

The Bethany Letter

SUNDAY ~ JANUARY 16, 2011

VOLUME 2011

ISSUE NO. 2

Rev. Stephen Gehlert, Senior Minister

Rev. Mark Steiner, Visitation Minister

Commencing With Commitment

I recently read this reflection by Kenneth Samuel, which offers an important reminder and challenge to us as we begin a new year, both as individuals and as a church.

“When a person stands before other people and says he believes in me, then I will say that person belongs to me. I will say this before my [God] in heaven. But when a person stands before people and says he does not believe in me, then I will say that person does not belong to me. I will say this before my [God] in heaven.” (Mt. 10:32-33)

Have you ever noticed how many people live with “commitment-phobia”? Perhaps you are one of them. In these days of uncertainty, we find it daunting to make long-range commitments, especially publicly. What if we lose our jobs? What if the person(s) we commit to prove untrustworthy? What if we just don’t feel tomorrow the way we feel today?

Fear of commitment gives us the shaky satisfaction of believing that our options are always open. So if we don’t commit to one person, we can still choose from an array of others. If we don’t commit to one set of beliefs, we can just sample all the others in perpetuity. If we don’t commit to any plan, then whatever happens is OK. So we think.

Public commitment carries a public accountability that many of us are not willing to shoulder. What we fail to realize, however, is that lack of commitment also carries accountability. Jesus says that a failure to acknowledge commitment to him publicly will result in the loss of a relationship with eternal consequences. To fail to decide is, in actuality, to make a decision.

This is not the year for closeted confessions and commitments. This is the year to step outside the shadows of shame. This is the year to discontinue the deceptions and duplicities of the down-low. This is the year to publicly embrace all that we are and all that we believe and all that we have in Christ.

Progressive Christian? Critical thinker? Open to dialogue and revelations from other faith traditions? Consistent supporter of the work and witness of a church body? Dedicated in loving relationship to one significant other? Not ashamed of the gospel of Christ? For me, these are not really questions. They are all a part of my public commitment. I’d stand to forfeit too much in relationship, responsibility and reward if I openly denied any of them.

Who and what are you committed to this year? Are you willing to make it public?

Prayer...

Dear Lord, we begin this year by acknowledging our faith in you and our commitment to live unashamed as your disciples. Help us to know the power of your open love for us, and help us share that power as we openly declare our love for one another. Amen.

May God help us commence every day this year and all the years that follow – “With Commitment!”

With Gratitude and Hope,

New Members...

Please extend a warm Bethany welcome to Kirk and Melissa Fenn who joined our church family last Sunday.



Just Peace Concert

We're all invited to join our brothers and sisters in Christ at New Trinity Missionary Baptist Church, 1380 Harford, Akron, TODAY~Sunday, January 16TH, at 6:00 p.m. to sing and share music in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Carpoolers meet at Bethany at 5:15p.

OFFICE CLOSED

MONDAY, JANUARY 17TH

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

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 January 19th 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.

BIBLE STUDY

Our Wednesday morning Bible study has resumed! We meet at 9:00 a.m. in the CE office. Please join us.

Annual Meeting and Dinner

Sunday ~ January 23rd

The Annual Meeting and Dinner is a wonderful way for our faith family to celebrate God's blessings in the past year and consider how God is calling us to serve in the coming year. For this year, Consistory has decided to try a new format starting at ...

10:30 am with a simple, brief, Family Worship Service; the annual meeting will immediately follow the service in the Sanctuary (child-care provided by Youth Fellowship); followed by dinner, served in the Social Hall. We hope that this will be a more efficient use of time that will enable more of us to share in the meeting.



Helen Davis

Helen will celebrate on

January 25th!

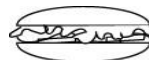
520 Meredith Lane #418

Cuyahoga Falls 44223

COMMITTEE NIGHT

7:00P WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26TH

SUPER BOWL SUB SALE!



There is no sub like a Bethany "YF SUPER BOWL SUB!" Order yours after worship starting Sunday ~ January 23rd. Cost is \$4.00 and "WOW" that is a deal! Having a bowl party? Order a dozen! Oh, you don't have to watch the super bowl to order one, two or three. You can order on your attendance card January 30th if you want.

Pick up is ~ when else ~

Super Bowl Sunday, February 6th
after BOTH worship services.

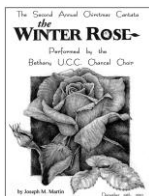
A Chance to Help YF!

Over the years Bethany members have provided important support for our Youth Ministry by collecting Acme Receipts. You can help us again this year! Please save and turn in receipts dated September 25th - February 19th. Collection boxes are at all the entrances. The YF is grateful for your support!



George Jensen has DVDs available of the Christmas Cantata and the Children's Christmas Eve Pageant. If you are interested in

purchasing a copy of the Cantata, the Pageant or both please see George after church in the Social Hall, he will be there for the next few Sundays. His asking price is \$5.00 - to defray the cost of production.



It Pays to Recycle!

For the month of January River Valley will pay \$30/ton for the following materials:

Newspapers, Office and School Paper, Mail, Hard & Soft Bound Books, Phonebooks, Magazines, Catalogs, Brown Paper Bags, Cardboard

The following items are NOT ACCEPTED in the recycling container:

Styrofoam, Glass, Any type of plastic, Metal, Trash, Aluminum

Please remember in your prayers...

- † Nancy Zucco, Bath Manor
- † Bobbie Berie, Falls Village
- † Karen Butler, Traditions
- † Shelley Alexander, home



Altar Flowers 2011

If you want to reserve flowers for the altar, \$15.00 per vase, for a particular Sunday, the office needs to know the following:



1. Do you want the church to keep the flowers to be delivered to a shut-in or someone recently hospitalized, or for a birthday? If so CIRCLE [C] for church takes in the flower book and on the pink slip that goes to the office.
2. Do you want to take the flowers after church yourself? If so, CIRCLE [D] for donor takes in the flower book and on the pink slip that goes to the office.
3. Do you want your arrangement in HONOR OF or IN MEMORY OF someone? If so, PLEASE fill that information in on the pink slip and turn it in to the office.

The Ministry Committee contacts church members to deliver the flowers that are designated for the "church to take." PLEASE circle [D] or [C] when you enter your request in the flower book so they know how many people to contact for delivery. If you do not provide the above information, the office will have to assume the church takes the flowers. If you do not provide a dedication for your donation your name will simply appear as the donor in the bulletin. Thank you.

thank you

Thank you so much for cards and the beautiful poinsettia brought to me by Barb Briggs who stayed to visit and informed me of the Briggs family. Also, to Carolyn Shroyer who brought food! The chicken soup made by Doug was delicious. I'm still enjoying it. Thank you all again; I feel so fortunate. *Mary Coffield*

Dear Bethany Friends,

A sincere thank you for the holiday greetings received from my Bethany family. To each one, you know who you are, I appreciate you taking time to select, sign and send them to me. *Special Blessings, Polly Rutledge*

Dear Bethany Family,

Thank you all for your thoughts, prayers, visits and the communion ministered to me from Frank Read and Rev. Steiner. Our family is truly blessed by all of you.

Love Jim, Bev and Family

Has your committee's Annual Report been turned into the office? If not - it is LATE!

**Calendar for additions to ~ or ~ changes to the
 2010 monthly calendar mailed to you.
 January 16th to January 30th**

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

Today 5:15p JUST PEACE CONCERT/ New Trinity

1/17 **OFFICE CLOSED** (M. Luther King, Jr. Day)
 1/18 NO Staff Meeting
 7:30p Kerygma
 1/19 8:00a Men's Breakfast
 9:00a Bible Study (CE)
 7:00p Bell Choir Practice
 1/20 7:30p Chancel Choir Practice
 1/21 8:00a Social Hall Rsrvd. 5:00p
 1/22

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

Annual Meeting & Dinner

Family Sunday ~

January 23, 2011

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

† **Children remain in worship**

† **ORDER YOUR SUPER BOWL SUB!**

8:30a Worship (Traditional)
 9:15a Church School for All Ages
 10:30a Worship
 11:15a Annual Meeting (YF Childcare available)
 12:15p Annual Dinner

Volunteers for January 23rd

Greeters: P. Peyak / Duane Shroyer Family
 Special Music: Bell Choir / Children's Choirs
 Nursery: P. Cochran, T. Ocepek, S. Ferda,
 B. Read, K. Renner
 Ushers: C. Hofmann, H. Walker, S. Truby,
 S. Ward, N. Buck, H. Koudela, Z. Read, K. Fratz
 Van Driver: C. Jones
 Visitor Outlook: M. Crichton

1/24 7:30p Bethany / New Trinity Mtg. at NT
 1/25 9:00a Staff Meeting
 1/26 7:00p Bell Choir Practice
 7-7:30p COMMITTEE NIGHT
 1/27 7:30p Chancel Choir Practice
 1/28
 1/29

**Super Bowl Sub Sale
 Orders Taken
 Jan. 23rd & 30th**

Sunday ~ January 30, 2011

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

† **ORDER YOUR SUPER BOWL SUB!**

8:30a Worship
 9:15a Church School for All Ages
 10:30a Worship/ Children's Sunday School
 11:30a Social Hour Host: Ministry Committee
 11:30a 7thDay Practice
 TBA YF – Toboggan Party

Volunteers for January 30th

Greeters: F.&N. Read / D.&M. Renner
 Lay Reader: C. Eiber
 Special Music: / Chancel Choir
 Nursery: B. Lees, T. Jensen, J. Smith,
 K. Dugan, J. Bebout
 Ushers: R.&S. Holle, B. Charton, M. Seymour,
 M. Seguin, A. McVan, A. Pease, N. Buck
 Van Driver: C. Frederick
 Visitor Outlook: B. Lees

Haiti Earthquake Response - One Year Later First Anniversary

January 12, 2011 marks the one-year anniversary of the massive 7.0 earthquake which shook Haiti killing nearly 300,000 and displacing approximately 2 million people. In the year since, Haiti has also been hit with a cholera epidemic and flooding from Hurricane Tomas.

While significant challenges to a full recovery remain, there have been many successes.

Generous donations from members and friends continue to enable the UCC and Global Ministries to support effective relief, recovery and rebuilding initiatives in Haiti.

These gifts, shared with our indigenous, grassroots and international relief and development partners have reached thousands of Haitians.

~ Emergency food, clean water, hygiene kits, shelter materials and medication have been distributed
~ Artesian wells and latrines are being constructed

~ Educational programs for children have been re-established and expanded and permanent schools are being constructed

~ Families are returning to their newly repaired homes

~ Persons with disabilities are being supported to re-establish small businesses

~ Seeds, tools and agricultural training have been provided to Haitians who have moved to the countryside.

~ Trauma counseling and cholera prevention education is actively being shared

And, plans are in place to support full-scale home construction as soon as land ownership issues can be resolved.

Yet, over a million people in Haiti remain extremely vulnerable. A fragile infrastructure, limited government capacity and soaring poverty levels prior to and post-earthquake have no easy remedy.

The resiliency of the Haitian people is remarkable. Recently, Kenson Vilmy, a school coordinator in Lay-o-gone said, "It's all good, life is not over because of this. Life continues. You have to get up and still keep living."

The United Church of Christ, Global Ministries and our partners are committed to accompanying the people of Haiti on the long, long journey of recovery. Your prayers and gifts make this commitment possible. Thank you.

Article from ... <http://www.ucc.org/disaster/haiti/haiti-year-one.html>

Who Is Jesus to Me?

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Jesus is the Word made Flesh.
Jesus is the Bread of Life.
Jesus is the Victim offered for our sins on the Cross.
Jesus is the Sacrifice offered at the Holy Mass for the sins of the world and mine.
Jesus is the Word – to be spoken.
Jesus is the Truth – to be told.
Jesus is the Way – to be walked.
Jesus is the Light – to be lit.
Jesus is the Life – to be lived.
Jesus is the Love – to be loved.
Jesus is the Joy – to be shared.
Jesus is the Sacrifice – to be given.
Jesus is the Bread of Life – to be eaten.
Jesus is the Hungry – to be fed.
Jesus is the Thirsty – to be satiated.
Jesus is the Naked – to be clothed.
Jesus is the Homeless – to be taken in.
Jesus is the Sick – to be healed.
Jesus is the Lonely – to be loved.
Jesus is the Unwanted – to be wanted.
Jesus is the Leper – to wash his wounds.
Jesus is the Beggar – to give him a smile.
Jesus is the Drunkard – to listen to him.
Jesus is the Retarded – to protect him.
Jesus is the Little One – to embrace him.
Jesus is the Blind – to lead him.
Jesus is the Dumb – to speak for him.
Jesus is the Crippled – to walk with him.
Jesus is the Drug Addict – to befriend him.
Jesus is the Prostitute – to remove from danger and befriend.
Jesus is the Prisoner – to be visited.
Jesus is the Old – to be served