

Unexpected Grief (Elegy for a Border Collie)

Tonight we will have our second *Blessing of the Animals* service.

I hope this story by Clifton Black will help explain why. *Steve*

On February 23, Libya was convulsed in civil revolt against Muammar Quaddafi, who threatened to shed his last drop of blood while killing the protesters. Turmoil in the Arab world triggered a spike in oil prices, a plummet in stock values and fear that much of the world would plunge into a recessionary tailspin. Meanwhile, in an animal hospital in New Jersey, a dog was euthanized. God forgive me, but it is this last event that I will remember.

Pinky lived over 16 years—very old for this breed. My wife and I purchased the pup when our daughter was five years old, so she grew up with Pinky and he grew up with us. Though the expression may repel some, the fact remains that this dog was a member of our family and regarded as family by friends whom Pinky greeted at our door. Deprived of the sheep that he'd been bred to drive, he herded the Black family. He had the goods to do it. His papers testified to his purebred lineage among trial and show dogs in Sussex. Unlike me, Pinky never bit people or even growled at them. His policy toward rabbits, cats and other dogs was an unruffled live-and-let-live.

Standing beside him as he was put to sleep, we found ourselves piercingly wounded. This took me by surprise. It wasn't our first brush with death. We've buried three of our parents. When one reaches the far side of middle age, funeral homes are no novelty. Pinky was, as they say, only a dog. What, then, prevented us from washing Pinky's preferred cushion when I smelled his odor on it? Why were we heartbroken at the sight of his leash on our porch and reminded us of Tiny Tim's empty stool and abandoned crutch? What could account for such grief?

The answer is a quality of companionship lost. Scientists say that dogs recognize humans as ambulatory meal tickets and have learned how to play us for saps. There may be truth in that. Nevertheless, when our collie laid his paws on my chest and licked my face, I could only experience his actions as affectionate. Ray Bradbury wrote a book titled Dogs Think That Every Day Is Christmas. Every day for over 16 years Pinky gave us canine Christmas presents. Of how many members among homo sapiens could we say the same? To lose that is reason to grieve.

Another reason is the inescapability of death. To own and care for a pet is to witness, as in time-lapse photography, one's own deterioration. Across 16 years a furry fireball grew grayer, slower, blinder, deafer and more arthritic. So have I. Like others who teach theology, I have upbraided our society's denial of death while denying mortality in my own house. In his last months I cleaned up Pinky's accidents as fast as I worked to ignore their cause: the wasting away of his internal organs.

We talked little of euthanasia until the morning we could no longer avoid it. To keep a suffering animal alive seemed to us cruel and self-serving. But placing a beloved friend beyond misery's reach required our consent to destroy him. "First, do no harm," insisted Hippocrates and, later, Christian thinkers. For us there was no available option that did not harm. We cried because death remains the one on the throne until all things are subjected to the sovereignty of the Lord of the universe.

Biologists say that eons of domestication have resulted in dogs' adoption of human habits. I wonder if the process operates in reverse. Did my dog, "canonize" me, helping me become more doglike and in the process more Christ-like? According to Robert Benchley, "a dog teaches a boy fidelity, perseverance, and to turn around three times before lying down." Pinky taught me even more. From him I learned adaptability. It couldn't have been easy for a dog, bred for nonstop activity, to settle into indoor domesticity, but Pinky did it, reminding me that there are things more important than demanding my way. He depended on us to feed and care for him in ways that, in his changed environment, he could not do for himself.

What is our life if not a school for trusting God, as circumstances beyond our control graduate us from helpless infancy to infirm old age? I suspect God's been using a collie to heighten my compassion for other creatures. Maybe Pinky's finest lesson for one inclined to depression and anxiety was a holy joie de vivre: the unadulterated delight of a brisk walk, a good meal, easy relaxation and a loving touch right now, never minding an unfetchable past and an uncertain future. I mourn the loss of a gentle "pedadog" and am grateful for his lessons. That he never intended them makes no difference—my best teachers were never aware of what I was learning from them.

So, shamelessly and with a love that can come only from the heart of God, I weep for the loss of a companion constant until death. Rest in peace, Pinky.

Third graders who received their Bible last

Sunday: Kailee Shaw
Tyler Urasek



Wednesdays at 9:00 am
Christian Education Office

Youth



| | | |
|-------|---------|----------------------------------|
| 10/02 | 5:00p | Prepare- Blessing of the Animals |
| 10/07 | Fri-Sun | Faith at Home Retreat |
| 10/16 | 6:30p | Halloween Planning |
| 10/23 | 5:30p | Halloween Planning / Oktoberfest |

Help Good Neighbors ...

| | |
|------------|--------------------------------|
| October 9 | Box of Instant Mashed Potatoes |
| October 16 | Can of Corn |



For pastoral care needs while Pastor Steve is away on the All Church Retreat...

October 7-9th

Rev. Mark Steiner 330-264-6034

Host Week



Our next Family Promise/IHN Host week is **October 9th - 15th**. 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.

2011 / 2012



| | | |
|---------|--------|-----------------------------|
| Oct. 15 | 5:00p | Prepare Family Promise Meal |
| Oct. 16 | 11:30a | Mentor Meal/Meeting |

FINANCE COMMITTEE WOW

CHALLENGE

Have you been out to dinner lately? Filled your gas tank? Or done any grocery shopping? Bethany will make a profit of about 4% on the card purchase. Currently our profit from gift cards is \$1015.00. Each Sunday at the Social Hour someone from the Finance Committee will have cards available for purchase or order.

→ **On Sunday, Oct. 16**, the Finance Committee challenges you to purchase or order cards. An anonymous donor will tithe the total of cards purchased or ordered for that day. What a great way to support Bethany. *The Finance Committee*

Esperanza

Mission Trip Meeting

The next informational meeting on the Esperanza Mission Trip will be **Sunday, October 16th** after 10:30 worship; meet in the Adult Library. The Bethany Mission Committee sponsors the Esperanza Mission Trip. The Mission Committee encourages all confirmed Bethany members to consider sharing in this special form of service. The Committee assists Esperanza volunteers with grants and fund-raising support for the trip. This experience has provided Bethany members with a unique opportunity to share fellowship with one another, begin to develop a sense of solidarity with the poor in another culture, and learn and grow through sharing with them. We celebrate the growing participation of Bethany members in this life-changing experience. The next trip is scheduled for February 18 - 25th, 2012. Questions, call Mr. Bill Leas.

EOA Annual Fall Business Meeting

All are invited to the EOA Meeting on **Saturday October 29th**. The beautiful gothic sanctuary of First United Church of Christ, 201 Fair Ave., NW, New Philadelphia will be the location of "Renewing in the Spirit." Keynote Speaker: Rev. Jim Oates. Registration deadline is Thursday, October 20; \$15 per person (includes a buffet breakfast). Child care will be provided if needed but only to those who request it on the registration form by the deadline. *(The Bethany office has registration forms and more information if needed. Please call.)*

“FOUND & FORGIVEN”

A Musical by Sharon Alberson
Based on the Story of the Prodigal Son

Sunday, November 5th 3:00 & 7:00 PM
Trinity United Church of Christ

A spaghetti dinner will be served between shows, 4:30-6:30 p.m. The Market Path, a fair trade store supported by First Grace UCC, will offer items for sale and Williard UCC will offer a basket auction. Tickets for the performance and dinner are available through the EOA/WRA Support Center or at faithmusicals@gmail.com. All proceeds from the day will benefit Akron Urban United Churches of Christ: East Market Street, Miller Ave., Williard and Trinity.



Need a ride to Worship?

There is one waiting for YOU! Just call the office at 330-923-5277 by 4:00 p.m. Friday and we will arrange for you to be picked up Sunday. 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.

A thought for today ...

... How come a waitress gets 15-20% and God only gets 10%? *-anonymous*

The Stephen Series ...

...is a complete system for training and organizing lay people to provide one-to-one Christian care to hurting people in and around our congregation. For more information, contact Bethany's Stephen Leader-Tammy Jensen.

God, your creation is infused with your generosity. You take care of our every need. Quiet our hearts – and rebuke us – when we fear that there is not enough. Amen.

The Bethany Bunch



(Children's Sunday School)

Prekindergarten/Kindergarten Sunday School Class

Did you see us last Sunday? We sang “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands” at the 10:30 service! In class we talked about water and how important it is – for fun like swimming and boating, for cleaning, and for drinking. John had a dream about a river with sparkling water like jewels and trees on either side with all different kinds of fruit – one for each month of the year. We tried to make a picture like that except that all our glue sticks went bad at the same time! (★ *Could you please donate some to our class? We could also use some magazines; we have some from 1977 and they are getting pretty thinned out.*) Some of us played a game of Bible Dominos. We practiced matching and good sportsmanship. We had eight boys and girls in class and some of us have come all **three Sundays in September – Audrey Keenan, Charlie Ocepek, Makena Dugan, Megan Weiser and Robyn Melvin.**

way to go!

Remember in your prayers...

- † Ron Shultz, Summa Western Reserve
- † Don Haflinger, Robinson Memorial
- † Olive Devine, Haven Homes
- † Ken Cleary, home



† “Special Thoughts” 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!



Do you know what the following chapter and verse reads?

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

If not, look it up in your Bible!

2011 Special Opportunities: Worship, Education, Service, & Fellowship

The original Greek word for church was *Ecclesia*, meaning “the gathered people,” those Christ had gathered to do God’s work in the world. Bethany does that work in many ways: giving God thanks and praise in worship, learning and growing in faith, serving others, and sharing in fellowship. Everyone matters; everyone is needed. Here’s a list of opportunities from now until Advent.

Where is Jesus calling you to get involved?

October 2, 6:00 pm – *Blessing of the Animals Service*

Pets are a great blessing to us; come and share in blessing them.



October 7-9 – *Faith at Home Retreat*

Reflect on living our faith more fully at home and share great fellowship and fun.

October 9–16 – *Family Promise Hosting*

Help welcome guests by preparing a meal, staying overnight, or driving the van.

October 15, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm – *Bethany Kitchen* *(see above)*

October 16, 8:30, 9:30, 10:30 am – *Association Minister Carol Barth*

In worship and adult class Carol will share about challenges facing today’s church.

October 16, 11:30 am – *Celebrate 20 Years of Bethany Kitchen!*

Celebrate this special mission anniversary and thank our many faithful volunteers!

October 23, 6:30 pm – *October/Steward Fest*

The Stewardship Committee offers great brats, music, and reasons for gratitude.

October 30, 9:30 am – *Mission Committee 5th Sunday Brunch*

Come for brunch and learn more about an important mission.

October 30, 6:00 pm – *Halloween Party at Octagon Shelter*

The Youth Fellowship hosts a gathering for Bethany children in a beautiful setting.

November 13, 8:30 & 10:30 am – *Dedication Sunday*

*Rev. Mark Suriano preaches on our theme *For the Joy*: brunch follows worship.*

November 18, evening – *Mission Spaghetti Dinner/Dessert Auction*

Help support Bethany’s many missions by sharing a great meal and dessert.

November 19, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm – *Bethany Kitchen* *(see above)*

November 23, 7:30 pm – *Thanksgiving Eve Communion*

Remember and give thanks to God, the true source of all we have and are!

November 27, 8:30 & 10:30 am – *First Sunday of Advent*

Communion at both services; after 10:30 worship Advent Celebration (soup, sandwich, craft)

**Calendar - additions to ~ or ~ changes to the
2011 monthly calendar mailed to you.
October 3rd to October 16th**

(as of Sept. 29)

10/03 7:00p Bell Choir Practice
7:00p Stewardship Meeting
10/04 9:00a Staff Meeting
10:00a Newsletter Deadline
7:30p Kerygma
10/05 9:00a Bible Study (CE)
7:30p Spiritual Council
10/06 7:30p Chancel Choir Practice
10/07 6:00p **Buckeyes**
7:00p **RETREAT WEEKEND** (Templed Hills)
10/08 Retreat & 10/09... ending at 11:00a

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**



Sunday ~ October 9, 2011

† Nursery Available 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.
† Family Promise Host Week
† Rev. Mark Steiner, guest preacher

8:30a Worship
9:15a Church School for Children and Adults
9:30a Bell Choir Rehearsal
10:30a Worship/ Children's Sunday School
11:30a Coffee Hour
6:00p F.P. Meal (SH)

Volunteers for October 9th

Greeters: PreK-Kindergarten Class / T.&B. Eberhardt
Lay Reader: H. Keenan
Nursery: tba
Special Music: / Chancel Choir, Bell Choir
Ushers: J.&S. Mancinelli, M. Jensen, J. Grazulis,
J. Seymour, B.&C. Pletzer, J. Bebout
Van Driver: E. Frederick

10/10 9:30a Prayer Shawl Ministry
6:00p F.P. Meal (SH)
7:00p Bell Choir Practice
7:00p 2nd year Mentor Meeting
10/11 9:00a Staff Meeting
10:00a Newsletter Deadline
6:00p F.P. Meal (SH)
7:15p Finance Committee Mtg.
10/12 9:00a Bible Study (CE)
6:00p F.P. Meal (Lounge)
7:30p Consistory
10/13 6:00p F.P. Meal (SH)
7:30p Chancel Choir Practice
10/14 6:00p F.P. Meal (SH)
10/15 11:30a **Bethany Kitchen**
5:00p Confirmands to prepare meal for F.P.
6:00p F.P. Meal (SH)

A busy week at Bethany ~ mark your calendars!



Sunday ~ October 16, 2011

† Nursery Available 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.
† Rev. Carol Barth, guest preacher

8:00a 7th Day Meets
8:30a Worship
9:15a Church School for Children/ Combined Adult
Class w/ Rev. Barth, EOA
10:30a Worship/ Children's Sunday School
11:30a Social Hour: *Bethany Kitchen Celebration!*
11:30a Confirmand/ Mentor, Meal/Class
11:30a Esperanza Meeting (Adult Libr.)
6:00p Youth Committee Meeting
6:30p YF – Halloween Planning

Volunteers for October 16th

Greeters: T.&S. Ocepek / R.&P. Haft
Lay Reader: H. Cool
Nursery: tba
Special Music: 7thDay / Chancel Choir
Ushers: C. Hofmann, F. Read, S. Truby, S. Ward,
H. Bowman, K. Fratz, A. Jensen, R. Berie
Van Driver: L. Goodwin

Ushers Do That!

Have you ever wanted to:

Meet more Bethany family members?
(Ushers do that).

Greet more Bethany family members?
(Ushers do that).

Make Bethany family members feel more welcome?
(Ushers do that).

Assist Bethany family members with offering and attendance?
(Ushers do that).

Lead Bethany family members (to their pews)?
(Ushers do that).

Be on a Bethany Team that helps only on Sunday mornings?
(Ushers do that).

If you answered yes to any one or more of the above, take action and become an Usher today! Either phone the church office or put a note on your Sunday attendance card.
(Ushers did that).

Help Good Neighbors Fill Holiday Food Baskets

As we enter October, the Thanksgiving holiday is not far away. The Mission Committee invites you to help Good Neighbors assist their clients with food. While all non-perishable food items are needed, we are suggesting the following:

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|------------|--------------------------------|
| October 2 | Can of Green Beans |
| October 9 | Box of Instant Mashed Potatoes |
| October 16 | Can of Corn |
| October 23 | Muffin or Corn Bread Mix |
| October 30 | Box of Stuffing Mix |

| | |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| November 6 | Can of Soup |
| November 13 | Jello or Pudding Mix |
| November 20 | Jar or Can of Applesauce |
| November 27 | Peanut Butter |

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| December 4 | Can of Fruit |
| December 11 | Box of Cereal |
| December 18 | Noodles or Pasta |
| December 25 | Jar of Jelly |

Leave your donations on the table in the Social Hall or in one of the boxes you will find near the entrances.