

The Bethany Letter

SUNDAY ~ OCTOBER 17, 2010

VOLUME 2010

ISSUE NO. 35

The Rev. Stephen Gehlert, Senior Minister

The Rev. Mark Steiner, Visitation Minister

Thought

Our Prayer of Confession on a recent Sunday included the following:

Our cheeks are carved with the tears of the pain we have caused. Our hearts are so empty we cannot comfort others. God, forgive us. Plant a tiny seed of hope that it might grow. Increase our faith until it spills over in thanksgiving to you. Fill us with the love that overwhelms all our complaints and rekindles our desire to follow faithfully Jesus Christ.

How much of our life is filled with this kind of mental turmoil, and then hope. The inescapable pains of our earthly existence are interspersed with periods of joy. We suffer and are lost, then in rediscovering God's love, once again find our way. In 2010, many Americans are dealing with challenges they never would have imagined. We are struggling individually and together, looking for direction. "Follow Me" is our theme for this year's Stewardship season. This is where our hope lies. There are an infinite number of ways to interpret this directive, in thought, word, and deed.

I have a dear friend who has been confounded by the many hardships in her life in recent years. She knows something of my beliefs, as I have shared my experiences with her and have tried to give her support and encouragement. She seems to marvel at my faith but can't quite grasp it (yet.) She sends me emails about miracles, angels, and God, and seems attracted to mystical, magical stories, and seems to consider those things "religious." Therefore she thinks they would appeal to me. I'm sure we all have acquaintances whose total "religious" understanding consists of watching TV movies about angels or spiritual phenomena, unearthly or miraculous occurrences, etc. But I tend to think these dramatic representations do little to inspire genuine faith; in fact they can distort the truth and tend to direct people away from a real understanding of the real God. In some cases, they may lead to superstition rather than faith.

Embellished miracles and stories of rare and mystical occurrences do not lead people in a Christward direction; they only distract from the real miracles we see every day but often overlook. What a miracle it is to wake up every morning, alive in this amazing world. If we're blessed with family and friends, that's something we should never take for granted. What about good health - that may be what we think we deserve, but this is Earth, after all - not heaven. The world was set spinning with necessary contradictions to that state and eventually we all experience some of the bad things too. What's miraculous is that we have so many so many blessings, in comparison. Water comes from the faucet. Food comes out of the ground. Miracles indeed! Someone once mentioned to me that it's a miracle that on the road we constantly pass other cars traveling at high speed from the other direction, just inches away, and do so safely far more often than not. When the interstate system was invented, God must have thought, "Oh my gosh, what have they done now!" To put it in a context my friend would grasp, imagine how many angels must have been dispatched to handle that one (especially at zipper merges!) Thank God for the every day small miracles.

And some miracles are big. I will never, ever forget how God worked in our lives at the time that my husband lost his job, and we somehow made it. Then he chose that time, of all times, to call us to tithe. Out of our amazement and thankfulness we did so, and have been sustained by his hand ever since. We have been carried along; it's a fact. I don't think I would ever have the courage to make the suggestion to tithe to someone who has lost his or her job. But that was clearly what God wanted us to do. We gained a new understanding God at that time; it has been a miraculous and a humbling experience. To me, it's better than a sentimental story about mystical events because it is real. The trouble with my friend's email messages is that they make God's miracles sound so implausible. But God is the true guiding force in all of our lives, creating miracles around us every day. You can't get more real than that.

The prayer above is a reminder of the constant need for God in finding our way, every time that we forget and need to re-learn his guidance and providence. The key to breaking free of the frustration is in the call to action at the end of the confession. For those struggling and in pain now, here's a comforting thought: **Follow Jesus.**

Debra Ocepek, Stewardship



The rosebud on the altar today is in honor of the baptism of Benjamin Michael Ocepek, son of Steven and Tracy. Big brothers: Charlie and Joel

Youth Fellowship – *what’s ahead*

- Oct. 24 Halloween Planning, 6:30 p, YF room
- Oct. 31 Halloween Party, 5-7:00 p,
Octagon Shelter CVNP

Confirmation – *the coming weeks*

- Oct. 24 Lead Family Sunday Worship, 10:30a
- Nov. 7 Class with Pastor Steve, 11:45a, Lounge

Wednesday ~ October 27th
6:30 p.m. Leaders’ Dinner
7:30 p.m. Committee Meetings

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>



Missions ~ 5th Sunday Brunch

Come to the brunch on Sunday, **October 31st** and learn how you can support our Bethany Missions during the holiday season. The Missions Committee will be serving breakfast casseroles from 9:00 - 10:00 am. We will have a brief presentation about our Missions at 9:30 am. A free will offering will be taken for the meal and will be used for our many mission projects.

TRICK OR TREAT Halloween Party

Special Place & 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 **boo** 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. on October 31st 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.



Election Day

The annual Election Day bake sale is just around the corner. Proceeds benefit our Bethany missions. Members of the mission committee will be calling to ask members to consider donating a baked good for **Tuesday, November 2nd**. Please leave your baked goods in the kitchen on Monday and mark them for the “Missions Bake Sale.” We are in need of help throughout the day to be at the sales table. If you are able to help with a two hour shift, please call Carolyn B. Hofmann at 330-929-7704.

21st Annual Spaghetti Dinner!

A community effort to benefit the

Williard Food Pantry

Please join us for "A Night in Old Italy"

Friday ~ November 5th 5:30 or 6:30 p.m.

Fairlawn-West UCC, 2095 W. Market St., Akron



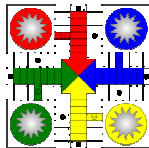
Tickets: Adults \$7 (\$8 at the door)

Children (6-12) \$4 (\$5 at the door)

5 yrs. and under – Free

Call: 330/864-2179

Bethany Buckeyes



The Bethany Buckeyes, an informal group of men and women who are at least 50 years old, meet the first Friday of every month and celebrate with food, games and laughter. The next meeting will be Friday **November 5th** at 6 o'clock. Remember to call in your reservations to the church office, 330-923-5277, or mark your Sunday attendance card.



Family Promise[®]

Building communities, strengthening lives.

Annual Meeting

Each year the Board of Directors and Family Promise volunteers gather to review the state of the Network and to celebrate the accomplishments of this mission. Bethany will be hosting this meeting on **Monday, November 8th** in our social hall. Please consider attending the meeting, which will include a delicious dinner by Kathy Keenan. The cost is \$8 and more information is being mailed to volunteers this week.



Rake'n Run

Sundays ~ November 14th & 21st

If you would like help getting your leaves raked please call the church office (330-923-5277). We will be sure to get there one of the two Sundays.

ATTENTION EVERYONE! Although this is a Youth Fellowship sponsored event, there are **LOTS** of leaves to rake! Just come to the 10:30 worship and then join us for an afternoon of work and fun. Please bring your own rake(s), tarps, and leaf blower (if you have one).

Bethany Kitchen...

...A please and thank you!

☞ Our next Bethany Kitchen will be the Thanksgiving meal. This is the biggest dinner of the year. We will be using china plates and cups, along with season table decorations. The kitchen is asking for **VOLUNTEERS!** We ask for 1-½ hours of your time for food preparation, table preparation and clean up.

Contact Kathleen Keenan at 330-688-6108.

Mark your calendar for November 20th.

☞ We would like to thank everyone for the outstanding job and hard work on Saturday the 16th. Thank you Kathy Keenan, Martha Peyak, Lou Atleson, Bob Pletzer, Harry Cool, Gregory Fratz, Kevin Fratz, Cheryl McGraw, Marty Crichton, and Amanda Keenan. Thank you all for your support.

Harvey Koudela



Family Promise[®]

Building communities, strengthening lives.

Host Week

Our next Family Promise/IHN Host week is **November 28 - December 5**. Please consider volunteering to help this week and contact one of our team leaders: Carol Clemente - meal preparation, Carolyn B. Hofmann - overnight and family center volunteers, and Frank Read - van drivers. Thanks to our many volunteers who help make this week possible.

Hospice of the Western Reserve

...addresses the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of seriously ill people and their families. Committed and passionate volunteers allow us to care for thousands of patients and their families. A few hours of your time will make a world of difference for our neighbors. Our next volunteer education will take place at Hospice of the Western Reserve, 150 Springside Dr., Suite A-100, Fairlawn, OH on Mondays beginning Nov. 1 thru Dec. 13, from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. If you are interested in attending, please call Jeff Younger at 440-892-6680.

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 3 days every month and they fed 730 individuals in the month of August. In the second quarter (April, May, June) they fed 3,416 individuals.

♥ Charlie Dorrow 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 AM to help the Food Pantry.

♥ If you are interested in finding out more information, please call me.

Frank Read [330-928-3002]



Please remember in your prayers...

† **Joe Probeck**, Select Specialty Hospital

† **Evelyn Vance**, Hospice Chapel Hill

† **Bill Leas**, home (from hospital)

"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!

Thanks!

Bethany Friends,

I would like to thank Bethany for the beautiful altar flowers delivered to me by Tom and Nancy Buck. I was very impressed by Mr. Buck when he sang Happy Birthday to me!

Maggie Deacon

River Valley Paper Company Fun Facts!

Did you know? The average American uses 7 trees a year in paper, wood and other products made from trees. This amounts to about 2,000,000,000 trees per year. Bethany's recycled paper has had the following environmental impact:

20.74	trees
3.66	cubic yards of landfill
8,540	gallons of water
5,002	kilowatts of electricity

Need a ride to Worship?

There is one waiting for YOU! Just call the office at 330-923-5277 BY 4:00 PM THE FRIDAY BEFORE and we will arrange for you to be picked up. Worried that something might happen to keep you from attending? Don't worry! You will be given the name and phone number of this week's driver so, if need be, you can cancel at the last minute. We do hope you will call.

Room to Grow!

For a little over a month we've offered the opportunity to order or purchase gift cards for a huge variety of businesses as a fundraiser for Bethany. Bethany orders the cards at a discount and sells them at face value and earns the difference for our ministry and mission. At the Finance Committee last week Mary Seymour estimated that about 25 people had purchased gift cards. That's a great start but it certainly leaves room for growth. We hope that every month we'll have more and more people participating in this easy way to support our church. We invite you to take a look at the gift card order form we've included this week, fill out your order and return it; your cards will be here for you within a week. Try it; you'll like it!

**Calendar for additions to ~ or ~ changes to the
2010 monthly calendar mailed to you.
October 25th - November 7th**

10/25 9:00a Quilters
 10/26 9:00a Staff Meeting (L)
 10:00a Newsletter Deadline
 10/27 9:00a Bible Study (CE)
 6:30p LEADERS' DINNER ☺
 7:00p Bell Choir Practice
 7:30p COMMITTEE MEETINGS
 10/28 **7:15p** Chancel Choir Practice
 10/29
 10/30 9:00a (SH) Rsrvd. – 7:00p
 9:00a EOA-WRA Annual Fall Meeting Bath UCC

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 31, 2010

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

8:30a Worship (Traditional)
 9:00a **5TH SUNDAY BRUNCH** – Mission
 9:15a Church School for Children Only
 10:00a 7thDay meets in Sanctuary
10:30a Worship/ Children's Sunday School
 (Pageant Rehearsal begins, 2nd hr. S.School) ☺
 5:00p **HALLOWEEN PARTY** – Octagon Shelter -7:00p

Volunteers for October 31st

Cup Washer: A. Zeller
 Greeters: T.&B. Hermann / T.&B. Briggs
 Lay Reader: C. McGraw
 Special Music / 7thDay
 Nursery: M. Peyak, H. Bedillion, A. Lorentz, E. Zeller, J. Nielsen
 Ushers: R.&S. Holle, B. Charton, M. Seymour, M. Seguin, B. Pletzer, J. Sammons, L. Sheppard
 Van Driver: F. Read
 Visitor Outlook: need a volunteer

November

11/01 9:00a Quilters
 11/02 6:00a Election Day & Bake Sale!
 9:00a Staff Meeting
 7:30p Kerygma
 11/03 9:00a Bible Study (CE)
 7:00p Bell Choir Practice
 11/04 7:15p Chancel Choir Practice
 11/05 6:00p Bethany Buckeyes
 11/06 9:00a S.Hall Rsrvd. 10:00p



Sunday ~ November 7, 2010

† **Nursery Available 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.**
 † **Celebration of Congregational Life**

8:30a Worship (Communion)
 9:15a Church School for All Ages
10:30a Worship/ Children's Sunday School
 (Pageant Rehearsal begins, 2nd hr. S.School)
 11:30a Social Hour Host:
 11:30a 7thDay Rehearsal
 11:30a Bethany Nurse BP Check
 11:30a Confirmation Class/Meal

Volunteers for November 7th

Cup Washing: A. Zeller
 Greeters: J.& B. Wachovec / Withrow, Sammons Family
 Lay Reader: J. Wachovec
 Special Music: Story and Song / Chancel Choir
 Nursery: P. Cochran, T. Jensen, M. Ferda, S. Keenan, E. Frederick
 Ushers: R. Holle, M. Jensen, J. Grazulis, J. Seymour, H. Koudela, B. Pletzer, J. Bebout, S. Mancinelli
 Van Driver: S. Gaskill
 Visitor Outlook: B. Lees

**Bethany United
Church of Christ**

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

“A Star for Freedom”

I have been serving on the Church in the World Committee for the Eastern Ohio Association of the UCC for the past three and a half years. Two years ago I agreed to chair the working group of Urban Ministries. This committee supports the mission outreach provided to the Akron community by the UCC congregations of East Market Street, Miller Avenue, Trinity, and Williard. Our group has supported their mission work by holding several clean up days in their churches to spruce up their buildings and we also provide financial assistance. Rev. Sharon Alberson is again providing one of her musical performances to benefit Urban Ministries. We have several Bethany members who are again in the musical. The event will take place on **Saturday, November 6 at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.** at Trinity on North Main Street; \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. A dinner for \$5 will be available between performances. Help is needed to prepare the meal that is being served between performances on Saturday, November 6. If you are able to help in the kitchen at Trinity UCC, please contact Carolyn B. Hofmann at 330-929-7704. Please consider attending this special evening and supporting the good work being done by these urban congregations. I will be selling tickets each **Sunday** in the social hall at the coffee table. *Thank you. Carolyn B. Hofmann*

