



John's Journal

I am writing this in the afterglow of another meaningful and profound Lenten season and Easter celebration. This is always one of the most meaningful times

of the year for me, and this year was no exception.

I had never really preached on the seven last statements of Christ from the cross. Deciding to do a sermon series on them during Lent was a little daunting at first, but as I got into them, I was enriched from my study and research, and I hope that you all were fed by the worship services that evolved from them.

And then, to be a part of the choir for its presentation of *The Seven Last Words of Christ* by Theodore Dubois, was another blessing in observing this special season. Many thanks to Chris for putting that all together. I don't know how much I added to the choir, but I enjoyed being a part of it.

Of course, Easter Sunday is always a joyous celebration. Proclaiming the good news of the empty tomb and singing our Easter hymns and hearing the Easter story again brings us a new understanding and new appreciation of what Christ has done for us.

So, yes, it has been a meaningful season, but the calendar says it is May, which means we're even closer to the summer months and all that goes along with that. I want to highlight a couple of things to put on your radar as we head through May and into summer.

First of all, please note on page 3 the notice of the new Sunday school series that I am going to be offering through the summer months. One thing that I heard through Lent from our Wednesday Lenten Lunch Series group was how much they got from studying a passage of scripture, and then having that same passage be what the worship service the following Sunday is based around.

In thinking of that idea, I thought we might try this idea on a little larger scale. Each Sunday morning

beginning on June 2nd, I will be offering a study session based on the passage of scripture from which I will be preaching on that particular Sunday. I will be using the "Feasting on the Word" resources that will help guide us through these studies.

My hope is that with spending a little time studying the passage before worship, that those attending will have a more meaningful worship experience and perhaps get a little more out of the sermon.

We will gather each Sunday (I will be away a few Sundays but we'll figure that out when the time comes!) at 9:45 for refreshments and coffee, and then a time of study and engaging discussion. We will finish up around 10:30 as I will have to get myself ready for worship!

I do not want this to seem as a competition for the Fellowship Class. That class is thriving and we certainly don't want to do anything to change that. But this is just a temporary alternative for something a little different. And I would invite those interested to take advantage of it.

I would also invite those who are not a part of a Sunday school class to take advantage of this opportunity as well. I think it will not only enhance your worship experience, but hopefully will give you a good head start on your week.

As we head into May, one of the highlights for me will be preaching at the installation of Rev. Evan Harrison at Pittsboro Presbyterian Church on May 19th (in the afternoon). What makes this so special is the Evan was a member of my youth group when I served at First Presbyterian in Burlington. As Evan progressed through his middle school and high school years, I could see even then that he had some gifts that were suitable for the ministry. Fortunately, he heard God's call and has served the church faithfully for several years. I am thrilled to have him so nearby and to serve with him as a colleague in Salem Presbytery.

So, May will be a good month. I hope it is for you all as well. As always, it is a privilege to be your pastor.

Grace & peace,

sabbatical

rest | refresh | refocus

The last several newsletters have given you a little introduction to the advance planning that is continuing as I prepare for my anticipated three-month sabbatical, May-July of 2020. The Sabbatical Support Group (Helen Brown, Ron Kimrey, Sandy Russell, and Tracey Troxler) have met several times and we are thrilled that the Grant Proposal and Application is complete and has been submitted! Now the waiting begins. According to the instructions and information, recipients will not be notified until late August. Fingers are firmly crossed!

As a way of further keeping you informed, over the next few months, I will continue to share in this space the responses to one of the narrative questions that is included in the application. So, are the next two questions, numbers 4

and 5, and the responses:

4. Provide a statement written by the pastor that describes the intended benefits, both for the pastor and for the congregation, of the program as planned.

The time away on this sabbatical will provide for me a clearer perspective to better appreciate the opportunities of ministry in the coming years, with renewed creativity and energized enthusiasm. The timing of the sabbatical will provide me a much-needed time of rest after 41 years of ministry, and will give the congregation a time to explore new opportunities and new vision for the future.

It is also my hope that this sabbatical will provide me with greater resources to minister to my congregation over the next few years. With fresh vision, renewed energy, and reinvigorated motivation, I foresee unique benefits for both myself and the congregation.

5. Provide a similar statement written by a representative of the congregation that describes the intended benefits both for the congregation and the pastor. This statement should summarize the congregation's views and should be incorporated into the body of the proposal. Do not include letters from individual members of the congregation.

The members of Bethany Presbyterian are excited by and supportive of the proposed sabbatical for John. The Presbyterian church is very intentional in providing its pastors this time of renewal, as a sabbatical is highly recommended (if not required in some presbyteries) as part of the pastor's Terms of Call. We are very aware of the benefits to both the clergy and congregation. With the funds provided by the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program, in August of 2020 we can welcome home a pastor who has had time to enjoy leisure time with family and friends, has engaged in activities that feed his soul, has explored avenues of ministry that are interesting to him and will enrich and inform his future ministry with us, and has had time for renewal and relaxation.

Although most of us are not as technologically savvy as John, we understand the importance of the church being open to using technology in its ministry. John has paved the way for us in many ways - utilizing technology in communications, worship, and education. We are confident that this opportunity to explore this field of interest for him, will only enhance his ministry with us on his return.

As John shares his experiences with us, hopefully we will also be enriched and energized to live more fully into our faith in new and exciting ways.

This statement of support was prepared by a committee of church members who are working with John in preparation for his sabbatical, and was completed after conversations with approximately 20 other members - from youth and young adult, to older adult.

Stay tuned. JWJ



The
Thoughtful
Christian

Something New ...

Beginning in June

Summer Sunday School Series

Feasting on the Word

Join us this summer for a unique new **Sunday School Series**. This series will use the *“Feasting on the Word”* curriculum, which follows the Revised Common Lectionary scripture passages. Each Sunday’s session will center on the text from which John will be preaching on that particular Sunday. The series will be led by John, with exceptions when he is out of town, and will meet in the classroom across from the offices. **We will gather each Sunday at 9:45 for coffee and refreshments, and will finish up by 10:30.**

The hope for this series is to provide a deeper look at the text for each Sunday, which will hopefully lead to a richer worship experience as the same text is used to build the worship service around.

So make your plans to join us for our **first session on Sunday, June 2nd** - continuing through August for this “new-look” Sunday school learning opportunity.





MAY WORSHIP THEMES

May 5th: Third Sunday of Easter

John 21:1-19

The Hefted Shepherd

May 12th: Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:33-43

Handcrafted Christians

May 19th: Fifth Sunday of Easter

Revelation 21:1-6a

Heaven on Earth

May 26th: Sixth Sunday of Easter

Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5

No Sun, No Moon, No Night



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

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

Easter Sunday 2019



SUMMER HAPPENINGS



Mark these dates:

June 9th

July 7th

August 11th

We'll bring back this popular series this summer, as we gather around the grill (locations to be determined) and great fellowship and study.

Massanetta Springs Middle School Conference

June 25-29

This year one of our youth will be attending this fantastic conference at Massanetta Springs Conference Center in Virginia. **Reis Smith** will be there along with **Rick and Nancy Purcell**.



Let
Love
Lead

2019 Montreat Youth Conference

Montreat Youth Conference:

July 6-13

Our youth will once again be joining 1000 or so of their friends for the 2019 Montreat Youth Conference. Rick and Nancy Purcell, along with Morgan Troxler and Shelby Smith will serve as adult leaders for **Seth Smith** and **April Troxler**.

May 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	29	30	1 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	2	3	4
5 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	6 10:00 AM Circle #1 7:00 PM Circle #4	7 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	8	9	10	11
12 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	13 7:00 PM Circle #3	14 9:00 AM Salem Presbytery 7:00 PM Session Meeting	15 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	16	17	18
19 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	20	21 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	22	23	24	25
26 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	27	28 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	29	30	31	1

Your Church Staff:

Pastor: Rev. John W. Johnson

Director of Music: Christopher Bagley

Office Administrator: Joy Saleeby

Bookkeeper: Pam Hurt

Elders:

Chip Allen

A. J. Campbell

Randy Cousins

Karen Maxwell

Ron Osborne (Treasurer)

Jean Payne

Nancy Purcell

Ben Russell

Tracey Troxler

Rick Purcell (Clerk of Session)



The Session met for its regular monthly stated meeting on April 9th. Here are some highlights:

- Heard a devotion from Nancy Purcell.
- Continued an engaging discussion of our book study *Canoeing the Mountains*.
- Shared in joys and concerns of the congregation
- Approved minutes from March stated meeting.
- Heard an update from Rick about ongoing plans for startup of Cub Scout Pack.
- Heard a treasurer's report from Ron Osborne.
- Heard an update from Personnel Committee (Ben Russell) about plans for nursery worker.
- Heard a report from Ron Osborne about applications for scholarships and plans moving forward.
- Were reminded of Palm Sunday presentation of *Seven Last Words of Christ* by our choir and guests.
- Were reminded of upcoming Holy Week and Easter observances.
- Jean Payne updated the Session about plans for the upcoming Salem Presbytery Women's Gathering on April 27th that Bethany is hosting.
- John shared concerns about current cleaning of the church, with several items not being done even after communication. Other options for cleaning are being explored.

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, MAY 14TH
ELDERS OF THE MONTH FOR MAY
JEAN PAYNE AND CHIP ALLEN**

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Provides Resources in Times of Distress

We all have been heartbroken as we have seen not only the devastation of the fire that nearly destroyed the iconic Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, but also the burning of three churches in Mississippi, the appears to be racially motivated.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance provides resources to respond to floods, fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, etc. It also provides resources for prayer and spiritual help. What follows is a prayer for rebuilding a burned church.

To you, O God, from whose hands comes the work of creation so artfully designed, we pray that this work we have set out to do may be done in companionship with you.

May the work we have begun sing praise to you as do songbirds. May the work we have begun add to the light of your presence

because it is done with great love.

May the work your volunteers have begun be a shimmering mirror of your handiwork in the excellence of its execution, in the joy of doing it for its own sake, in our poverty of ownership over it,

in our vulnerability to failure or success in our invitation for others to share in it and its bearing fruit for the world.

May we be aware that through this work we draw near to you. We come to you, O God, with ready and willing hands. Amen.

(Harold Confer, Quaker Workcamps International)

memorials & gifts

The following gifts have been made in memory of **Levi Byrd:**

The Fellowship Class

mark  your **Calendar**

VBS 2019



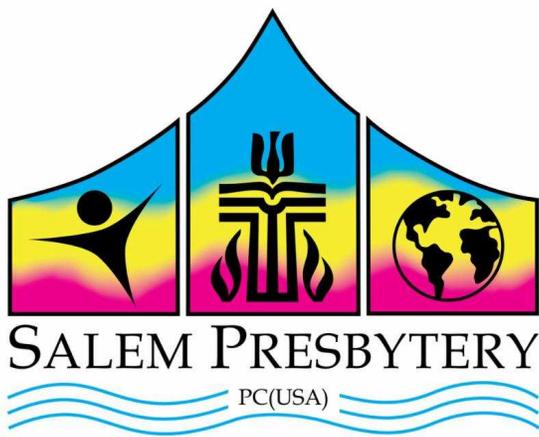
JULY 20 AND 21



We are so excited that Bethany has chartered **Cub Scout Pack #141!!** After several months of planning, the first meetings have taken place. The Pack is meeting in the Rec Building on Thursday evenings.

A special thanks to our leadership team of Rick Purcell, Nancy Purcell, Glenn Patterson, Zack Wagner, and Jean Payne, who are providing leadership at this time. Other volunteers are always needed, so contact Rick or Nancy if you are interested.

Scouting is so important in the development of young people, and we are thrilled that Bethany can provide a home for these children!



Continue to keep **Salem Presbytery** in your prayers, as the proposal presented by the "Dream Team" was approved at the meeting of Salem Presbytery on February 12th.

With the Implementation Team being named, we move now to the implementation phase. Please pray for those who will be responsible for putting this plan into action, and especially our **presbytery staff**, as they now ponder what the future holds for them.

We move forward in the assurance that we live in the presence of God and that God has a plan for his church.



FINANCIAL REPORT - END OF MARCH 2019	
Year-to-date Actual Income	\$41,350.80
Year-to-date Actual Expenses	\$41,116.04
YEAR-TO-DATE SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$234.76

PLEDGE REMINDER:

Summer is coming soon, and schedules get changed around and our usual routines get amended. History shows that giving to the church usually drops off during the summer months due to these changes in routines.

The reality is that the expenses of the church do not take a break! We will have bills to pay and commitments to adhere to. So, we urge all to do what you need to do to keep your pledge up-to-date during the summer months.

As you can see from the above figures, we are doing well in keeping our income and expenses in line. Let's make sure that the next few months show the same thing! Thanks for your generosity and your gifts to the mission and ministry of Bethany.

NURSERY UPDATE:

For those of you who make use of our nursery on Sunday mornings, you may have been aware that we have been without a paid nursery worker since before Christmas. We had been contracting workers through a company in Jamestown. Due to the problem in getting childcare workers here on Sunday mornings on a consistent basis, we have terminated our relationship with this company.

We are in the process of searching locally for a competent, loving, and caring childcare worker who will be here consistently on Sunday mornings. We appreciate your patience, and apologize for any inconvenience.

We are hoping to have someone on board in the next few weeks. Our Personnel Committee is working!

UPDATE ON PROPERTY SALE:

As you may remember, the congregation voted last fall to approve the sale of the property across Main Street from the church, that previously was our rental property.

Things are progressing slowly but surely on this sale. There were zoning issues, and other hoops to jump through, but we are hoping that everything will be finalized by late May or early June.

If you have any questions concerning the process, you may feel free to contact Glenn Patterson, who is handling all the real estate matters concerning this property.



May Birthdays and Anniversaries!

Happy Anniversary to:

Joyce & Norman Mize May 2

Happy Birthday to:

Ron Kimrey May 8

Sara Sizemore May 9

Ron Osborne May 11

John Johnson May 12

Christel Schappacher May 15

Shirley Lane May 22

Daniel Mitchell-Ayers May 25

Mackenna Mitchell-Ayers May 25



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.

Feasting on the Word (beginning June 2) - Special Sunday school series through the summer looking at the Lectionary passage for each Sunday.



HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!
May 12th

Presbyterian Women Circles May Schedule!

Circle #1: Monday, May 6th at 10:00 am

Circle #3: Monday, May 13th at 7:00 pm

Circle #4: Monday, May 6th at 7:00 pm



Bethany Prays

Bill Faucette
Shirley Lane
Ida Whitney
Diane Miller
Jack Cook
Joan Richardson
Teresa Wilborn
Tiffany Tauchren
John & Ann Sutton
Peter Slater
Joey Leake
Shannon Russell

Mary Moore
Rachel Poteat
Jeremy Harden
Mike Sutton
Stewart Dillard
Shelvia Russell
Ruby Martin
Katherine Turner
Jean Berry
Christy Lutterloh
Eleanor Thompson
Nancy Sutton

Norma Proctor
Family of Levi Byrd
Randy Thompson
Barbara Cousins
Pat Kennedy
Donna Mitchell-Ayers
Pete Campbell
Ben Johnson
Alex Thomas
Bill Abplanalp
Robert Sykes
Randy Thompson



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