

The Bethany Letter

Sunday ~ January 8, 2012

VOLUME 2012

ISSUE NO. 1

Rev. Stephen Gehlert, Senior Minister

Rev. Mark Steiner, Visitation Minister

Beyond Comprehension

During Advent I read a story by biblical scholar and theologian JB Philips that I thought very helpful in lifting up the grand and wondrous mystery of the incarnation of Christ at Christmas, a revelation which we affirm is for all the world at Epiphany. It's called *The Visited Plane* and I share it with you as a kind of belated Christmas, early Epiphany gift.

Once upon a time a very young angel was being shown round the splendors and glories of the universes by a senior and experienced angel. To tell the truth, the little angel was beginning to be tired and a little bored. He had been shown whirling galaxies and blazing suns, infinite distances in the deathly cold of inter-stellar space, and to his mind there seemed to be an awful lot of it all. Finally he was shown the galaxy of which our planetary system is but a small part. As the two of them drew near to the star that we call our sun and to its circling planets, the senior angel pointed to a small and rather insignificant sphere turning very slowly on its axis. It looked as dull as a dirty tennis ball to the little angel, whose mind was filled with the size and glory of what he had seen.

"I want you to watch that one particularly," said the senior angel, pointing with his finger.

"Well, it looks very small and rather dirty to me," said the little angel. "What's special about that one?"

"That," replied his senior solemnly, "is the Visited Planet."

"Visited?" said the little one. "You don't mean visited by . . .?"

"Indeed I do. That ball, which I have no doubt looks to you small and insignificant and not perhaps over-clean, has been visited by our young Prince of Glory." And at these words he bowed his head reverently.

"But how?" queried the younger one. "Do you mean that our great and glorious Prince, with all these wonders and splendors of His Creation, and millions more that I'm sure I haven't seen yet, went down in Person to this fifth-rate little ball? Why should He do a thing like that?"

"It isn't for us," said his senior a little stiffly, "to question His 'why's', except that I must point out to you that He is not impressed by size and numbers, as you seem to be. But that He really went I know, and all of us in Heaven who know anything know that. As to why He became one of them – how else do you suppose He could visit them?"

The little angels face wrinkled in disgust. "Do you mean to tell me," he said, "that He stooped so low as to become one of those creeping, crawling creatures of that floating ball?"

"I do, and I don't think He would like you to call them 'creeping, crawling creatures' in that tone of voice. For, strange as it may seem to us, He loves them. He went down to visit them to lift them up to become like Him."

The little angel looked blank. Such a thought was almost beyond his comprehension.

With Prayers for Gratitude that's "Beyond Comprehension,"

Steve

Announcements in Worship

The family of God comes together on the Sabbath to honor God by giving God thanks and praise in worship. That time of gathering presents an opportunity to remind one another about areas of our life together in which God is honored and given thanks and praise – educational offerings, fellowship events, service opportunities, and special times of worship. It is a great blessing that Bethany is a living, active church, involved in many forms of ministry and mission. Yet, that’s all the more reason to be intentional in regard to announcements, so that we don’t find ourselves having spent 15 minutes on them without beginning worship. Mindful of that worship is our unique and special Sabbath purpose and of the nature of the other events through which we honor God, Consistory has approved these Guidelines for Announcements in Worship.

Announcements in Worship Should:

1. Be About Bethany Events

This means events sponsored by a Bethany Committee. Bethany members may be involved in many worthwhile causes and may share information about them in the Newsletter but not in the limited time we have for worship.

2. Be Brief

Announcements in worship are reminders. The “full story” can be told in the newsletter. Please plan what you are going to say so you can be succinct – no more than a half page single spaced or a full page double spaced. (A sermon is about 3 pages single spaced).

3. Not Begin Too Soon

Two Sunday’s before the event is plenty, or if it falls on a Sunday, three. More than that compounds the problem of having too many, which lengthens the whole announcement time. Please note that some services which are especially full (Celebration of Congregational Life, Dedication Sunday, Palm Sunday, Easter, Cantata Services) may require the omission of verbal announcements. On those Sundays extra space will be available in the bulletin to lift up special events and the pastor will reference these in the Greeting.

Happy New Year

Sign up for Altar Flowers ~ 2012

Thanks to everyone who chooses to honor or remember loved ones by selecting a date to place flowers on the altar on Sunday mornings. This not only graces our service but often provides a bit of cheer to a shut-in. **Please remember to complete the pink slip and turn it in to the office so information can be included in the bulletin.**



* **Bethany Members** ... please **USE** your **NEW 2012** giving envelopes. They are available now. Pick yours up after worship. Every member is assigned a box of **numbered** envelopes that identifies you as the contributor. Along with using your numbered envelope please write your name and amount given on the front of the envelope; mark check or cash. **This is so helpful.**

* **ALSO**, if you have had a change of address or telephone number please notify the office today as new church directories are being published.



ATTENTION

All Committee Chairpersons

Your committee’s annual report is DUE!

The annual meeting is Sunday, January 22nd and it is very important to get your report into the office **ASAP**. Please contact Carol if you have any questions.



01/08	11:30a	Meal and Class
01/15	11:30a	Mentor Meal and Talk

Youth



01/08	5:00p	YF Officers
	5:30p	Youth Committee
	6:15p	Movie Night



Prayer shawls are a means to extend our love and prayers to persons who may be homebound, ill or perhaps a way to share a special joy such as a birth or birthday milestone. Bethany’s Prayer Shawl group meets the second Monday of each month. If you are interested in this ministry please join them January 9th at 9:30 a.m. in the lounge.

GREEN TEAM MEETING
January 9, 2012 7:00 p.m.

“The Story of Stuff”

January 15th, 9:30 am - Social Hall

A Special Adult Class in the New Year

This simple, insightful and powerful film looks at the huge role “stuff” plays in our hearts, minds and lives, as well as where it comes from and social and environmental consequences of our producing and consuming so much of it. It also offers great insights into the spiritual values which drive our global economy. As Christians we are called to care for God’s creation and uphold justice for all of God’s children. This film is an excellent opportunity for all of us to renew our commitment to that calling.

Items for Good Neighbors

During Epiphany, we are suggesting “Kid and Infant Items” for our Good Neighbors collection:

Jan. 15	Peanut Butter	or	Diapers
Jan. 22	Cheerios	or	Baby Wipes
Jan. 29	Jam / Jelly	or	Baby Powder



REMEMBER! CELEBRATE! ACT! 2012

The Partnership Committee invites everyone to once again come together and remember the reason for the Martin Luther King Holiday on Sunday Evening January 15th for the Just Peace Celebration at New Trinity. It has been said it is not how much you spend on Christmas that counts, but WHERE you spend Christmas...well, it seems to us that same idea applies to the Martin Luther King Holiday. Where to spend it?...with our Friends and Partners in the cozy and warm Sanctuary of New Trinity on that Sunday Night, that’s where. We will sing, listen to others sing and talk and have a great time before having some refreshments in the basement. Carpooling and the Church Van should be available if you don’t want to drive. We will announce the time at Worship.

The time is always right to do what is right. MLK

OFFICE CLOSED

MONDAY, JANUARY 16th

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

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 **January 18th**.) 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.



Wednesday Morning Bible Study

Resumes

January 18, 2012 9:00 am

Bethany Kitchen



Saturday, January 21st 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 good food and fellowship.



Annual Meeting and Dinner

Sunday ~ January 22nd

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. We’ll be following the same plan which was well received last year:

- Simple service for worshippers of all ages at 10:30 a.m.
- Annual Meeting in the Sanctuary immediately following (Child care provided by the Youth Fellowship)
- Annual Dinner in the social hall after the meeting

COMMITTEE NIGHT

Wednesday, January 25th 7:00 p.m.

Bethany Church Directories for 2012



will be available in January. Now is the time for corrections to be made. Please call the church office and let us know of any changes made to your families: address, phone number, e-mail, additions/deletions etc. We would like to publish an up-to-date directory for your use.

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-final receipt date: **February 11, 2012**. Collection boxes are at all the entrances.

YF is grateful for your support!

Please remember in your prayers...

- † Dale Renner, St. Thomas
- † Ron Shultz, The Arbors
- † Ted Housley, home
- † Barbara Sunyecz, Select Specialty
- † Carol Clemente, home



† "Special prayers" to Bethany members who are unable to worship with us Sunday mornings. Please keep them in your prayers and keep in touch with a call or a card.

Thank You,

I would like to thank Pastor Steve for his visits and prayers while I was in the hospital. I am doing much better so far. Also, many thanks to such a "caring church."

Ken Cleary

Thanks so much for the prayers, visits from Rev. Gehlert and Rev. Steiner and the for the altar flowers delivered by Ed and Nancy Zeller. I was in therapy and missed Ed and Nancy; Rose appreciated the visit.

Ted Housley

Thank you so much for the beautiful poinsettia plant delivered to us by Dale and Maureen Renner and Jan and Bob Charton. We enjoyed good conversation and will enjoy the plant for months to come.

Peg and Glenn Leiter

Thank you for thinking of me and for the beautiful flower.

Mary Ellen Powell

So many to thank! Thanks to Nancy and Frank Read for communion; Lynette and Clyde Sheppard for the altar flowers; Jan and Bob Charton for the poinsettia; the Carolers and all the young people with their happy faces; for all the cards and visits – they were greatly enjoyed and appreciated. Happy New Year to all of our Bethany Family.

John and Kathy Ruch

Thanks for an Inspiring Christmas Cantata

Thanks to Director Beth McDevitt, Organist Dawn Filler, Narrator Bob Tromp and all the members of the Chancel Choir for the beautiful Christmas gift they gave everyone in worship on December 18 – the Cantata *Winter's Grace*. Through word and song the Cantata told the Christmas story in a beautiful and inspiring way. Our worship was truly enriched and we are grateful.

Thanks for Sharing the Joy of Christmas

Music offers one of the most important ways to share the joyful good news of Christmas. Thanks to all who did that through caroling for our homebound members on December 18. They were very grateful for our visits and uplifted by our songs. Thanks too, to the Music Committee and Chancel Choir for hosting the fellowship time which followed.

Thanks for Wonderful Christmas Eve Services

What a joy it was to see and hear our children share the good news of Christmas through their pageant, *Miracle at Midnight*, at the early service on Christmas Eve. Thanks to all who enriched our worship and Christmas celebration by making this possible: Directors Beth McDevitt and Laura Rorrer, all the other adults, youth, and Confirmants who helped in so many ways and of course, the children in the pageant. Thanks to the Confirmants who led the liturgy that evening. We were also blessed with wonderful music at the Candlelight service later in the evening. Thanks to the Chancel Choir and Organist Dawn Filler for the special pieces which so enriched and enlivened the service.

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." – John 14:27



**Calendar - additions to ~ or ~ changes to the
2012 monthly calendar mailed to you.
(as of 1/5) January 9th to January 22nd 2012**

1/09 9:30a Prayer Shawl Ministry
7:00p Bell Choir Practice
7:00p GREEN Team Meeting
1/10 9:00a Staff Meeting
10:00a Newsletter Deadline
7:15p Finance Committee
1/11 7:30p Consistory
1/12 7:30p Chancel Choir Practice
1/13
1/14 11:00a (SH) Rsrvd. 3:00p

Sunday, January 15, 2012

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

8:00a 7thDay Meets
8:30a Worship
9:15a Church School for Children
Combined Adult Class - "Stuff"
10:30a Worship/ Children's S.S./ Baptisms
11:30a Social Hour: Kerygma Class
11:30a Confirmation/Mentor, Meal/Talk
TBA JUST PEACE CONCERT

1/16 Office Closed, M.L. King, Jr. Day
7:00p Bell Choir Practice
1/17 No Staff Meeting
10:00a Newsletter Deadline
7:30p Kerygma
1/18 8:00a Men's Breakfast
9:00a Bible Study (CE)
6:30p Band Rehearsals Resume
1/19 7:30p Chancel Choir Practice
1/20
1/21 11:30a Bethany Kitchen

Sunday ~ January 22, 2012

† Nursery Available 9:15 to end of Meeting
† ANNUAL MEETING AND DINNER
† Family Sunday

8:30a Worship
9:15a Church School for All Ages
10:30a Worship (meeting follows)
11:15a Annual Meeting
12:15p Dinner

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

Display Cases for January:

Case A-1 Knitters
Case A-2 Christian Education

Volunteers for January 15th

Greeters: H. & A. Keenan / The Bedillion Family
Lay Reader: A. Cool
Nursery: L. Weiss, P. Cochran, B. Lees. H. Alberson
Special Music: 7thDay / Chancel Choir
Ushers: R.&S. Holle, F. Read, J. Grazulis, J. Seymour,
A. McVan, R. Berie, J. Sammons
Van Driver: S. Gaskill

Join us for Church School !

Volunteers for January 22nd

Greeters: C. & E. Croskey / T.&B. Eberhardt
Nursery: T. Ocepek, M. Peyak, S. Keenan.
H. Bedillion, C. Bedillion
Special Music: Memory Bell Choir / Children's Choirs
Ushers: L. Luginbill, H. Walker, S. Truby, S. Ward,
B.&C. Pletzer, J. Bebout, K. Fratz
Van Driver: C. Jones

Christmas Flowers

*Thank you for helping make our church so beautiful and festive and
for providing a lovely plant to cheer our shut-ins.*

Ernie Albert, in memory of wife, Marie and in honor of family
Donna Bidwell, in memory of James Bidwell and in honor of Marcia Spring
Ralph & Mary Bowmaster, in memory of loved ones
Charles, Pat, Steven, & Willowe Boyett, in memory of Charles S. Boyett, son and brother
Judy Caiola, in memory of George Caiola

Phyllis Casper, in memory of Jack and our parents
Pat Cochran, in memory of Earl and Ann Cochran
Chris, Michelle & Madi Mae Davis, Brett, Kim & Brandon Moore, in memory of
Harry & Mae Moore
Beverly Edwards & family, in loving memory of Jerry Edwards

Gary & Carol Eiber, in memory of loved ones
Mark & Susan Gaskill, in memory of Marjorie & Dick Gaskill, Doris Hackel and other
loved ones
Jerry & Linda Goodwin, in memory of the family members we love and miss
Warren & Mary Jo Graves, in memory of loved ones
Dick & Phyllis Haft, in memory of our parents

Ozzie & Ruth Hibbard, in memory of parents Ward & Eleanor Henderson
Carolyn B. Hofmann, in memory of Helen and Gus Hofmann, nephew Todd Hofmann, friends:
Doris, Olive, Esther and Dorothy and in honor of the Mission Co. members for their
dedication and who do so much to help so many and in honor of our many Bethany Family
Promise volunteers who take the time to help with our host week and show compassion to
our families
Dick & Sharon Holle, in honor of our loved ones
Jim, Sue, Kristy & Steve Jacobson, in memory of Carolyn Jacobson and Jim Jacobson
Donna Jones, memory of loved ones

Kathe Kirstein, in memory of husband, Fritz Kirstein
Lenora Luginbill, in memory of Chuck Luginbill
Sally Mellott, in memory of Calvin Mellott
Cheryl Philips, in memory of mother, Marie

Lynette & Clyde Sheppard, in memory of loved ones
Marcia Spring, in honor of Donna Bidwell and in memory of Barb Bidwell
Edna Truby, in memory of Peggy McVan

