



John's Journal

I love my church! And I'm not just talking about Bethany - I'm talking about my church, the Presbyterian Church (USA). I love my church!

Is it perfect? By no means - but what church is? But I love being a part of this connectional church that strives to be the hands and feet of God in this world.

As a pastor in the Presbyterian church, we are called not only to be the pastor of the church or entity to which we are called, but also to serve in the larger church in whatever capacity that fits our skills and abilities and interests. I have been fortunate over the years to have been able to serve my church in many different ways.

As you know, I have been involved with APCE (Association of Presbyterian Church Educators) for well over 20 years now - serving in many different capacities. After serving for several years on what was then the Governing Cabinet, (the leadership structure has been redesigned) including serving as president, I have given my time over the past several years as conference photographer at the APCE Annual Event, and at the recent gathering in January, began a new term serving on the Governance Ministry Team. APCE is a part of my DNA, and I cherish my opportunity to serve this great organization in the lifting up of Christian Education in the church.

It is a privilege as well that I have opportunities to serve in Salem Presbytery. At the end of 2018 I ended a six-year term on the Commission on Ministry (COM). After a year off, I agreed to come back on COM, and am now serving as Co-Moderator with Rev. Amanda Anderson - who preached here at Bethany the first Sunday in February (while I was away at APCE!).

Serving on COM is not an easy job. With the presbytery continuing to go through this time of transition, with a reduction in staff and all that goes along with that, the work of the presbytery naturally

falls on committees to a much larger degree. The tasks that were once done by staff, are now expected to be done by committees. Thus the work-load of the committees has increased.

But I have found that the work of COM is vital to the presbytery and something that I find meaningful and hopeful. The tasks of COM are wide and varied - from working with churches in transition as they look for a new pastor, to praying with churches that are in conflict as they try to resolve issues, to welcoming newly ordained pastors to their first call - always a high moment! - to recognizing pastors who are entering retirement, to assisting churches as they feel the need to leave our beloved denomination, to gracefully and lovingly helping churches close their doors as they come to the realization that the time for their ministry has come to an end.

Yes, the emails are plentiful and the phone calls sometimes difficult. COM deals with anger and resentment towards the presbytery, but always with the larger picture in mind. We are Christ's church in this world, warts and all! We certainly aren't perfect, but we always strive to be the church that Christ would want us to be.

As we enter this time of Lent, journeying together towards the cross, let us always pray that we can be a church that puts Christ first before personal grievances and complaints. May we be a church that realizes that the "we" is stronger than the "I". And may we be a church that is a beacon of light in this community as we reach out to those who are in need of knowing the love of Christ in a real way.

Lent is here, and there is always the idea of what we're going to "give up." Let's turn that around that talk about what we're going to add. What new thing can we do in our lives that will bring joy to another person, that will make someone else be keenly aware of God's presence in this world and in their lives?

Let's be those people. Let's be that church!

As always, I am grateful to be your pastor.

Grace & peace,

sabbatical

rest | refresh | refocus

During much of 2019 I updated you monthly on the status of my application to receive a Lilly Grant for my proposed sabbatical leave in 2020. Unfortunately, I was informed in August of 2019 that my application for the grant was denied. So, I have spent the last several months considering my options for my sabbatical.

I am excited to let you know that - after receiving a grant from the Board of Pensions - I will be taking my sabbatical leave from June-August of this year. My last Sunday prior to being away will be May 31st (Pentecost Sunday!), and my first Sunday back with you will be September 6th. I will return to the office on September 1st.

As was previously planned, Rick Purcell, who is a Certified Ruling Elder (CRE) and has significant training and experience in church related matters, will serve in my place during those three months. He will be contracted for 20 hours per week, and will preach on Sundays and tend to any pastoral care matters that may arise, as well as moderate the Session. He will be available for funerals as well during that time, in the unfortunate event that there is a death in the congregation.

Due to the considerable decrease in funding from the Lilly Grant to the Board of Pensions grant, I have had to make significant changes in the plans for my sabbatical. My focus of study will remain largely the same, looking at how technology plays a part in church life, and how to reach those who are not as "plugged in" as others. I will specifically be looking at worship life, and how that can be more interactive and engaging - both technologically and otherwise. I will be doing reading and research in these areas, looking at different options for improving what we do here.

As always, part of the focus of a sabbatical is rest and renewal. To that end, I will be attending - as is my custom - the Montreat Conference on Worship and Music at the end of June. Much of July will see Debbie and me hit the road on a tour of National Parks, ending up in Minneapolis visiting Jackie. August will include my annual Atlanta Braves Weekend with friends.

I am very much looking forward to this time of rest, renewal, and study. June will mark 41 years of ministry, and this is my first sabbatical. I appreciate your wisdom in including this in my Terms of Call, and I look forward to sharing my experiences and the fruits of my study upon my return. I covet your prayers during this important time in my ministry.

JWJ

IT'S NOT TOO LATE!!

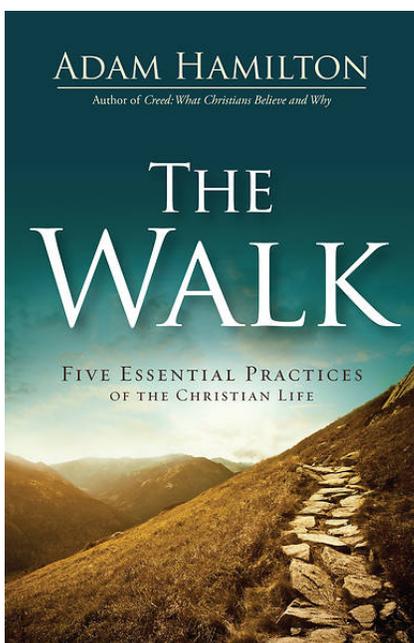
Our Lenten study begins on **Monday, March 2nd**. See below for more info.

We are excited to offer this unique study entitled "***The Walk: Five Essential Practices of the Christian Life***" by Adam Hamilton. We have participated in several of his studies, and have come away richer for these experiences.

This six-week series will be held on **Monday evenings, beginning on March 2nd**. The topics are as follows:

- March 2nd: Worship and Prayer: A Living Hallelujah
- March 9th - Study: The Importance of Listening and Paying Attention
- March 16th - Serve: Here I Am, Lord, Send Me
- March 23rd - Give: Where Your Treasure Is
- March 30th - Share: Going Fishing, Reflecting Light
- April 6th - The Five Practices from the Cross

Each participant will be responsible for purchasing their own book, available on Amazon for \$9.99 (Kindle version) or \$14.99 (hardcover). There is a reservation form on our website (www.bethanypreschurch.org), or just email John to let him know that you are signing up for the course (pastor@bethanypreschurch.org). Come join us for this lively and engaging study during the Lenten season.





MARCH WORSHIP THEMES

March 1st - First Sunday in Lent / Communion:

Matthew 4:1-11

God's Fasting Plan

March 8th - Second Sunday in Lent:

John 3:1-17

What If God Googled?

March 15th - Third Sunday in Lent:

Romans 5:1-11

Doing Business by Forgiveness

March 22nd - Fourth Sunday in Lent:

Ephesians 5:8-14

Know the No's

March 29th - Fifth Sunday in Lent:

Romans 8:6-11

Living the New Life in the Spirit



Missed a Sunday? Check out our sermons online!
There are three ways to listen to audio of our Sunday sermons:

- On our website: www.bethanypreschurch.org
- On our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian
- Or by going to: www.buzzsprout.com/9198



LOOKING AHEAD!



PALM/PASSION SUNDAY

Through Death to Life

Sunday, April 5, 2020



MAUNDY THURSDAY

A NEW COMMANDMENT
I GIVE TO YOU...

Thursday, April 9, 2020

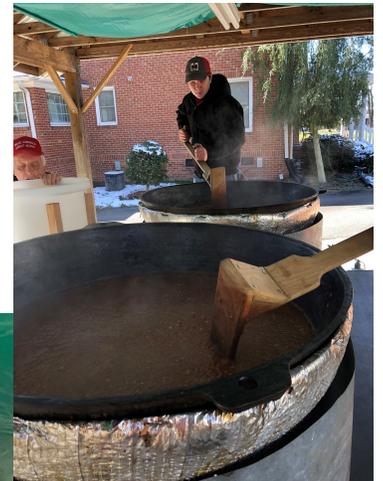


easter SUNDAY

Christ Is Risen!

Sunday, April 12, 2020

BRUNSWICK STEW 2020



March 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1</p> <p>First Sunday in Lent</p> <p>9:45 AM Sunday School</p> <p>11:00 AM Worship</p> <p>12:00 PM First Sunday Lunch</p>	<p>2</p> <p>10:00 AM Circle #1</p> <p>7:00 PM The Walk Lenten Study</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Super Tuesday (regional holiday)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>			
<p>8</p> <p>Daylight Saving Time starts</p> <p>Second Sunday in Lent</p> <p>9:45 AM Sunday School</p> <p>11:00 AM Worship</p>	<p>9</p> <p>7:00 PM The Walk Lenten Study</p>	<p>10</p> <p>7:00 PM Session Meeting</p>	<p>11</p> <p>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Third Sunday in Lent</p> <p>9:45 AM Sunday School</p> <p>11:00 AM Worship</p>	<p>16</p> <p>7:00 PM The Walk Lenten Study</p>	<p>17</p> <p>St. Patrick's Day</p>	<p>18</p> <p>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Fourth Sunday in Lent</p> <p>9:45 AM Sunday School</p> <p>11:00 AM Worship</p>	<p>23</p> <p>7:00 PM The Walk Lenten Study</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Fifth Sunday in Lent</p> <p>9:45 AM Sunday School</p> <p>11:00 AM Worship</p>	<p>30</p> <p>7:00 PM The Walk Lenten Study</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>1</p> <p>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>

THE WAY

The way to Jerusalem
looks suspiciously like Highway 40,
and the pilgrims
look suspiciously like you and me.
I expected the road to Jerusalem
to be crowded with holy people...
clerics and saints...
people who have kindness wrinkled in their faces
and comfort lingering in their voices,
but this is more like rush hour...
horns blowing, people pushing, voices cursing....
This is not what I envisioned!

O God, I've only begun and already
I feel I've lost my way.
Surely this is not the road
and surely these
are not the ones
to travel with me.
This Lenten journey calls for
holy retreat,
for reflection

and repentance.

Instead of holiness
the highway is crammed
with the cacophony
of chaos.
Is there no back road
to Jerusalem?
No quiet path
where angels tend
to weary travelers?
No sanctuary
from the noise of the world?
Just this?
Can this hectic highway
be the highway to heaven?

- Ann Weems, from *Kneeling in Jerusalem*

Matthew 25 in the PC(USA): *A bold vision and invitation*

What is a Matthew 25 church?

Matthew 25:31–46 calls all of us to actively engage in the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities. Convicted by this passage, both the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018) exhorted the PC(USA) to act boldly and compassionately to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor.

How the vision unites all Presbyterians

By accepting the Matthew 25 invitation, you can help our denomination become a more relevant presence in the world. We recognize Christ's urgent call to be a church of action, where God's love, justice and mercy shine forth and are contagious. And we rejoice how our re-energized faith can unite all Presbyterians for a common and holy purpose: our common identity to do mission.

About the Matthew 25 mark

The circular shape represents unity and equality. Like God, a circle has no beginning and no end, and it symbolizes our continuing effort to help one another. The shape also suggests a globe that points to our engagement with the world.

The three interlocking figures represent the equality of all people without gender or race bias. They have their arms around each other, symbolizing friendship, protection and service. The number three suggests the three focus areas of congregational vitality, structural racism and systemic poverty, as well as the Trinity.

The color palette is bright, lively, friendly and energetic — suggestive of our active commitment.

Finally, the legend "Matthew 25" below the symbol is the literal identification of the mark. We use a handwritten font to make the point that active engagement in the world requires human effort.



For more information visit the Matthew 25 website here: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/>



The transition to a new structure for Salem Presbytery continues, although with some adjustments and changes. The financial challenges of the presbytery has made it possible to alter the timetable for hiring new staff and to revise the Dream Team's plan for the new structure.

Instead of proceeding to hire three presbyters on the staff, the plans now are to progress to hire the Administrative Presbyter with an adjusted job description to reflect the new realities that have arisen.

Other staff will also be hired over the next few months, including financial, communications, stewardship, and parish pastors.

Continue to pray for our presbytery during this transition.

Your Church Staff:

Pastor: Rev. John W. Johnson

Director of Music: Christopher Bagley

Office Administrator: Joy Saleeby

Bookkeeper: Pam Hurt

Elders:

Bill Abplanalp

Chip Allen

Helen Brown

Randy Cousins

Karen Maxwell (Clerk of Session)

Tina Patterson

Nancy Purcell

Ben Russell

Tracey Troxler

Glenn Patterson (Treasurer)



The Session met for its regular monthly stated meeting on February 11th. Here are some highlights:

- Heard a devotion from Randy Cousins
- Continued in our book study of *Canoeing the Mountains*, by Tod Holsinger
- Heard joys and concerns of the congregation
- Received a treasurer's report from Glenn Patterson
- Approved the 2020 Budget
- Called for a Congregational Meeting and Meeting of the Corporation on February 16th
- The Session was reminded of the Pancake Supper and Ash Wednesday Service on February 26th
- Heard an update from John on his plans for his sabbatical June-August, 2020

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, MARCH 10TH
ELDERS OF THE MONTH FOR MARCH
CHIP ALLEN AND TINA PATTERSON**



Super Bowl LIV was on Sunday, February 2nd, which means that this was also the day when we received our **Souper Bowl Offering**. All of the money donated on that Sunday was reported to the national Souper Bowl office, but it all stays in this area, donated to our usual Pennies For Hunger Offering. On the day when food is at the forefront as we watched the big game, we remember those who may not know where their next meal is coming from.

We are excited to announce that our Souper Bowl Offering for 2020 was **\$127.50**. Thanks to all who contributed!





FINANCIAL REPORT - END OF JANUARY 2020	
Year-to-date Actual Income	\$9,684.50
Year-to-date Actual Expenses	\$14,830.16
YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	-\$5,145.66

As you can see, January was a slow month - as is usually the case following the holidays. Although we once again head into a new year with a deficit budget, we continue to work to make up this deficit so that we can end the year on a positive note.

Please make every effort to keep your pledges up-to-date, so that we can continue to maintain and grow our missions and ministries here in this great church.

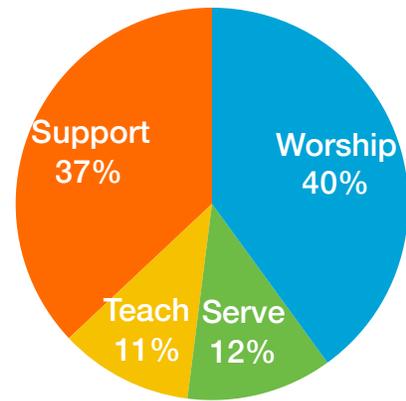
Thank you for your continued support.

Narrative Budget

At the Congregational Meeting on February 16th, the Session shared with the congregation our 2020 budget, that was unanimously adopted by the Session at its February meeting.

To help communicate what is involved in this budget, a **Narrative Budget** was distributed. What is below is a thumbnail view of the budget. Anyone who wishes to receive more detailed information, the full Narrative Budget Brochure is available in the church office (or in the Welcome Center).

Much gratitude goes to the Session, our Treasurer, Glenn Patterson, and outgoing Treasurer, Ron Osborne, for helping put this budget together.



MINISTRY AREA BUDGET AMOUNTS	
Worship	\$66,160.00
Serve	\$19,847.00
Teach	\$18,194.00
Support	\$61,198.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$165,399.00

Total Anticipated Ministry Needs for 2020 - \$165,399

March Birthdays and Anniversaries!

Happy Anniversary to:

Lisa & Russell Donley

March 11

Happy Birthday to:

Russell Donley

March 2

Glenn Thompson

March 3

Meritt Russell

March 4

Bill Brown

March 8

Macie Smith

March 12

Danny Smith

March 16

Helen Byrd

March 18

Grace Dampier

March 18



Children & Youth Ministries

- **Sunday school for Youth and Children** / Meets on second floor of Education Building at 9:45 each Sunday
- During **Worship**, children are invited to sit in designated pews (front rows on north side) / there are activities provided
- Our **Nursery** is staffed by a professional, paid worker, as well as volunteers each Sunday.
- Watch your calendar and inbox for special activities for our young people throughout the year.



Find your place!

ADULT MINISTRIES

Christian Education Opportunities

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

Lenten Bible Study - see page 2 for information about our great Lenten Study, *The Walk: Five Essential Practices of the Christian Life*.

Bethany Prays

Bill Faucette
Jack Cook
Joan Richardson
Tiffany Tauchren
Jean Berry
Christy Lutterloh
Eleanor Thompson
Nancy Sutton
Norma Proctor
Katherine Bayliff
Randy Thompson
Frederica Beatty
Christopher Bagley
Diane Miller

Peter Slater
Joey Leake
Shannon Russell
Mary Moore
Barbara Cousins
Pat Kennedy
Donna Mitchell-Ayers
Pete Campbell
Ben Johnson
Alex Thomas
Glenn Thompson
Carol Brooks
Lou Crutchfield
John & Ann Sutton

Ruby Martin
Shirley Lane
Ida Whitney
Katherine Turner
Jeremy Harden
Anne McDaniels
Mike Sutton
Stewart Dillard
Shelvia Russell
Family of Foy Bayliff
Richie Fishburne
Janie Holt Clapp
Robert Sykes



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bethany presbyterian 

love learn serve