

The Bethany Letter

SUNDAY ~ OCTOBER 10, 2010

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The Rev. Stephen Gehlert, Senior Minister

The Rev. Mark Steiner, Visitation Minister

Just One Hour

The first definition in the dictionary for the word *education* is “to develop the knowledge, mind, skill, and character.” Given that definition, *Christian Education* would be “to develop Christian knowledge, Christian minds, Christian skill, and Christian character in Christians. This definition would make it seem that such “education,” would be very important to Christians.

Sadly, that doesn’t seem to be the case. The first article in the latest issue of *Christian Century* magazine tells of the dramatic decline in worship attendance in America in the last decade (and with it, an even more dramatic decline in Sunday School attendance). The two are clearly related; if fewer and fewer people believe that they owe God their regular expression of gratitude, praise, and commitment in worship, there are also going to be ever fewer people who feel the need “to develop Christian knowledge, Christian minds, Christian skill, and Christian character” in their children, much less in themselves, at least not in an intentional, disciplined way.

Another article in a recent *Christian Century* talks of the “almost Christian” faith formation of many teens today, teens who may feel “OK” about their church and think that God “can be helpful in times of trouble,” that we should “be nice to one another,” and that “if we are, we’ll go to heaven,” but for whom any grasp of the core of our faith, relating to Christ’s incarnation, life, death, and resurrection, is clearly lacking.

Interestingly, the article attributes this lack of both understanding and passion for our faith, not only to inadequate Sunday School attendance, but also to a lack of passion and commitment to the faith in the adults in their lives. Young people see very few adults being passionate about giving their time and energy to worship, learning and growing in faith, or serving, so they see little reason to become passionate about it either.

I also learned that a recent study shows that Americans are increasingly letting their politics guide their faith choices; they are finding churches that they think are compatible with their political views. People are using factors other than our faith to shape their view of life and seek to choose a religion that supports it. There’s less patience with people of faith, with varied values and politics, coming together and seeking to find truths in God’s word that can unite them as a community and help them share in ministry and mission.

I lift up these trends because I believe that our responsibility as adults to continue learning and growing in our faith through sharing in *Christian Education* goes beyond asking ourselves “what will I get out of it?” The answer to that question, by the way, is “Plenty!” – better understanding of God (as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), the Bible, the Church, and what it means to be a Christian, for starters! But beyond all that rich and important individual blessing is that Jesus Christ needs for his “body,” his living, active, visible presence in the world, to continue to develop in all these ways, so that the way it lives and acts, and what it makes visible in the world, is faithful to him. Just as important, our children and youth, as well as our fellow adults, need to see us modeling a commitment to “develop Christian knowledge, Christian minds, Christian skills, and Christian character,” to help them believe that our faith is worthy of passion, commitment, and self-discipline.

Historically, the church, seeking to obey God’s command to “remember the Sabbath and keep it holy” (set aside for God) has designated just one hour a week, for opportunities to share in this learning and growth and to make this witness. At Bethany it begins at 9:30 every Sunday, and there are many choices about where to get involved. I hope you’ll consider giving one of them a try. I believe that it will make a difference not only in your own life, but in your families, in Christ’s church, and yes, even in God’s world. Perhaps that seems like a mighty big impact from “just an hour a week,” but I don’t believe I’m over-stating this case, not at all. So, as Nathaniel, after he’d met Jesus, said to his friend Philip, “Come and see!”

With Hope,

Acme Receipts!

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!

Youth Fellowship – *what's ahead*

- Oct. 10 Fun & Stuff, 5:00 p, Macedonia
- Oct. 17 Hayride, 4:30 p
- Oct. 24 Halloween Planning, 6:30 p, YF room
- Oct. 31 Halloween Party, 5-7:00 p,
Octagon Shelter CVNP



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 **October 20th**.) You can help make this time possible by providing breakfast for 8-10 men once during the year. If you'd like to help this way call Nancy Read at 330-928-3002.

Confirmation – *the coming weeks*

- Oct. 22 Lock-in, 8:00p – 9:00a, Lounge
- Oct. 24 Lead Family Sunday Worship, 10:30a
- Nov. 7 Class with Pastor Steve, 11:45a, Lounge

Bethany Kitchen

Saturday, October 16th 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 fellowship and lunch.



To attend a free concert by

The Aidan String Quartet ~

Friday, **October 22nd**, 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary at Bethany UCC. Sponsored by the Brahms Allegro Junior Music Club an educational outreach of Tuesday Musical Association of Akron. More info contact Ann Edwards at 330/ 923-2250. www.aidanstringquartet.com

MISSION

JUSTICE & COMPASSION

Jesus tells us that whenever we feed or clothe someone or visit the sick or those in prison we are doing it to him. And when we don't...well, we're not doing it to Jesus, too. On **Sunday, October 17th** we all have the opportunity to help support ministries of justice and compassion by contributing to the **Neighbors in Need** special offering. One third of the funds go to the Council for American Indian Ministries, which provides financial support for 20 American Indian UCC congregations. Two thirds is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects. These initiatives include work on issues such as voting rights, hate crimes, civil liberties, hunger and poverty. On Sunday, October 17th, please give as generously as you can using the envelopes in the pews.

"...Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."

-Matthew 25:40

EOA WRA Joint Annual Fall Meeting

*Keynote Speaker, Rev. Bob Molsberry
Conference Minister*

Saturday, October 30th

Bath UCC, 3980 W. Bath Rd., 330/666-3520

Theme: *We Gather in a Season of Change,
To Dance with the Spirit*

Please see the flyer on the bulletin board by the church office. You may obtain a registration form in the office. Also, if you have a computer check out the following website. There is an article from Rev. Molsberry on a triathlon he was part of. <http://www.ocucc.org/StaffPages/ConfMinCornerConnections2.htm#Sept2010>

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.





PARTY

thanks

Special Place and Time!

Once again this year, the Youth Fellowship and Youth Committee are happy to host a HALLOWEEN PARTY for Bethany children. We're especially excited this year to host it at the lovely Octagon Shelter in beautiful Cuyahoga Valley National Park. One of the things we're trying to emphasize in our youth ministry is the gift of God's creation and how blessed we can be when we give ourselves an opportunity to spend time in it; so we're glad to be hosting the party in this setting. It will be from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the shelter. Parents are welcome to either stay at the party or leave their children and enjoy a walk or drive in the park. To get to the Octagon Shelter take Old Route 8, turn west on Truxell Road; the entrance drive to the shelter is on the right (north side) just past the entrance to the Ledges Shelter.



Sharing God's Love!

† One of the doctrines of the Christian Church is that we share God's love with everyone. That is what Williard Food Pantry is doing by feeding some of the hungry people of Akron. The Food Pantry is open three days every. They fed 730 individuals in the month of August. In the second quarter (April, May, June) they fed 3,416 individuals.

† Charlie Dorow has been the coordinator since 2001 and he has decided to step aside. It is the Food Pantry Board's responsibility to find the people to take over his duties. I would hate to see the Food Pantry fold up, therefore, in a small way I am asking for people to volunteer 2 hours one day a week in the morning from 7-9 a.m. to help the Food Pantry. If you are interested in finding out more information, please call me. [330-928-3002] *Frank Read*

Retreat – A Day of Fun and Faith-Building

Those who attended the retreat last weekend went home grateful for many blessings. Our theme, "Children of Abraham: One God, Three Faiths." So it was important that we began the day with a lively skit about God's call to Abraham and Sarah to be the parents of a people "through whom all the people of the earth would be blessed," a call in which Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are rooted. Then we had a chance to learn about Judaism from Rabbi Robert Feinberg of Temple Israel, reflect on the heart of Christianity with Pastor Steve, and begin to learn about Islam from Hakeem Najeulla of the Islamic Society of Akron and Kent. Our two guest speakers did a great job helping us to understand their faiths and what links we all have to the God who called Abraham. We also shared a variety of fun activities during the breaks, great soup for lunch and a wonderful Mediterranean banquet for dinner, a lively game of Jeopardy on what we had learned through the day, and opening and closing times of worship to prayerfully reflect on the call to "be people of blessing," which we all share. Thanks to the Retreat Committee – Hilda Bowman, Beth Lees, Tammy Jensen, Holly Keenan, Kathy Keenan, Beth Lees, and Janice Smith - for their dedicated work which enabled us to share this blessing.

Blessing of the Animals ...

a Blessing for "Us" Too!

We held this service on the eve of the Feast of St. Francis, to celebrate God's love for all of creation, including the animals in our care. The rain stopped long enough for us to be able to have the service outside on the lawn as we'd hoped, and Bethany members and their pets came in numbers that certainly made it worthwhile. Dogs outnumbered cats by a wide margin, with only one bird (named Riley) in attendance. Our non-human guests were very cooperative, which enabled us to speak, hear, and sing, without difficulty. Thanks to members of the Youth Fellowship for helping with the set-up, wearing the CAT, DOG, and OTHER signs that helped create some order in our worship area, and for filling treat bags for our special guests. Most of all, thanks to the pet lovers who brought their pets to share in this time of worship and blessing. It's something that we'll definitely do again next year!

WANTED

Do you want to help during our Sunday Morning Bethany Worship Service? This opportunity requires no special athletic or public speaking abilities. Become a Sunday Morning Usher! (Clip, fill & put in offering plate. Thanks)

I want to be a Sunday Morning Usher!

Name: _____

Service: _____ Phone: _____

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 remember in your prayers...

- † **Joe Probeck**, Select Specialty Hospital
- † **Kathy Ruch**, Home
- † **Evelyn Vance**, Hospice Chapel Hill
- † **Phoebe Gero**, c/o Susan Hickerson
9024 Linden Dr., Tinley Park, IL 60487

"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!

Save Money and the Environment!



A family of four can save \$3,000 a year simply by buying products in the largest size they can use and by buying long lasting reusable items. Think about the effect of your purchases on the environment when you shop. Items with excess packaging and products that need to be discarded after only a few uses cost more money, use up valuable resources and create more waste.

Buy Products in the Largest Size You Can Use; Avoid Excess Packaging

A family of four can save \$2,000 a year in the supermarket by choosing large sizes instead of individual serving sizes. Remember, ten cents of every shopping dollar is used to pay for packaging. Small sizes use more packaging for each ounce of product than larger sizes. So, if you buy large sizes, you save money, reduce waste, and help the environment. That is a really good buy. Here are a few good examples, look for others the next time you shop.

🌍 Buy cereal in a large box instead of in individual serving sizes. Buy juice in concentrates and use reusable containers instead of single serving packages. Save money by buying bottled water in a large plastic jug instead of six packs of 16 ounce bottles. Reuse plastic water bottles. Buy large packages of sugar and flour. Avoid the small boxes of raisins and buy the same amount in the 24-ounce box.

Buy Products in Containers That You Know You Will Be Able to Recycle

It is important to familiarize yourself with what types of containers and items can be recycled in your local recycling program. Once you know what you can recycle, look for products that come in the containers that you know you will be able to recycle when the products are all used up. Examples are products in commonly recycled containers made from aluminum, steel, #1 and #2 plastic, and glass. Check the Earth 911 Reuse and Recycling Services listings to see what types of containers/packaging you should look for in your community.

Buy Reusable and Long Lasting Items

Products that can be reused are cheaper in the long run than those you throw away and buy over and over again. Goods that are designed to last a long time are also cheaper in the long run than those that wear out quickly. A family can save \$1,000 each year by buying reusable and long lasting products.

– from Earth911.com

**Calendar for additions to ~ or ~ changes to the
2010 monthly calendar mailed to you.
October 11th - October 24th**

- 10/11 9:00a Quilters
9:30a Prayer Shawl Ministry
10/12 9:00a Staff Meeting
10:00a Newsletter Deadline
7:15p Finance Committee Meeting
7:45p Stewardship Committee Meeting
10/13 9:00a Bible Study (CE)
7:00p Bell Choir Practice
7:30p Consistory
10/14 7:30p Chancel Choir Practice
10/15
10/16 11:30a Bethany Kitchen

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 ~ October 17, 2010

- † **Nursery Available 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.**
† **Rev. Mark Steiner, guest preacher**

- 8:30a Worship** (Fellowship)
9:15a Church School for All Ages
10:30a Worship/ Children's Sunday School
11:30a Social Hour Host: 7 & 8 Grades
4:15p YF Hayride etc., \$5.00, meet at Bethany

Volunteers for October 17th

- Cup Washer: A. Zeller
Greeters: R.&M. Seguin / S.&K. Pietrowski
Lay Reader: G. Smith
Special Music: S. Parker / Chancel Choir
Nursery: H. Bowman, A. Thompson, J. Smith
K. Dugan, J. Nielsen
Ushers: C. Hofmann, F. Read, J. Grazulis, J. Seymour,
C. McGraw, K. Fratz, J. Nielson, M. Spring
Van Driver: L. Goodwin
Visitor Outlook: S. Ward

- 10/18 9:00a Quilters
10/19 9:00a Staff Meeting (L)
10:00a Newsletter Deadline
7:30p Kerygma
10/20 8:00a Men's Breakfast
9:00a Bible Study (CE)
7:00p Bell Choir Practice
10/21 7:30p Chancel Choir Practice
10/22 7:00p The Aidan String Quartet
8:00p Confirmation Lock-in
10/23 9:00a Confirmation Pick Up



Sunday ~ October 24, 2010

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

- 8:30a Worship** (Traditional)
9:15a Church School for All Ages
10:30a Worship
11:30a Social Hour Host:
11:30a 7th Day Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
5:30p Youth Committee Meeting
6:30p YF Halloween Party Planning

Volunteers for October 24th

- Cup Washing: C. Eberhardt
Greeters: T.&B. Eberhardt / R.&P. Haft
Special Music: Bell Choir / Children's Choirs
Nursery: S. Ward, T. Jensen, N. Zeller, J. Dugan,
C. Eberhardt
Ushers: T. Hermann, H. Walker, S. Truby, S. Ward,
L. Short, J. Smith, Z. Read, N. Buck
Van Driver: B. Read
Visitor Outlook: L. Goodwin

**Bethany United
Church of Christ**

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

A MISSION MINUTE ...

A FEW WATER FACTS

- Though water covers our world, 97% is salty; 2% of fresh water is locked in snow and ice. That leaves 1% for our use; 2/3 of our water is used to grow food.
- Americans use about 100 gallons of water at home each day. Millions of the world's poorest subsist on fewer than 5 gallons.
- 46% of people on earth do not have water piped to their homes. Women in developing countries walk an average of 3.7 miles to get water.
- Gabra women in northern Kenya spend up to five hours a day carrying jerry cans filled with murky water. A lingering drought has created a water crisis.
- One out of 8 people lack access to clean water.
- 3.3 million people die each year from water-related health problems.
- Washing hands with soap can reduce diarrhea problems by 45%

There are many stories, facts, and figures telling what people do to get water – not always clean water. For more information check out the National Geographic magazine dated April 2010 and the Charity Water website at charitywater.org.