEENAN |
| NANCY JENSEN | KRISTY DUGAN |
| KATHY KEENAN | ANNA ZELLER |
| MARIA MANCINELLI | SUSAN MANCINELLI |
| DEBBIE MCCLELLAN | JULIANNA BEBOUT |
| JENNA COFFY | HANNAH |
| WENNGMAN | |
| JACOB MCCLELLAN | NICK REAGH |
| HEATHER ALBERSON | CAELA BEDILLION |
| TAILOR OROS | CAYLA GOODWIN |
| TRAY JOHNSON | ALEX WACHOVEC |
| TAYLOR GIFFEN | |



Altar Flowers given in June by...

- 6/20 Kathe Kirstein & Family** in memory of husband and father, Fritz Kirstein
- 6/27 Ruth Schreiber** in memory of Ed and Edith



Join us for Sunday Worship

Please remember in your prayers...

- † Joe Probeck, Akron General Hospital
- † Donna Bidwell, Falls Village

Calendar for additions to ~ or ~ changes to the
2010 monthly calendar mailed to you.
July 26th to August 8th

7/25 through 7/30 CAMP BETHANY / NT

7/26 9:00a Quilters
7/27
7/28 7:00p Mission Committee Meeting
7/29
7/30
7/31 10:00a Miller Ave. "Lunch on Us" (Mission)

Sunday ~ August 1, 2010

† Nursery Available 9:15 to 10:30 a.m.
† Communion at both worship services

8:30a Worship ~ In the Social Hall
9:30a Worship ~ In the Sanctuary
10:30a Coffee Hour
10:30a Bethany Nurse BP Check
10:30a Retreat Committee Meeting

8/02 9:00a Quilters
7:00p Stewardship Committee Meeting (Lounge)
8/03 9:00a Staff Meeting (Lounge)
10:00a Newsletter Deadline
08/04
08/05 12:15p Newsletter Preparation
08/06
08/07

Sunday ~ August 8, 2010

† Nursery Available 9:15 to 10:30 a.m.
† Sandy Hutchinson, preacher

8:30a Worship (Healing & Reconciliation)
9:30a Worship
10:30a Coffee Hour

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 August 1st

Cup Washing: A. Zeller
Greeters: S.&G. Myers / N.&G. Boughner
Lay Reader: G. Jensen
Special Music: Camp Bethany Singers
Nursery: D. Schreiber
Ushers: L. Luginbill, H. Walker, B. Pletzer, N. Buck
M.&R. Bowmaster, L. Short, J. Smith,
H. Bowman, M. Jensen, K. Fratz, M. Spring
Van Driver: S. Gaskill
Visitor Outlook:

*'So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to
you; search, and you will find; knock, and the
door will be opened for you. For everyone who
asks receives, and everyone who searches finds,
and for everyone who knocks, the door will be
opened. -Luke 11:9-10*

Volunteers for August 8th

Cup Washer: A. Zeller
Greeters: M. Heyburn / B. Caiola
Special Music: Mark Bair
Nursery: B. Lees
Ushers: C. Hofmann, B. Charton, J. Grazulis, J. Seymour,
A. McVan, B. Pletzer, C.&D. Schreiber
Van Driver: C. Jones
Visitor Outlook: N. Read

MISSION

Reminders

mark your calendar !

Mission Committee Meeting

Our next Mission Committee meeting is Wednesday, **July 28** at 7 p.m. Come and join us and learn more about our mission projects

Bethany Kitchen

Saturday, **August 21**. Can you volunteer a few hours to help prepare and serve this meal? Contact Gail Cool for more info at 330-923-2676.

Save the Date

The Mission Committee is hosting an evening of food, fun, and music on Saturday, **October 9**. The proceeds will benefit The Clean Water Project and Bethany's missions.

Make a difference with your donations Throughout the summer, we would like the families and members of our congregation to bring in items for Good Neighbors, IHN, and Miller Avenue. For Good Neighbors: a school supply (listed below) or a food item such as peanut butter, cereal, tuna, pasta, soup, or canned vegetables. For Miller Avenue: toothpaste, deodorant, toothbrush, paper towels, tissues, or toilet paper. For IHN: coffee, diapers size 4, 5, and 6, wipes and Desitan, child's underwear sizes 2-6, cleaning supplies. Please put items in the boxes marked in the social hall. Thanks in advance for your support of these missions.

Fair Trade Coffee We have several regular drip varieties: Breakfast Blend, Bright Day, Columbian, Ethiopian, French Roast and Decaf. Whole bean is available in Breakfast Blend. Check us out at the social hour each Sunday. This is a Mission awareness and benefits the coffee farmers.

Family Promise (IHN) If you have been thinking about getting involved with this mission but you're not sure how to get started, consider shadowing a volunteer during our host week to learn more about the program. For more information call Bob Pletzer or Carolyn B. Hofmann.

Please contact Carolyn B. Hofmann at 330-929-7704, 330-543-3897
or chofmann@chmca.org for more information on these many mission projects.

Come and join us and learn more about our mission projects.

Thanks for your support of Bethany's missions.