

bethany presbyterian

love learn serve
bethany press



VOLUME VI NO. 1

JANUARY 2018

John's Journal

The beginning of a new year offers an opportunity to not only reflect on the year past, but also the opportunity to ponder what lies ahead in the new year. What will 2018 look like? What new opportunities and experiences lie in the future? What mistakes will we make? What lessons will we learn? What will our lives look like at the beginning of 2019?

It's only natural to think about these things as the calendar flips from one year to the next. But a year ago, did we have any idea how 2017 would end up? Probably not. We have experienced many highs and lows. We have celebrated and rejoiced. We have mourned and grieved. But through it all, we remain children of faith, with untold gifts for which to be thankful.

It seems hard to believe that January 15th will mark my five-year anniversary as your pastor. And so, not only am I reflecting on the past year, but I also find myself reflecting on the past five years of my journey here at Bethany.

Yes, there have been significant accomplishments, but there is still much work to do. I have marked many milestones: too many funerals of Bethany's saints, the joy of weddings and baptisms, the happiness in welcoming new members, and the sadness in saying goodbye to others.

Together we have grown in the way we worship together, and through study, in how we understand our place as God's people. We have celebrated successful stewardship campaigns, and fretted over ones that have been less successful. We have experienced a year-long celebration of our 125th anniversary - and what a celebration it was.

As I mark my 5th year with you, and near my 39th year of ministry, I continue to try to grow and learn and not be hindered by the "we've always done it this way" mindset. The danger in adopting that way of thinking is that it is usually the easiest way of doing things. Not having to think and explore and try new things makes things much easier and less hectic.

But in thinking that way, we limit ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit in lifting us to new heights. As I continue to look for new forms of ministry as we are now nearly one-

fifth of the way into the 21st century, I will continue to participate in conferences that have fed me in the past, and will explore other avenues of continuing education that will provide me with new and exciting forms of ministry.

As you may know, I have a long history with the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE). Although I no longer serve in a leadership capacity with APCE, I still look forward to attending the annual conference, this year held in Louisville, KY. The conference is January 31-February 3rd, but I will also be attending another meeting of the General Assembly Committee on Christian Education of which I am a member, January 29-31. The theme of this year's APCE conference is "Deep and Wide - Boundless Hospitality." I look forward to learning new forms of hospitality that can be useful in the church.

I have also had the privilege of attending several NEXT Church Conferences over the past few years - from which our Bethany NEXT Work Group was born. This year's conference is being held in Baltimore, February 26-28. I hope to attend this as well, and hope that other members of our Bethany NEXT Group will attend also. There is much that we can all glean as we continue to strive to enhance our mission and ministry here at the fork in the road . . . and beyond!

And so, as we begin our 6th year together, let us hope and pray for several things: let us pray for happiness and good health of our members and friends; let us pray that God will send new members our way and that they may find a welcoming home here; let us pray for faithful stewardship of our resources, and that we will have the financial means to continue and grow our ministries; let us pray for open hearts and open minds to new ways of worshipping together; and let us pray for God's wisdom and guidance in everything that we do.

Happy New Year Bethany! May 2018 be a year of happiness, joy, well-being, hope, peace, and much, much laughter. I rejoice that God called me to be your pastor, and I rejoice that we can begin another year together!

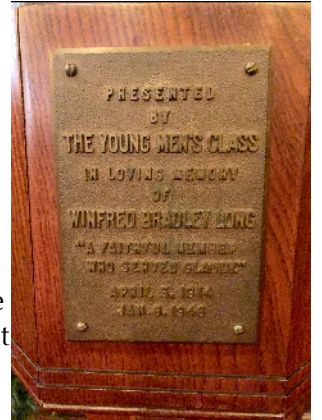
Honoring our past . . .



On Sunday, January 7th, which is Baptism of the Lord Sunday, we will honor our past as we recognize the gift and legacy of our current Baptismal Font. This beautiful font, built with the loving hands of Joseph Blair Long (Diane Bullis' grandfather), was given in memory of Winfred Bradley Long (Diane's father) by the Young Men's Class in 1946.

Mr. Long also built the communion table, the chairs by the communion table, as well as possibly other furnishings that adorn our sanctuary and church.

The font will remain as a prominent fixture in our sanctuary, as we always remember the covenant that we all have in the Sacrament of Baptism. We remember with gratitude all those who have been baptized from this font, and pray that they all continue to live into the covenant that was affirmed at their baptism.



. . . blessing our future

As we begin a new year, and continue our march forward into the 21st century, we not only honor our past, but we strive to strengthen our future as we continue to innovate and evolve. Over the past year or so, the use of our baptismal font has grown - not only in the joy of the Sacrament of Baptism, but also in the remembering of our baptisms almost every Sunday.

In an effort to emphasize the baptismal covenant, the idea arose to commission the building and addition of a new font and stand - more prominent and larger scale, reflecting our increased emphasis on the covenant that we all received through the baptismal waters.

Building on the experience of the gift of our Advent Candle stand - now two years old - we wanted to have a significant piece that not only matched the Advent Candle stand, but also fit into our sanctuary. Once again we commissioned woodworker and artisan Will Bucher who has crafted the beautiful piece that now adorns our sanctuary. (Will is John and Debbie's son-in-law.)

As we dedicate this new item on January 7th, our prayers are that all who are baptized from this font will be truly blessed. As we reaffirm our Baptismal Covenant on the 7th, we pray that the covenant that we all have been blessed with at the waters of baptism will continue to bless our lives this day and in all the days to come.





Our sanctuary is beautiful 365 days a year, but is always especially beautiful when adorned for the Advent and Christmas seasons. It seemed though, that this year was a step beyond what we usually have. There were many comments made about the unusual beauty reflected in the Chrismon tree, the poinsettias, the Advent candles, and all the usual adornments. Many thanks to those who helped decorate before the season, and thanks in advance to those who will help take down the decorations on Saturday, January 6th at 10:00 am!

And thanks also to those who helped make our "Angels Among Us" Advent theme such a success. Do you still have your feather key chain?! There were several stories shared about how the feather key chains made it into the community. Thanks to Joy Saleeby for her work in making that happen, as well as Nancy Purcell in getting folks lined up to help with the scripture presentations, to Chris and the choir for their participation each Sunday.

Let us hope that our Advent season helped us spread #morehope, #morepeace, #morejoy, and #morelove! Let us continue this as we move now into 2018!



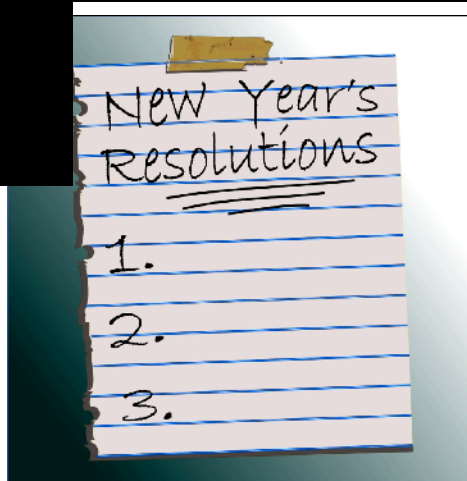
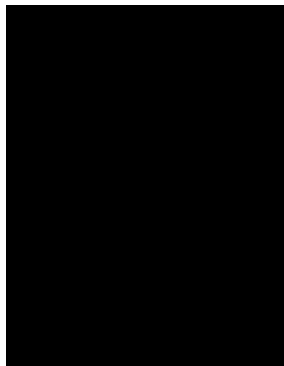


Our Lenten Journey begins on
Wednesday, February 14, 2018

Ash Wednesday Service

7:00 pm

A Service of Prayer, Contemplation,
Music, Scripture, and the
Imposition of Ashes

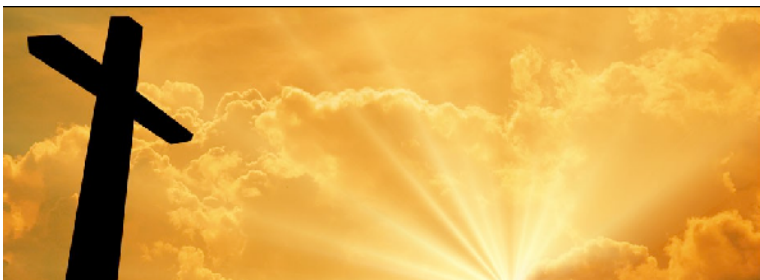


The beginning of a new year always brings about the idea of New Year's resolutions - which usually fall by the wayside after a few weeks. But, have you ever made New Year's resolutions as it pertains to your church? Here's some ideas to get you going:

- Attend worship every Sunday. It'll do your soul good!
- Sign up for a Bible study or book study. Our learning never stops.
- Join the choir. No experience

necessary!

- Sign up for a committee. The Session can't do it all, and appreciates all help in carrying out the work of the church.
- Pray for Bethany every day. Make Bethany a constant in your daily prayers.
- Pray for your Session and for John. They carry a lot of responsibility for Bethany's well-being.
- Make Bethany a priority for 2018 and beyond!



January 7th - Baptism of the Lord:

Mark 1:4-11

Cleaning Tips from John the Baptist

January 14th:

1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20)

Taking the Call

January 21st:

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Jonah's Escape Room Strategy

January 28th:

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Prophet or Pitchman

Check out the daily
devotions online at

www.365.org

Also posted daily to
Bethany's Facebook
page.



January 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
New Year's Eve ■ 9:45 AM Sunday School ■ 11:00 AM Worship	New Year's Day 1	2	■ 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	4	5	6
Baptism of the Lord Ordination and Installation Offices ■ 9:45 AM Sunday School ■ 11:00 AM Worship	■ 10:00 AM Circle #1 ■ 7:00 PM Circle #4 ■ 7:00 PM Circle #3	8	■ 7:00 PM Session Meeting ■ 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	10	11	12
■ 9:45 AM Sunday School ■ 11:00 AM Worship	Martin Luther King Jr. Day 15	16	■ 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	■ 6:00 PM Men's Oyster Stew Dinner	18	19
■ 9:45 AM Sunday School ■ 11:00 AM Worship	21	22	23	24	25	26
■ 9:45 AM Sunday School ■ 11:00 AM Worship	28	29	John away - General Assembly Special CE Comm. Meeting - Louisville ■ 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	31	1	2
						3



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

Sandy Cook

Karen Maxwell

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 12th. Here are some highlights:

- Heard a devotion from Karen Maxwell
- Welcomed Elders-Elect Chip Allen and Sandy Cook and heard their Statements of Faith as part of their examination / enthusiastically sustained their examinations / set January 7th as date for Service of Ordination and Installation
- Completed discussion and book study of *Spiritual Leadership for Church Officers* by Joan Gray
- Heard report that rental property is now listed for sale / sign will go up soon
- Heard a financial report from Treasurer, Ron Osborne
- Engaged in lengthy discussion regarding shortfall in pledges for 2018 / discussed ideas of addressing this in the new year
- Were reminded of schedule for Advent and Christmas worship services
- Heard report from SERVE team leader Jean Payne with plans for addressing needs for families
- Heard staff report from Chris

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2018
ELDERS OF THE MONTH FOR JANUARY
NANCY PURCELL AND A. J. CAMPBELL

Service of Ordination and Installation

Sunday, January 7, 2018

11:00 am

Ruling Elder to be Ordained & Installed

Chip Allen

Ruling Elders Previously Ordained to be Installed

Sandy Cook & Karen Maxwell



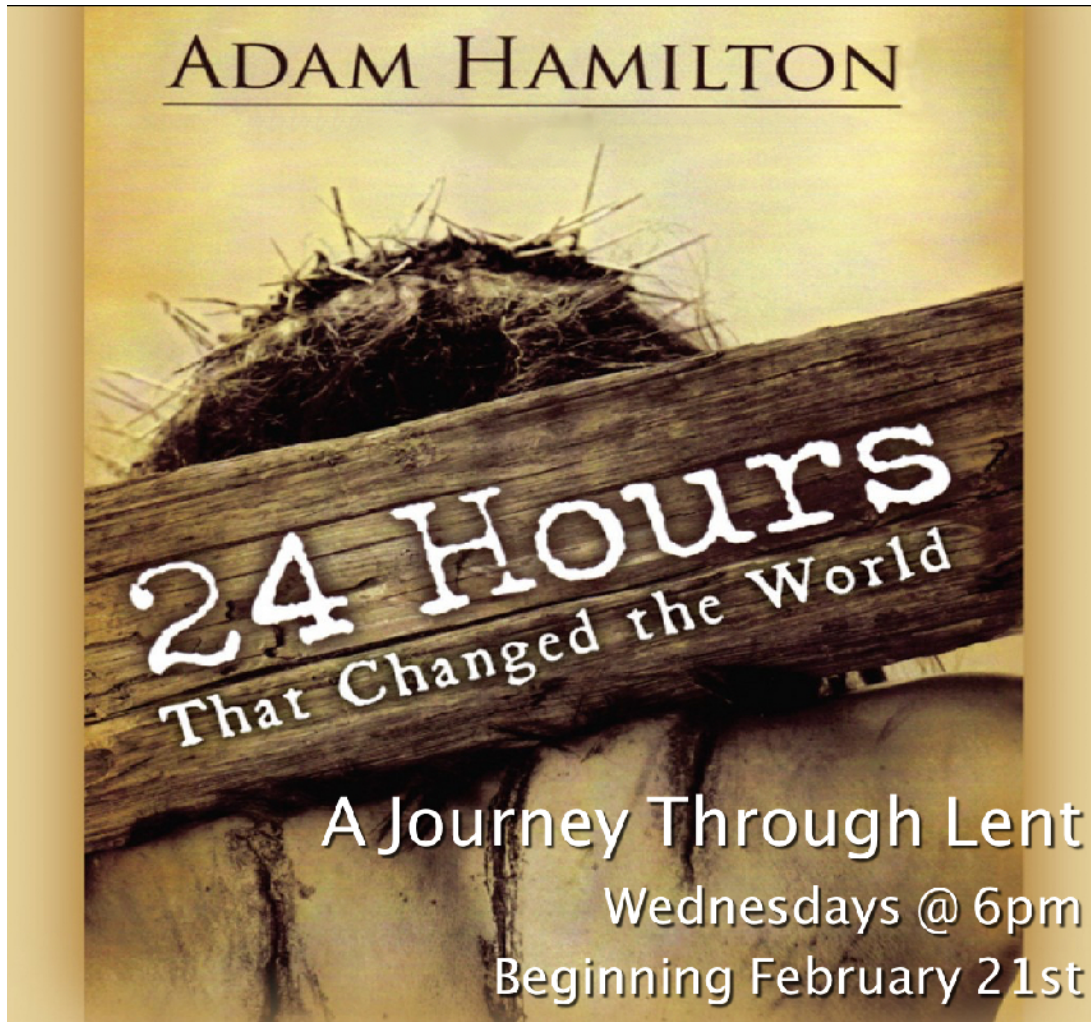
A special word of thanks goes to

Ron Kimrey

who is rotating off the Session.

Thanks for your time, energy,
good humor, and commitment
to your church!





Make your plans now to join as we journey through the Lenten season with a six-week study of Adam Hamilton's "24 Hours that Changed The World."

Adam Hamilton guides us, step by step, through the last 24 hours of Jesus' life in his popular, heartbreaking, and inspiring study.

No single event in human history has received more attention than the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. In this study, Hamilton will help us experience and understand the significance of Jesus' suffering and death like never before. He retraces the day that changed human history in his usual straightforward yet easy, conversational style that speaks to both long-time Christians and those who are simply curious about the story of Christ's crucifixion.

The study will begin on Wednesday, February 21st and will run through the six weeks of Lent. We will meet at 6:00, so as to not exclude choir members who may want to join the study. There is a study book, as well as a video resource to help guide us through the study. The only cost is for the book, which is \$10.00.

Be on the lookout for registration information coming soon!



REPORT THROUGH END OF NOVEMBER	
Year-to-date Actual Income	\$158,374.51
Year-to-date Actual Expenses	\$159,679.77
YEAR-TO-DATE SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$1,305.26



As the Session gathers for its January meeting on the 9th, one of the continuing topics of discussion will be our financial situation. Although we do have much to be thankful for, in that we did finish 2017 in the black, the outlook for 2018 is challenging, in that the amount pledged for 2018 does not fulfill all our budgetary requests and needs. The Session is considering several options of how to overcome this shortfall in pledges. At this writing, there are no specifics yet, but please know that you will be kept informed of progress and opportunities that will be coming your way.

In the meantime, if you have the ability, and would like to amend your pledge, this can be done at any time and would be greatly appreciated. You can do this by either putting a note in Pam Hurt's box, or by calling her at the church (she is at the church on Tuesday afternoons).


Bethany has been blessed in the past with very generous donors. The challenge for 2018 is to continue their legacy as we move forward in faith, so that the mission and ministry of Bethany can continue.





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

find your place Adult Ministry

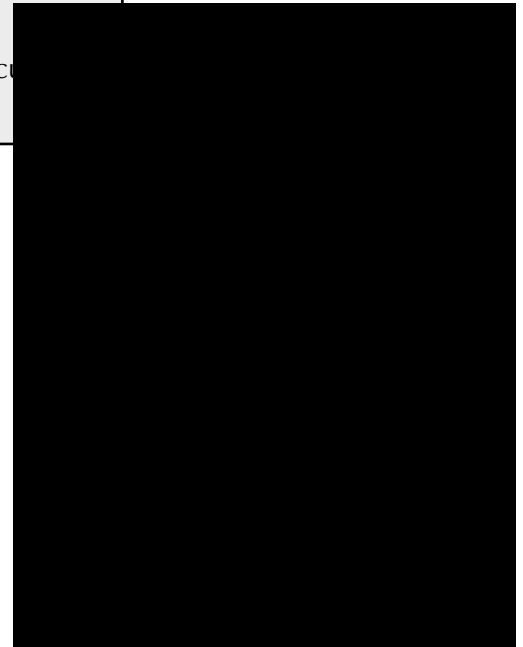


Christian Education Opportunities

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 Seeker's Class - meets in the church office / currently using The Wired Word curriculum



Presbyterian Women Circles January Schedule!

- Circle #1: Monday, January 8th at 10:00 am
- Circle #3: Monday, January 8th at 7:00 pm
- Circle #4: Monday, January 8th at 7:00 pm

January Birthdays and Anniversaries!

Happy Anniversary to:

Becky & David Eatmon

January 6

Nancy & Rick Purcell

January 23

Joyce & Bobby Peele

January 24

Happy Birthday to:

Joy Saleeby

January 6

Sarah Osborne

January 6

Foy Bayliff

January 7

Mike Sutton

January 17

Mary Moore

January 21

A. J. Campbell

January 23

Norman Mize

January 24

Grey Donley

January 25

Thank you

A big thank you goes to all who contributed food over the holidays - both the Thanksgiving Food Drive which went to Allied Churches, and our Christmas Food Collection for two families who were in need of food for the holidays. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!



Bethany Prays

Bill Faucette

Faye Campbell

Frances Nolan

Layla Benoklen

Ida Whitney

Rachel Poteat

Jeremy Harden

Anne McDaniels

Mike Sutton

Stewart Dillard

Ben Johnson

Diane Miller

Jack Cook

Polly and Dick Wilson

Teresa Wilborn

Tiffany Tauchren

Jean Berry

Christy Lutterloh

Eleanor Thompson

Nancy Sutton

Norma Proctor

Sandy Cook & niece Rachel

John and Ann Sutton

Peter Slater

Joey Leake

Shannon Russell

Shelvia Russell

Mary Moore

Barbara Cousins

Pat Kennedy

Donna Mitchell-Ayers

Pete Campbell

Carolyn Thompson

Ruby Martin

Levi Byrd

Ruth Younts



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