

The Bethany Letter

SUNDAY ~ March 13, 2011

VOLUME 2011

ISSUE NO. 10

Rev. Stephen Gehlert, Senior Minister

Rev. Mark Steiner, Visitation Minister

The Season of Lent

We have just entered the season of Lent, the 40 days (not counting six Sundays) starting with Ash Wednesday and ending with Holy Saturday. (Sundays are not counted in the 40 days of Lent because every Sunday is considered a “little Easter.”) I’d like to share with you about the importance and meaning of this season. I’m indebted to Lori Farr, Louise Mangan, and Nancy Wyse, authors of *Living the Christ Life*, for their insight and wisdom.

In the early church, Lent was a time of preparation for people who were seeking to be baptized. During this time of baptismal preparation, the church community adopted a 40-day discipline of fasting, charity, and prayer. Prayer was for healing souls, fasting for healing bodies, charity for sharing (which heals community).

We need to relearn the power and meaning of preparing during Lent to celebrate baptism, and renewal of baptism, at Easter.

People have long believed that the word “Lent” comes from the same root as “length,” and refers to the lengthening days of spring. Some now believe, however, that it may actually come from the Latin word *lentare* which means “to bend.” This understanding reinforces a sense of Lent as a time of preparation for personal and collective transformation. Having nurtured ourselves through Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, Lent becomes a time to take a hard look at ourselves and make changes.

The scripture readings for the Lenten season remind us that God calls us to live humble lives filled with justice and kindness. When we fall short of this vision, scripture assures us that God will forgive us and help us start fresh. When we err because we take too much upon ourselves, Genesis reminds us that we are made from the dust of the earth. When we fall short because of feelings of fear or desolation, Genesis also reminds us that we are made in God’s image.

The Journey to Jerusalem is the biblical theme of Lent. As Jesus “set his face toward Jerusalem,” we turn to face our own vulnerability. We come to healing and wholeness by allowing our former self to come apart. Just as Jesus’ body was wounded on the cross, our sufferings on the cross of becoming spiritually vulnerable may be painful to body, mind, and spirit. We have to let go of many kinds of illusions which hold our false sense of security together. We have to let go of “false” attachments – whatever our souls cling to instead of God. We have to open up to what’s real and face the shadows.

Like the ancient prophets, we go through our “dark night” to become the whole persons God intends. Risking coming apart, we come together anew in “at-one-ment.” To be whole is to be at peace with God. Atonement is the peace of God, a peace the world without God cannot give. Atonement frees us for justice and kindness.

Our personal Lent won’t always coincide with a particular season of the Christian Year. But Lent and Holy Week can help us deal constructively with suffering when we must. As children of God, we will always have Lenten times because we are always “becoming.” We’re constantly called to change. Lent draws us into the faithful persistence of transformation. With Jesus we yield, come apart, and even die – so we can be born anew for God’s future.

And again and again God is present, not just in strength but in weakness. God works creatively with pain in history and works creatively in us. Our changing self is getting ready for our part in building God’s peace.

With Hope for a Blessed Lenten Journey,

Steve





Harvest for Hunger Food Drive

During the month of March the Mission Committee will be supporting the Harvest for Hunger Food Drive. Every Sunday in March, please bring as many canned and dry goods as you can to donate. This is a great opportunity to support our neighbors and our local community and also a great way for kids to get involved. Drop boxes for the canned goods will be available by each of the nametag boards. Together we can make sure all children go to bed full. The Foodbank would like us to focus our donations on the "Super Six" items but any donation is appreciated.

Canned Beef Stew, Canned Tuna Fish, Peanut Butter, Boxed Cereal, Canned Vegetables, and Canned Soup

Financial contributions are appreciated. Checks can be made payable to the Akron Canton Regional Foodbank or Bethany, with "food drive" in the memo section.

Youth Fellowship

3/20	6:30 pm	Movie Night
3/26	5:00 pm	Prep - Indian Taco Family Night!
3/27	6:30 pm	Ponca Creek share with YF and Parents

Confirmation

3/13	11:30	Meal/Discussion w/Mentor
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Prayer Shawl Ministry



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 (March 14th). If you are interested in this ministry please join them at 9:30 a.m. in the lounge.



This year's Soup and Worship Lenten Series: Learning Forgiveness, will be offered at 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Social Hall. Here is the schedule:

March 16 Forgiveness, Relationship, and Community

- March 2 *The Need for Self Examination*
- March 30 *On Enemies and Honesty*
- April 6 *God's Love and Judgment*
- April 13 *The Call to Forgive*

I look forward to sharing the special blessings of this part of our Lenten journey with you.

Pastor Steve

Wednesday Morning Men's Breakfast Group



On the third Wednesday of each month, the men of Bethany Church meet at 8:00 a.m. to share faith, food and fellowship. After breakfast these special men join forces and do a few small chores to help out our custodians - who are very appreciative. Do you want to join them? All are welcome. The more the merrier! **The next breakfast is March 16th.** Also, if you would be interested in making a breakfast for these deserving men that would be terrific. Contact Nancy Read at 330-928-3002.



Bethany Kitchen

This is just a reminder to mark your calendar for **March 19th** - the date of the next Bethany Kitchen meal. Make sure you sign the volunteer sheet! This gives us a record of your attendance. If I have forgotten to thank anyone who volunteered in the past I'm sorry. Apologies to Susan Mancinelli, one of Bethany Kitchen's faithful volunteers, who helped in the kitchen on Feb. 19th. Help is always needed for food preparation and clean up - sign the volunteer sheet! **ALL ARE WELCOME!** *Harvey Koudela*

One Great Hour of Sharing



One Great Hour of Sharing is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ and is part of Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM). The UCC works with international partners to

provide hope to people in more than 80 countries. The ministries supported include National Disaster Ministries, Refugee Ministries, Volunteer Ministries and Global Ministries.

National Disaster Ministries: A network of Conference Disaster Coordinators assists in developing preparedness measures before crises occur. Coordinators help to organize volunteers for clean-up and rebuilding efforts. They also participate in response and long term recovery efforts in communities affected by natural disasters.

Refugee Ministries: This mission involves, encourages and accompanies local churches and their members in the life transforming ministry of refugee resettlement and an understanding of the plight of refugees. One out of every fifty persons worldwide is a refugee or an international migrant.

Volunteer Ministries: Volunteer Ministries partners with local agencies to place individual volunteers with agencies that match the skills of the volunteers with the needs of the agencies. Mission Trips are another way in which the United Church of Christ provides volunteer opportunities. Mission Trips are short-term in nature lasting up to a week and are for groups of people.

Global Ministries: A total of 126 missionaries served in 43 countries last year which included 56 fully supported missionaries, 8 global mission interns (young adults ages 18-30), 13 long-term volunteers (one year or more) and 49 overseas associates.

We will have a special offering on Sunday, March 20th. Please consider a contribution to help support One Great Hour of Sharing and these ministries.

Change of Address: (now through July)

Lorraine Benesh

c/o Margie Weaver

2102 Carrington Lane, Miamisburg OH 45342



United Church of Christ

Summer Camps

The Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ offers a wonderful variety of camps for all ages at two sites. You can register your children for camp at a significant discount if you do so by March 31. Just go to www.ocucc.org to link to summer camp registration.

Guests from Ponca Creek

For years we've heard our youth tell about the meaning of our partnership with the Native American members of the Ponca Creek United Church of Christ Community. We're very excited that soon, three members of that community: lay leaders, Judith Andrews and Judy Hanson and youth member, Lindsay Yellow Hawk, will be with us to share about Native American culture, the importance of our continued partnership and their needs and expectations of the youth who come to lead the all-day Bible School and be role models and witnesses for Jesus Christ. They will be with us three times, each with a different focus:

Sat, March 26, 6:00 pm – Indian Taco Family Night

Learn about Native American culture!

Play Native American games!

Eat GREAT Indian Tacos!

Sun, March 27, 9:30 am – Combined Sunday School

This community still deals with racism and neglect.

Hear of the hope our continued commitment offers.

Sun, March 27, 6:30 pm – YF & Parents

Ponca Creek young people need good role models.

Potential mission trippers and their parents will hear what that means from Ponca Creek leaders.

Women's Spring Lantern Fellowship Pilgrim Hills Camp – April 8, 9, 10

Led by Pastor Dale Ann Gray

We may be pretty well acquainted with God the Almighty, Jehovah, the Most High, but what about God the Sweeper Woman, God the Knitter, God the Mother Hen? What do *these* images tell us about who God is, how God loves, and who we are? Come see!

Cost is \$135 – more info? hoffretire@yahoo.com



Noisy Offering

The Mission Committee would like to suggest a 50/50 proposition for Lent. Save your pocket change during Lent and give at least 50% to the Church and keep the other half to do something special for yourself or with your family. We will have a Noisy Offering collection on **Palm Sunday, April 17th**. We hope to hear a loud clamor! All money collected will go to Bethany's missions. So please start saving that change!

Nursery

May 22 10:15-11:30a
Aug. 28 10:15-11:30a
Sept. 18 10:15-11:30a

If you can help, please call the church office.



Please remember in your prayers...



† Nancy Zucco, Gardens of Western Reserve
† Bev Lipinski, home

† In Sympathy...

We extend our Christian sympathy and extend our prayers to the family and friends of Bethany member, Bobbie Berie, who passed away March 5th.

Special Summer Dates

Ponca Creek Youth Mission Trip June 11-19
Camp Bethany / New Trinity July 24-29

Thank you!

All of the Esperanza volunteers wish to thank Bethany for their generosity and prayers while we were in Tijuana. The families that we worked with were so grateful for the support and help in building their "dream houses." That love and care changes the lives of those we help as well as the lives of the volunteers who went to serve. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to go on behalf of Bethany church.



JUST FOR TODAY...

Every day is a precious gift. It is ours to squander or to fill with satisfying accomplishment. Real achievement comes from filling each day with useful, organized activity. For success comes one day at a time and, as one productive day follows another, our achievements can amaze and delight us.

Just for today ...

I WILL TRY TO LIVE THROUGH THIS DAY ONLY AND NOT TACKLE MY WHOLE LIFE PROBLEM AT ONCE.

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.

RECYCLE: UPS will recycle bubble-lined manila envelopes. Bethany members can bring them to church and drop them off at the recycle table in the social hall. They will be collected and delivered by our "green ambassador."

Matthew 4:1-11



⁴Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. ³The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' ⁴But he answered, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."' ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."' ⁷Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."' ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; ⁹and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' ¹⁰Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! for it is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."' ¹¹Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

**Calendar for additions to ~ or ~ changes to the
2011 monthly calendar mailed to you.
March 14TH to March 24TH**

- 3/14 9:30a Prayer Shawl Ministry
 3/15 9:00a Staff Meeting
 10:00a Newsletter Deadline
 7:30p Kerygma
 3/16 8:00a Men's Breakfast
 9:00a Bible Study (CE)
6:30p Lenten Service/ 7th Day / Soup
 7:00p Bell Choir
 7:30p Consistory
 3/17 7:30p Chancel Choir Practice
 3/18
 3/19 11:30a Bethany Kitchen

Sunday ~ March 20, 2011

- † **Nursery Available 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.**
 † **Second Sunday in Lent**
8:30a Worship
 9:15a Church School for Children and Adults
10:30a Worship/ Children's Sunday School
 11:30a Social Hour Host: Mission
 6:30p YF Movie Night

- 3/21
 3/22 9:00a Staff Meeting
 10:00a Newsletter Deadline
 3/23 9:00a Bible Study (CE)
6:30p Lenten Service/ Chancel Choir / Soup
 7:00p Bell Choir Practice
7:30p COMMITTEE NIGHT
 3/24 7:30p Chancel Choir Practice
 3/25
 3/26 6:00p Family Night Indian Taco Meal

Family Sunday ~ March 27, 2011

- † **Nursery Available 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.**
 † **Third Sunday in Lent**
 † **Children remain in worship**
8:30a Worship
 9:15a Church School for Children/
COMBINED Adult Classes
10:30a Worship
 11:30a Social Hour Host: Green Team
 11:30a 7th Day Practice
 6:30p YF – Ponca Creek, share w/parents

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 March 20th

- Altar Flower Delivery: C.&L. Sheppard
 Greeters: C. Bedillion, M. Ferda/J. Sammons, G. Jenson
 Lay Reader: J. Wachovec
 Special Music: / Chancel Choir
 Nursery: S. Ward, M. Peyak, A. Lorentz, E. Zeller
 J. Sammons
 Ushers: T. Hermann, B. Charton, M. Seymour, M. Seguin,
 L. Short, J. Bebout, M. Spring
 Van Driver: C. Frederick
 Visitor Outlook: N. Zeller

join us this week

Volunteers for March 27th

- Altar Flower Delivery: J.&S. Mancinelli/ M.&S. Gaskill
 Greeters: Z. Read, G. Smith / J. Bebout, C. McGraw
 Special Music: Bell Choir / Children's Choirs
 Nursery: H. Bedillion, T. Jensen, M. Ferda, S. Keenan,
 R. Read
 Ushers: C. Hofmann, M. Jensen, S. Truby, S. Ward,
 H. Bowman, K. Fratz, J. Nielson, R. Berie
 Van Driver: E. Frederick
 Visitor Outlook: H. Bedillion