



John's Journal

After six and a half years here at Bethany, you probably have figured out that I do spend time online. In fact, a good part of my research and study for my sermons is done

online. I have found several sources that really help in providing commentary for scripture, as well as resources for our worship services.

It's very easy to find fault with technology, especially with the internet and social media. And yes, there are issues there with which to find fault. But the positive aspects of online life - for me - far outweighs the negative. I have lived long enough to know both worlds, and I much prefer the world that is at our fingertips through a keyboard or in our hands.

The technology that makes all this possible is truly amazing. I heard recently, as we were celebrating the 50th anniversary of the moon landing, that the computing power in our smartphones is many times over more powerful than the computers that sent Apollo 11 to the moon. We've come a long way in 50 years!

So with all the advantages of technology and social media, why are there so many problems associated with it - especially in the social media arena? Whether its Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or any of the other platforms, there seems to always be some issues relating to their use or misuse.

Of course, as I write this the hearings are underway with Robert Mueller testifying before congress about the special counsel's report concerning interference in the 2016 election. One of his strongest points - and one that he has reiterated several times - is that interference did occur, with much of it tied to social media.

Yes, there are questions as to whether this interference influenced the election to sway it one way or the other - with strong arguments on both sides, but the point is that social media can be such positive aspect of our online world, but it can also be very destructive and hurtful.

I use Facebook quite a bit. I am also on Twitter, but I use that mostly to follow trusted news sources, and for sports stuff. My Facebook usage revolves around family and friends and keeping up with what's happening in their lives.

Those of you who are friends with me on Facebook may have noticed that I never post anything political. My friends know where I stand politically. But I am the pastor for all of Bethany, not just those who agree with me.

So, I'm not going to get into an argument on Facebook or Twitter with someone who rants and rages behind the anonymity of a keyboard. Name-calling and baiting are not healthy, and certainly not a Christian way to carry on a conversation.

Another negative aspect of social media is bullying. We have heard story after story of the heartbreak of a young person committing suicide after constant harassment and bullying on social media.

So, what's the answer? How can we be responsible users of technology and social media? I look at technology as a gift - given to us as a tool to help get the message of Christ's love out into the world. Amidst all the noise of social media, I do appreciate those who are attempting to spread this message through positive posts with the message of hope and peace and promise of the gospel.

If you are on social media, use it wisely. Don't fall into the trap of liking or sharing a post out of guilt. When you like or share a post - even if you agree with its sentiment - the person (or computer) that originated that post now has access to your Facebook page and all of your friends' pages. This creates an open door for targeted advertising, and targeted posts that clog our news feeds. So, use with care.

And let us all pray, as we approach another election season, that our democracy will be intact and free from interference from any entity with the intent to sow chaos, doubt, or hate. Our forefathers fought too hard for us to allow this to happen.

As always, I am grateful 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) met several times over several months spanning the end of 2018 and the beginning of 2019. There was much work involved in getting the proposal and application for the Lilly Foundation grant. According to the instructions and information, recipients will not be notified until late August. Fingers are firmly crossed!

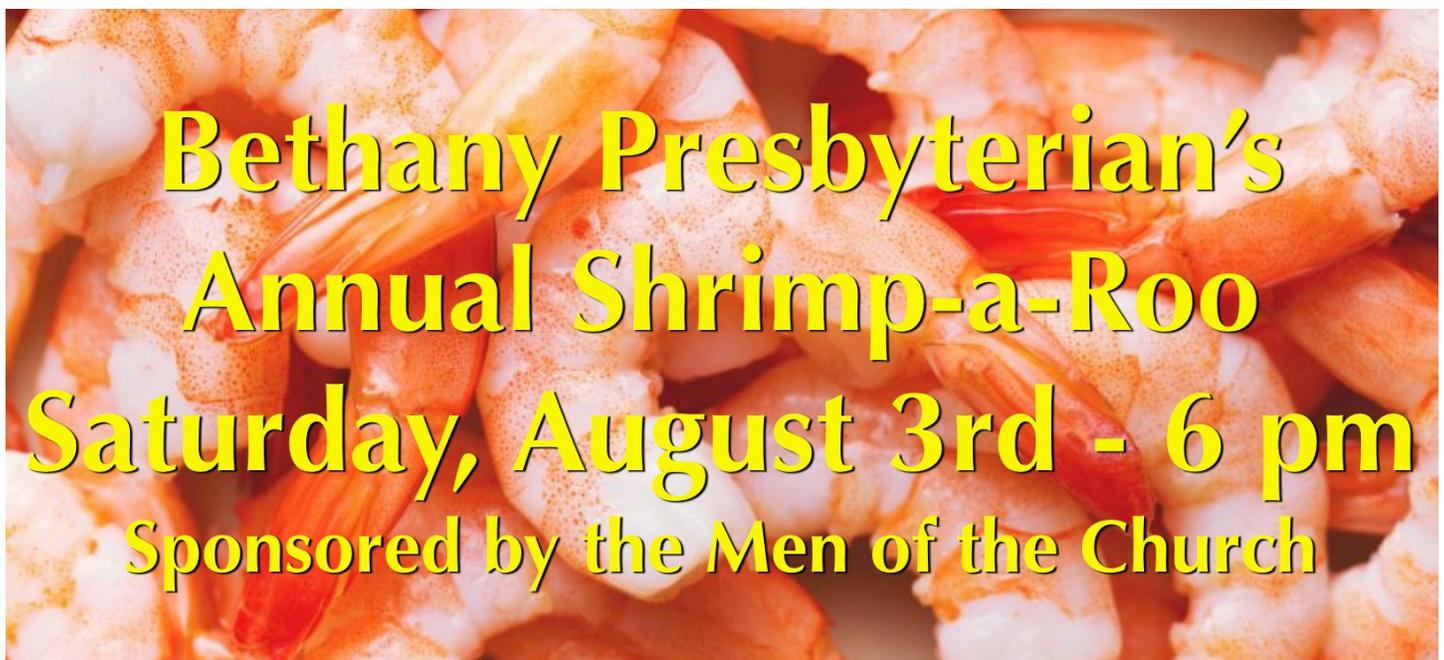
I hope you have gained some insight into the process and into my plans for the sabbatical over the past few months as I have shared some of the main questions in the proposal/application, and our responses. As August is now

upon us, and the notice of whether or not I will receive the grant comes closer, I will share now the final question in Part A of the proposal.

8. Give a brief description of the process by which the congregation determined whether to submit a proposal. Favorable consideration will be given only to proposals that provide evidence of broad congregational support for the program.

When the pastor was called to Bethany in January of 2013, the congregation voted to approve the Terms of Call, which included a three-month sabbatical after seven years in the call. So, the congregation knew from the start that this was something that was going to take place. As 2020 has been getting closer and closer, there has been a more concerted effort to keep the congregation informed of plans. There have been articles in the church newsletter for four consecutive months (as of March, 2019) and these will continue as plans are fleshed out. There have been brief blurbs in the Sunday morning bulletin with highlights of plans for the sabbatical. The pastor will present a "Moment for Mission" in the early part of 2019 during worship which will give the congregation more information about the sabbatical plans. In addition, a "Sabbatical Support Group" has been formed (currently four members) from the congregation, who are meeting regularly with the pastor to offer support, insight, suggestions, and aid in planning for the sabbatical.

Stay tuned. JWJ

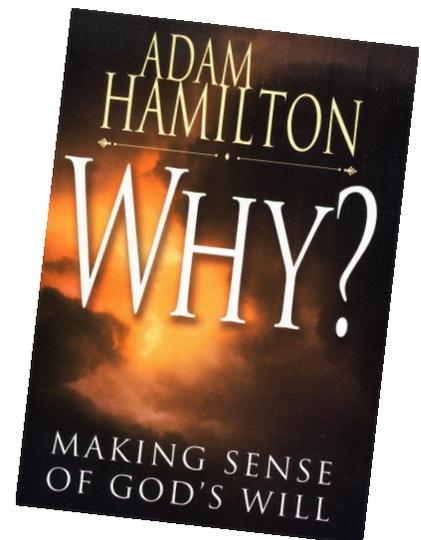


FEASTING on the WORD



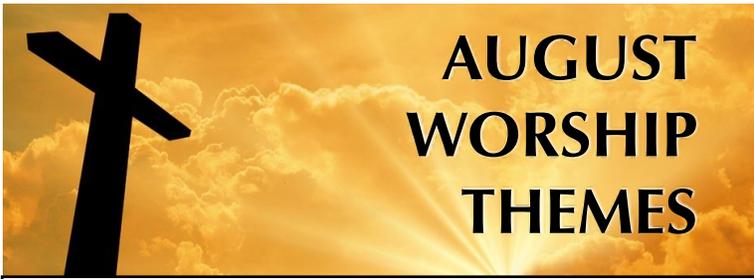
Our **Sunday School Series**, using the *“Feasting on the Word”* curriculum, which follows the Revised Common Lectionary scripture passages will conclude at the end of August. Each Sunday’s session centers on the text from which John will be preaching on that particular Sunday. The series is led by John, 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.**

Join us as we wrap up this series, for lively and engaging discussion each Sunday morning.



For our Summer Study Series this summer is revisiting a format we used several years ago - **The Grill & The Gospel**, continuing on **Sunday, August 11th**. This summer we are looking at another Adam Hamilton study, called **Why? Making Sense of God’s Will**. The focus of our final gathering will be *Why Can’t I See God’s Will For My Life?* As with other Adam Hamilton series that we’ve looked at, this is a DVD based series, with discussion and sharing.

So, mark your calendars for **August 11th**, as we gather for great food, fantastic fellowship, and engaging discussion on the many “why” questions of life!



AUGUST WORSHIP THEMES

August 4th:

Luke 12:13-21

Rich Toward God

August 11th:

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

Being Faithful

August 18th:

TBA

TBA

August 25th:

Luke 13:10-17

Bending the Rules



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



Summer Worship

If you've been around during the summer, you have noticed that our worship services have looked a little different. Summer brings changes to schedules, adjustment to heat, and the opportunity to try some new things.

As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, we will be utilizing the *Feasting on the Word* resource for our worship - following the Revised Common Lectionary as we normally do, but including a study aspect during the Sunday school hour.

Also, you will notice that John will not be wearing a robe during the summer. He has done this before during the summer and will return to this more comfortable attire. He will continue to wear appropriate stoles for the seasons.

Another change that we are trying out for the summer will be that John will be preaching from the floor, instead of the pulpit. This gives John some flexibility in preaching, and also creates a better connection with the congregation.

We hope that these minor adjustments will enhance our worship experience for these summer months, and that we can glorify God in new and creative ways!





Mark your calendars and make your plans now to gather for worship on **Sunday, August 10th** as we celebrate our annual **YOUTH SUNDAY!** Our young people who attended the Massanetta Springs Middle School Conference and the Montreat Youth Conference will lead us in worship on that day, using the themes of these conferences to share their experiences and to share their faith. This is always a unique and moving service, so come and support these young people as they share of themselves on this special Sunday.



An Invitation

Bill and Linda Abplanalp would like to invite the congregation and friends to help celebrate their **55th Wedding Anniversary.** Come to the party on **Saturday, August 10th** from 2-4 pm at the Rec Building.

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 July 9th. Here are some highlights:

- Heard a devotion from Tracey Troxler.
- Continued with our discussion of the book *Canoeing the Mountains*
- Shared in joys and concerns of the congregation
- Received an update from Glenn Patterson regarding the sale of the property, with the news that the sale was not moving forward at this time.
- Heard a treasurer's report from Ron Osborne.
- Were reminded of Shrimp-a-Roo on August 3rd.
- Were reminded of Vacation Bible School, July 20-21
- Chris shared news from his work and plans moving forward with Choral Scholars Program.
- John shared his schedule for the summer months.

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, AUGUST 13TH
ELDERS OF THE MONTH FOR AUGUST
BEN RUSSELL AND NANCY PURCELL**



The Session has called for a **Congregational Meeting** to be held immediately following worship on **Sunday, August 4th**, for the purpose of electing a Nominating Committee, whose task will be to bring names to the congregation for a slate of officers for the Class of 2022 of the Session.



In conjunction with our Blessing of the Backpacks on **August 25th**, we will also have a **School Supply Drive** on that same day. Please bring school supply items that will be blessed and then donated to local schools. These supplies can either be for students or for teachers.

Thanks for you generosity and support of our local schools - students and teachers!

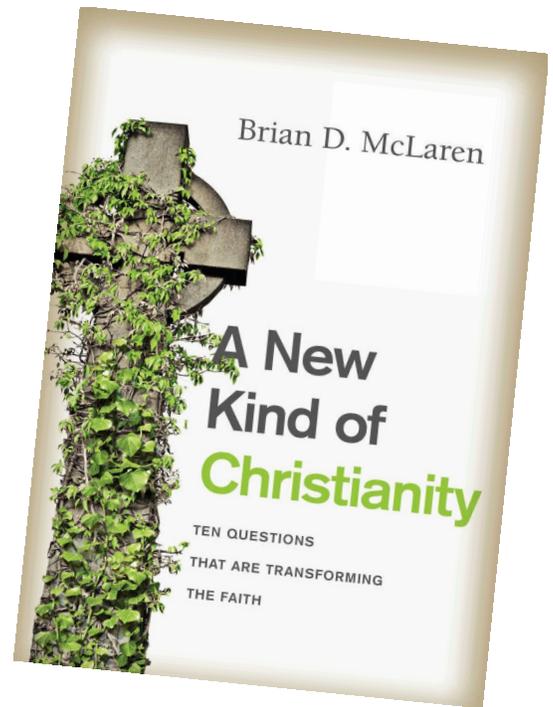


John and one of our elders will be offering **Homebound Communion** during the week of **August 5th**. Anyone wishing to receive communion during this week should contact the church office (336.227.4041). Joy will be contacting those we have served in the past to make appointments.

This is a special way to keep in contact with those who are unable to attend worship, and to remind them and all of us of God's continued presence in our lives no matter our station in life or our abilities to physically participate in the life of the church.

"Christ is known in the breaking of the bread."

**Fall Book Study
Beginning in September
Details coming soon.
Stay tuned!**



Blessing of the

BACKPACKS

Sunday, August 25th

for students & teachers of all ages

Our nation recently observed the 50th anniversary of the successful mission to the moon of Apollo 11, with astronauts Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins. What many people don't know is the Buzz Aldrin was a Presbyterian elder, and a member of Webster Presbyterian Church in Houston. The article below from the Houston Chronicle tells the story of how Buzz Aldrin took communion to the moon.

A Houston-area church still remembers the small act of faith Buzz Aldrin performed on the surface of the moon 50 years ago.

Every year, Webster Presbyterian Church marks the Sunday closest to the anniversary of the July 20, 1969, Apollo 11 landing as its "lunar Communion."

As an elder of the church off East NASA Parkway, Aldrin discretely took a piece of bread, a small amount of wine, a tiny chalice and a Bible verse scribbled on a piece of paper to hold the Christian rite of Communion on the moon.

Moments after landing on the Sea of Tranquility, Aldrin radioed Houston to request a few moments of silence. Aldrin read a verse from the Gospel of John to himself, ate the wafer and drank the wine from the chalice. Fellow moon mission astronaut Neil Armstrong declined to participate but watched respectfully and silently.

"At the time, I could think of no better way to acknowledge the enormous achievement of Apollo 11 than by giving thanks to God," Aldrin later wrote in his 2016 memoir, "No Dream Is Too High."

Webster Presbyterian's annual lunar Communion includes playing Aldrin's audio from the moon landing and a reading of Psalms 8, in which King David praises the majesty of the heavens and the earth.

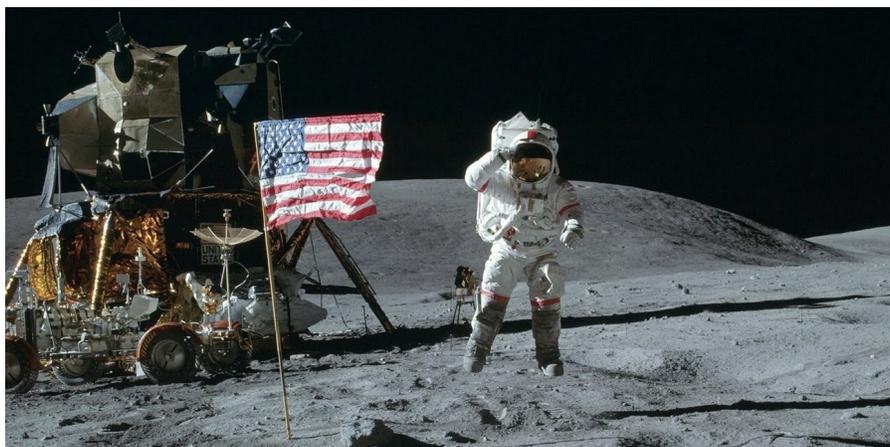
As part of the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission, International Space Station astronaut Clay Anderson delivered a Sunday morning sermon titled "Do Your Part" — challenging more than 400 people in attendance to use their talents and skills to make the world a better place.

Born and raised in Nebraska, Anderson and his family attended Sunday services at the church where he sang in the choir. Serving in several missions, Anderson spent five months aboard the International Space Station. The retired astronaut told the Houston Chronicle that his time in outer space strengthened his faith as a Christian.

"Faith and science are not mutually exclusive — not to me anyway," Anderson said. "When I saw the Earth from orbit, it did nothing but strengthen my faith in God. All I could think about was how this is not random. We are a single human species on our planet, the solar system, the known galaxy and the universe. We're it. To me, that's not random. As I saw the Earth and I observed the beauty of how everything fit together — the oceans and deserts and the rivers mountains — all of that fits so nicely together. There's a higher power out there that's orchestrating everything."

As the closest Protestant church to the Johnson Space Center during the 1960s, engineers, contractors, astronauts and their families have made Webster Presbyterian their spiritual home for decades. The church has shared in the triumphs and tragedies of the space missions over the years.

The moon mission's success was attributed to NASA support staff and contractors — many of whom are now retired but still attend services at the church alongside current NASA engineers and contractors.





FINANCIAL REPORT - END OF JUNE 2019	
Year-to-date Actual Income	\$81,670.90
Year-to-date Actual Expenses	\$80,652.33
YEAR-TO-DATE SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$1,018.57

PLEDGE REMINDER:

Summer is here! 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.

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.

Unfortunately, due to additional expenses anticipated for the buyer in adhering to zoning regulations, the sale is not progressing. Other options are being considered, both for the original buyer, and for other interested parties. We are disappointed that this sale did not go through, but we are confident that this property will be sold.

Many, many thanks to Glenn Patterson for his tireless work for Bethany in selling this property.

STEWARDSHIP SEASON 2019

Your Generosity Team (Glenn Patterson, Nancy Purcell, Rick Purcell, Jean Payne, and John Johnson) have met to begin plans for this year's Stewardship Campaign. Mark your calendars for **Sunday, November 17th**, which will be the culmination of our Stewardship Season.

One focus for this year will be capital needs of the church. The Generosity Team, as well as others will be compiling a list of capital needs and will be prioritizing these needs. With anticipated income from the sale of the property across the street from the church, as well as designated funds that we have on hand, we should have funds available to tend to the physical upkeep of our property, as well as to consider upgrades and other issues.

As always, the input of the congregation is encouraged. Please contact any of the above named team to offer suggestions.

And the team covets your prayers as we look to providing a strong budget for 2020.



August Birthdays and Anniversaries!

Happy Anniversary to:

Debbie & John Johnson	August 1
Tina & Glenn Patterson	August 6
Linda & Bill Abplanalp	August 15
Nancy & Mike Sutton	August 22
Kasey & Brent Dampier	August 26

Happy Birthday to:

Ruby Martin	August 1
Jean Payne	August 4
Darrell Holmes	August 10
Zach Wagner	August 13
Millie Fuller	August 15
Emerson Davis	August 15
Donna Mitchell-Ayers	August 18
Samantha Patterson	August 18
Gina Wagner	August 18
Robert Cousins	August 19
Shelvia Russell	August 19
Sue Kimrey	August 20
Betty Boggs	August 22

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 - Special Sunday school series through the summer looking at the Lectionary passage for each Sunday.



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
 Randy Thompson
 Barbara Cousins
 Pat Kennedy
 Donna Mitchell-Ayers
 Pete Campbell
 Ben Johnson
 Alex Thomas
 Robert Sykes
 Joy Saleeby
 Frederica Beatty
 Glenn Thompson



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