



# John's Journal

Well, we made it! We made it through all the busy-ness of the Christmas season. And what a celebration we had! From the beginning of Advent with communion and the lighting of our first

Advent candle, to the joy of hosting the Graham High School Choral Ensemble on December 11th, to our own choir's wonderful Christmas Cantata on the 18th, to the celebration with communion, lighting the Christ candle, and congregational candle-lighting on Christmas Eve, to the joy of worshipping on Christmas morning, we truly celebrated the coming of this amazing gift of the Christ child into the world.

But now what? Has our visit to the manger changed us in any way? Our post-Christmas scripture passage usually has us looking at the visit of the magi. I've always been intrigued by this part of the story, especially at the end when it says, *"Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to the own country by another route."* (Matthew 2:12 CEB) Other versions have it saying they went *"home by another way."*

I guess then, the question for us is, after we have visited the manger, will we return to our lives as they were, or will we go *"home by another way?"* Are our lives in any way changed by what we have seen and heard?

Quoting from a sermon I wrote on this passage a while back: *"After the anticipation and the celebration and the wonder of the Holy Night with the candles flickering and the smell of cedar and the songs of angels, does the spirit of Christmas burn away like the morning fog?"*

*When it's time to un-decorate the house and take down the lights and drag the tree out, and get back to school and back to work, are we not like the wise men going back home to their own country?*

*Like the wise men, for those who have seen the star, it will not easily fade away. The sense of wonder, the capacity to dream, the joy - the joy of that holy night continues to catch our imagination.*

*The sense of wonder, the capacity to dream, the joy we knew in our hearts as we went to Bethlehem to see what*

*had come to pass won't easily go away.*

*We still long to know it right here in the midst of old routines - right here where we are and always have been - in a world that Christmas doesn't seem to have changed very much."*

And so we jump into 2017 "by another way" - hopefully changed by our experience at the manger. And we have an amazing year ahead of us, as we celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the chartering of Bethany Presbyterian Church on May 29, 1892. So, let us truly jump into this anniversary celebration.

Our theme is *"Growing Stronger, Growing Deeper, Reaching Higher."* Our celebration will continue throughout 2017, with three opportunities to gather and remember. You can read the details of the celebration on the next page. I am so pleased that Pat Flythe has agreed to head up the celebration planning team. If you would like to join this group to help, please let Pat know. The team will have its first planning meeting early in January, as we plan for our kickoff celebration on January 29th.

As I begin my 5th year with you on January 15th, I am so excited to celebrate the 125 years of Bethany's ministry in this place. This is truly a significant event in the life of Bethany, and we will celebrate!

As we celebrate our history, we should perhaps make our New Year's resolution to *Grow Stronger, Grow Deeper, and Reach Higher.* Happy Birthday Bethany!! And Happy New Year!

Grace & Peace,

John





**IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE OUR HISTORY!**

*"The records of Orange Presbytery contain the date of the organization of the Bethany Presbyterian Church in Graham, North Carolina as May 29, 1892, but the people who were most familiar with her remember that long before she was organized into a congregation, Bethany was a Sunday school outpost that met in a school house somewhere down the road to*

*Pittsboro near the Little Alamance Creek. Holding meetings for religious education of the people in that area had been the dream of Rev. George Summey, the pastor of the Graham Presbyterian Church.*

*Bethany was organized with sixteen members who for the most part were members of the Curtis, Rogers, Clapp and Dixon families. The area churches that contributed to those first members were: Graham Presbyterian, Hawfields Presbyterian and Providence Christian churches. W.R. Cooper and E.R. Dixon were elected as the first ruling elders."*

The above comes from the intro to the "History of Bethany Presbyterian Church" - a document that was composed from the notes of Inez Florence Webster. It has been a long and prosperous 125 years and we are thrilled that we can celebrate this anniversary throughout 2017. On page 3 of this newsletter, you can see the schedule of events that will take place throughout the year. Be sure and mark these dates on your calendar and make your plans. Also, if you know of folks who should be invited to join in the celebration, be sure and let Pat Flythe and her team know as well.

Just to highlight a few details: the kickoff of our celebration will be on **Sunday, January 29, 2017** with a joyous and delicious Fifth Sunday Breakfast, followed by worship - centered on the first statement of our theme "Growing Stronger."

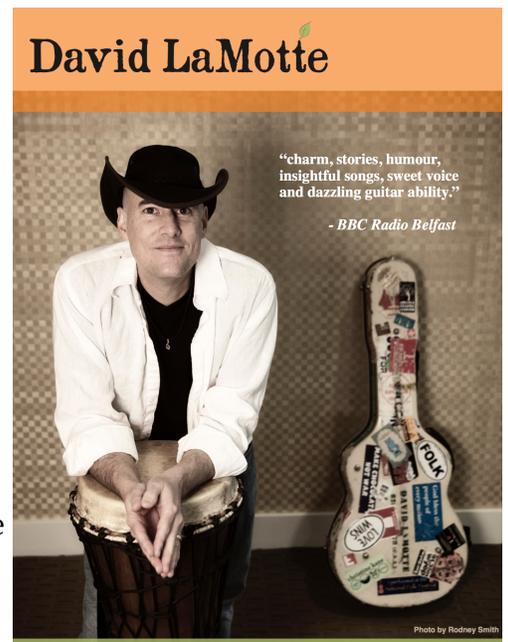
Then on **Sunday, May 28, 2017** we will welcome back long-time pastor and friend of Bethany **Rev. Norman Whitney**, who will preach that day, with the second part of the theme "Growing Deeper" as his focus. The celebration will continue following worship with a fun, informal Potato and Salad Bar luncheon.

Our year-long celebration will culminate on the weekend of **September 23-24, 2017**, with two amazing events. First we will gather on **Saturday, September 23rd**, for a concert by singer/songwriter/author **David LaMotte**. David will not only present a concert on Saturday night, but will also provide some music for worship on Sunday morning, as we also



welcome the **Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Rev. J. Herbert Nelson**, who will be our guest preacher. He will focus on the third aspect of our theme, "Reaching Higher." We will also welcome representatives from Salem Presbytery that day who will bring greetings and congratulations. A celebratory luncheon will be held following worship.

We have so much to celebrate as we remember our history and think about our future! God is good! All the time! And we will celebrate! Make your plans, mark your calendars, tell your friends.



bethany presbyterian  
125th Anniversary  
1892-2017



Growing  
**Stronger**

Growing  
**Deeper**

Reaching  
**Higher**

Isaiah 40:31

... but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength;  
they will fly up on wings like eagles; they will run and not be tired;  
they will walk and not be weary.

**Sunday, January 29, 2017**

- ***Growing Stronger***
- Fifth Sunday Breakfast
- Special Fifth Sunday worship with "Growing Stronger" theme
- Introduction to 125th Anniversary Celebration!

**Sunday, May 28, 2017**

- ***Growing Deeper***
- Sunday closest to actual anniversary date of May 29, 1892.
- Welcoming former pastor **Rev. Norman Whitney** as guest preacher for the day
- Potato and Salad Bar Luncheon following worship

**Saturday, September 23, 2017**

- Concert by singer/songwriter/author **David LaMotte**

**Sunday, September 24, 2017**

- ***Reaching Higher***
- Culmination of 125th Anniversary Celebration
- Welcoming PCUSA Stated Clerk **J. Herbert Nelson** as guest preacher and **David LaMotte** as guest musician
- 125th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon following worship



# SERVE

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE,  
CARE AND CONNECTING

Are you interested in serving your church in a very unique way? Well, there's a spot for you! The **Bethany NEXT Work Group** is seeking new members who are committed to the future growth in ministry and mission of Bethany Presbyterian. The group usually meets monthly (except around special events) and usually for a meal!

This group was formed in 2014 by the Session to serve as sort of a "long-range planning" group - but one that is looking at all aspects of Bethany's ministries - from facilities, to programming, to stewardship, to worship, and everything in between. The group continually tries to answer the question, "What's NEXT?"

Don't you want to be a part of and have a voice for the future of Bethany? Come and serve in this unique way. If you have an interest, or have any questions, please see John at any time. He can be reached at the church at 336.227.4041, or on his cell at 336.214.5859. Or, shoot him an email at [pastor@bethanypreschurch.org](mailto:pastor@bethanypreschurch.org). Come join the fun!



# Men of the Church



**Oyster Stew**  
**Thursday, January 19th**  
**6:00 pm**  
**Rec Building**



"FOR I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU,"  
SAYS THE LORD.

"THEY ARE PLANS FOR GOOD  
AND NOT FOR DISASTER,  
TO GIVE YOU A FUTURE AND A HOPE."

JEREMIAH 29:11



# January Worship Themes

**January 1st:**

Luke 2:21-38

*The Iconic Jesus*

**January 8th:**

Luke 3:1-22

*A Dangerous Baptism*

**January 15th:**

Luke 4:14-30

*Grab a Piece of the P.I.E.*

**January 22nd:**

Luke 5:1-11

*Scouting the Deep Water*

**January 29th - 125th Anniversary Celebration  
Kickoff**

Isaiah 40:28-31

*Growing Stronger*



Last month in this space there was a heartfelt thank you to elders who are rotating off the Session at the end of 2016.

Unfortunately, there was a big oops as one of our dedicated elders was inadvertently left

out. Please give **MILLIE FULLER** a big thank-you for her service on the Session the past few years. Millie has been responsible for our WORSHIP Ministry Team, and has done a fabulous job in making sure all the elements of our worship are taken care of, including changing paraments and banners, prepping for communion, and making sure everything else is taken care of. Thanks **Millie**, for your service to Bethany!

## online sermons

There are three ways to listen to audio of our Sunday sermons:

On our website: [www.bethanypresbyterian.org](http://www.bethanypresbyterian.org)

On our Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian](http://www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian)

Or by going to: [www.buzzsprout.com/9198](http://www.buzzsprout.com/9198)

## Worship Attendance



### What You Need to Know

The saying goes that “where two or three are gathered . . .” and it is certainly true that God is present and active wherever we gather as God’s people, and no matter how many people are there.

And although we affirm the idea that “numbers don’t matter,” we also recognize that having people in the pews on Sunday mornings does indicate that lives are being fed and that it is important to be here.

We have been invigorated by the resurgence in attendance over the past couple of months - especially during December. And so, we would like to celebrate that by sharing our attendance numbers in this space each month - showing worship attendance figures for the past two months. And a special thanks goes to Glenn Patterson and Rick Purcell, who do the recording of attendance each Sunday. Here are the recent figures:

- November 6: 58
- November 13: 76
- November 20: 53
- November 27: 55
- December 4: 68
- December 11: 91
- December 18: 104





**Your Church Staff:**

Pastor: Rev. John W. Johnson  
 Director of Music: Christopher Bagley  
 Office Administrator: Joy Saleeby  
 Bookkeeper: Pam Hurt

**Elders:**

A. J. Campbell  
 Ron Kimrey  
 Karen Maxwell  
 Sherrie Moore  
 Ron Osborne (Treasurer)  
 Glenn Patterson  
 Jean Payne  
 Nancy Purcell  
 Brandon Troxler  
 Rick Purcell (Clerk of Session)

**The Session met for its regular monthly stated meeting on December 13th. Here are some highlights:**

- Heard a devotion from Sherrie Moore
- Enthusiastically sustained the examination of Elder-elect A. J. Campbell following his sharing of his Statement of Faith and his faith journey!
- Heard a positive financial report from Treasurer Ron Osborne
- Approved the proposed budget for 2017
- Heard a report from Karen Maxwell concerning options for securing contract for cleaning the buildings
- Received a very positive evaluation of the Session retreat and agreed to plan for another retreat in the fall of 2017
- Heard a report from Bobby Peele and Ron Kimrey regarding issues with the boiler / prayers offered that boiler will last through the winter at which time options for repair/replacement will be discussed
- Session was reminded that 2017 is our 125th Anniversary / Pat Flythe is leading the planning for this
- Approved communion dates for 2017
- Heard a staff report from Director of Music, Chris Bagley
- Heard a report from John about homebound communions that have been completed
- John presented thank-you gifts to those rotating off the Session - Pat Flythe, Millie Fuller, Sylvia Hayes, and Bobby Peele.



Join us on **Sunday, January 22nd** during worship for a very special moment as we participate in the **Ordination as Ruling Elder of A. J. Campbell**, and the **Installation of A. J., Jean Payne, and Ron Osborne** (Jean and Ron are being installed to new classes on the Session.) Make your plans to celebrate with us!

**NEXT SESSION MEETING - JANUARY 10TH**  
**ELDERS OF THE MONTH FOR JANUARY**  
**NANCY PURCELL AND A. J. CAMPBELL**

**Congregational Meeting**

The Session has called for a **Congregational Meeting** to immediately follow worship on **Sunday, January 8th** for the purpose of approving changes in the Terms of Call of the pastor (approving a 3% salary increase).

**NEW YEAR - NEW SESSION RESPONSIBILITIES**

With the coming of a new year, and new Session members, including a reduction in the size of the Session from twelve to nine, we also adjust responsibilities within the Session and our four Ministry areas. At the Session Retreat in November, the following areas of responsibilities were agreed to and adopted:

- WORSHIP** Ministry Team: Nancy Purcell and A. J. Campbell  
**SERVE** Ministry Team: Jean Payne and Sherrie Moore  
**TEACH** Ministry Team: Brandon Troxler and Karen Maxwell  
**SUPPORT** Ministry Team: Ron Osborne, Ron Kimrey, and Glenn Patterson



## PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

**OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE**

### GIVE

SHARE YOUR FINANCIAL  
BLESSINGS TO HELP DISASTER  
SURVIVORS THROUGHOUT THE  
WORLD.



### ACT

GET INVOLVED WITH DISASTER  
RECOVERY MINISTRY.



### PRAY

OUR BEST RESPONSE IS PRAYER.  
SEEK GOD'S PRESENCE ON  
BEHALF OF DISASTER  
SURVIVORS.



It is an unfortunate reality in our world that we are faced with disaster situations around the world. Bethany has responded to many of these situations over the years, most recently the devastation caused by Hurricane Matthew in the eastern part of our state.

We are fortunate to be a part of a denomination that has a very active and present organization to respond to these situations, in the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Whether it is Hurricane Matthew, the fires in Tennessee, the floods in West Virginia, the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, or the catastrophic situation in Aleppo, PDA is there to help.

The graphic to the left gives you some suggestions on how to be involved in helping. The PDA website ([www.pda.pcusa.org](http://www.pda.pcusa.org)) can give more details on giving options, ways to get involved, and even specific prayers. We have copied a prayer for Aleppo below as a way to get us thinking more intentionally about these horrendous situations.

As we are now on the other side of Christmas, and our minds have been geared towards giving, think of ways that you as individuals, and we as a church, can become more involved in responding to crisis situations as they arise around the world.

And let us continually be in prayer for our brothers and sisters who face these situations daily.

### PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE OF ALEPPO

Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus, PDA Coordinator

God our Peace, the Human One, as we anticipate the coming of your glory in the form of a helpless infant, hear our prayers for the children, women and men of Aleppo, Syria: helpless in the face of warring powers, bowed under the burden of violence, fear, and want. We, who wait in hope and peace for the Star to rest over the place where the Child lies, entreat you on behalf of our neighbors whose night skies are not shining with the Star of Promise, but smudged with smoke and streaked with the light of mortar fire - whose faces we may never see, though they bear your image, whose eyes, like ours, are watching in the night and whose hearts, like our own, pray for peace.

Jesus, child whom Herod sought to kill, watch over your children in harm's way this day, and these nights.

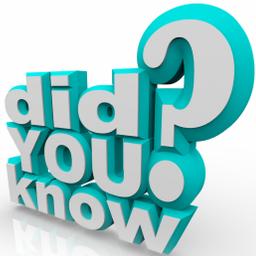
Grant strength and courage to emergency responders, neighbors, and strangers who labor together to protect the weak, heal the wounded and bring those in harm's way to safety.

Jesus, who found safety as a refugee in Egypt, protect those who flee for their lives from a broken city. Impel the powers that war in their midst to grant sanctuary to these innocents. Create a spirit of welcome among all who watch and pray for Aleppo, make us advocates for safe passage. Open our hearts and our homes, that those who flee may find refuge and rest.

Spirit of peace, Holy Comforter, help us find courage, compassion, and hope. Hover over the people of Aleppo, and shelter them under your wings. Show us another way, your way, and make us instruments of Peace. Amen.

# STEWARDSHIP & FINANCIALS

<b>Report through the end of November:</b>	
Year-to-Date Actual Income	\$166,581.65
Year-to-Date Actual Expenses	\$160,393.46
<b>Year-to-Date Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$6,188.19</b>



- That the last few Sundays in the year saw near record attendance in worship for the past few years! Attendance on December 11th was 91, and attendance on the 18th was 104! Let's

keep it up!

- That the Men of the Church will be hosting an Oyster Stew on Thursday, January 19th at 6:00 in the Rec Building.
- That on January 22nd we will be participating in our Service of Ordination and Installation of our new elders for 2017.
- That Pat Flythe is heading up the planning team for our 125th Anniversary Celebration during 2017. If you'd like to help out, please let her know!
- That John is once again participating in the 2017 Annual Event of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE), held this year January 24-28 in Denver, CO. John will be presenting a workshop titled: *"The Pastor as Educator: Reclaiming the Role of Teaching Elder."*
- That each Sunday's sermon is available online to listen to? Just go to our website, or to: [www.buzzsprout.com/9198](http://www.buzzsprout.com/9198).
- That we are once again planning for our annual Mission Trip to West Virginia. The (tentative) dates are July 16-22.



As you consider your giving to the church in 2017, perhaps now is the time to consider online giving - like the graphic says: fast, easy, and convenient. And, completely safe and secure. This is a good way to keep up with your pledge even when you're away, as you can set up an automatic draft from your bank account or your credit card. Just go to our website and follow the link on the home page, or go to this link to get signed up: [www.bethanypresbyterian.org/online-giving](http://www.bethanypresbyterian.org/online-giving).

Join the growing group of Bethany folks who have opted for this convenient way of honoring their pledge to the church.





Children and Youth Ministries

- Our Nursery is staffed by a professional, paid worker, as well as volunteers each Sunday morning.
- “Sunday Fundays” - watch your calendar and announcements for info.

- Sunday School for Youth and Children / Meets on the second floor of the Education Building at 9:45 am
- During **Worship**, children are invited to

## Adult Ministry



### Christian Education Opportunities

**The Fellowship Class** - Bible study class using our denomination’s Present Word curriculum

**The Young @ Heart Class** - meets across from the church office / currently using the Uniform Lesson Series

**The Seekers’ Class** - meets in the church office, using various curricula with discussion of topical issues.

**Covenant Bible Study** - continues - meeting each Thursday evening at 7:00 (with exceptions).



*Bethany  
Presbyterian  
Women*

### Here’s what’s happening with our circles:

- Circle #4:** Monday, January 2nd - 7:00 pm
- Circle #1:** Monday, January 9th - 10:00 am
- Circle #3:** Monday, January 9th - 7:00 pm



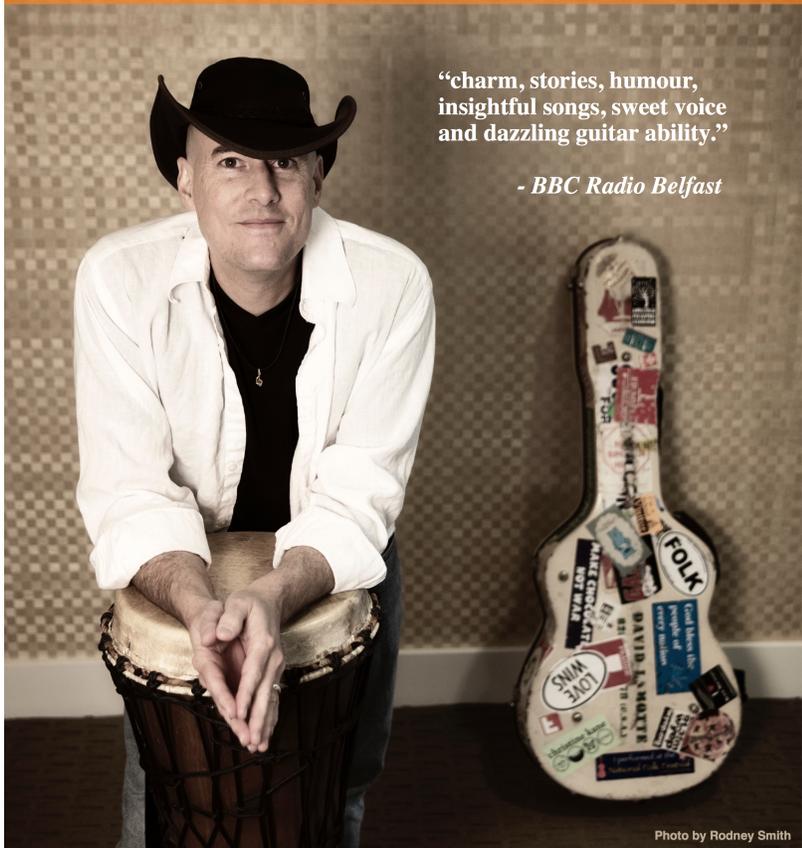
WHY NOT **JOIN US** FOR **SUNDAY SCHOOL?**



<b>Happy Anniversary to:</b>	
Becky and David Eatmon	January 6
Nancy and Rick Purcell	January 23
Joyce and Bobby Peele	January 24
<b>Happy Birthday to:</b>	
Joy Saleeby	January 6
Sarah Osborne	January 6
Foy Bayliff	January 7
Mike Sutton	January 17
Bricen Bullis	January 19
Jazmin Holt	January 21
Mary Moore	January 21
Lori Stuart	January 21
A. J. Campbell	January 23
Allison Gore	January 23
Norman Mize	January 24



# David LaMotte



“charm, stories, humour, insightful songs, sweet voice and dazzling guitar ability.”

- BBC Radio Belfast

Photo by Rodney Smith

In Concert  
Bethany Presbyterian Church  
Saturday, September 23rd - 7:00 pm  
Donations received at the Door  
[www.davidlamotte.com](http://www.davidlamotte.com)

**Bethany Prays**

Bill Faucette	Diane Miller	John & Ann Sutton	Faye Campbell
Jack Cook	Peter Slater	Family of Dean Caldwell	Polly & Dick Wilson
Dr. Bob James	Joey Leake	Layla Benoklen	Teresa Wilborn
Diane Bullis	Shannon Russell	Family of Ben Martin	Tiffany Tauchren
Mary Moore	Ida Whitney	Jean Berry	Barbara Cousins
Rachel Poteat	Christy Lutterloh	Jeremy Harden	Eleanor Thompson
Harold Baldwin	Anne McDaniels	Frances Nolan	Nancy Sutton
Ron Chilton	Pat Kennedy	Duffy Strigo	



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**bethany presbyterian**

**love learn serve**

