



# John's Journal

I've always enjoyed this time of year - not only for the profound meaning for our lives of the Lenten and Easter seasons, but also - and much more mundane reason - the

end of the college basketball season and the major league baseball season intersect. There have even been years when the basketball national championship game would be played on a Monday night, and baseball's opening day would be on the next day. For a big college basketball and major league baseball fan like myself, it doesn't get much better than that!

It's easy to see why people like basketball - it's fast-paced, it's exciting to watch, upsets do happen which adds to the excitement - and March Madness certainly lives up to its name each year.

But there are those who just can't understand the allure of baseball. It's slow. It's ponderous. Hours can go by with nothing happening - no action. There's way to much spitting!

All that is true, unless you dig down to the intricacies of the game. I guess I get my love of baseball from my father. He loved the game as well, and it was one thing that we did together. I remember many Saturday afternoons (the only time games were on TV), watching our favorite teams on the "Game of the Week."

My father taught me to appreciate the nuances of the game - how the entire game could change on one pitch - how "it ain't over till it's over!" I have seen games come down to two strikes on the batter with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning, and then there's a base hit, and then maybe a walk, and someone makes an error, and before you know it there's a rally and the team that was behind and on the precipice of defeat, comes back to win the game.

Maybe this is a stretch, but could this not be seen as a metaphor for what Jesus has done for us on the cross. All seemed to be lost. Everyone had given up hope. The one who had come to bring victory was

hanging there, beaten, bloodied, humiliated, and giving himself over to his father.

It was the bottom of the ninth, and for those standing there at the foot of the cross, it looked like the game was over.

But wait! There's more to the story. Friday was a stark and difficult reality, but put your rally caps on because Sunday is coming!

Sunday dawns and we are presented with the glorious good news that the game wasn't over. Jesus rallied from death as he said he would, and rose from the grave.

But the game still isn't over. There is still work to do. Yes, Jesus lives on in our hearts and in our lives, and we celebrate his victory during this important season. But his work and our work isn't done.

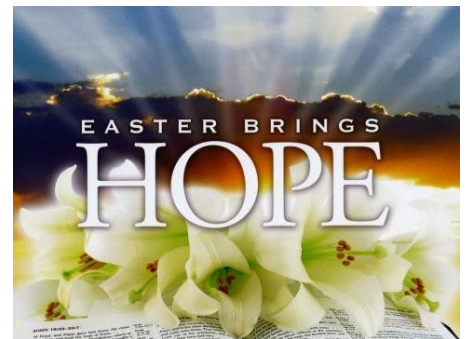
There are still hungry people to be fed, and homeless people to be housed. There is

still the monumental problem of hate in our world that needs to be consumed with the love of God lived out in Jesus Christ.

As we approach this season of hope and promise, let us resolve to understand that no matter where we are in life or what is happening in our lives - no matter whether it seems like we have two strikes on us in the bottom of the ninth and there's no hope - we must understand that there's always hope. There's always hope for victory.

May the promise of this Easter bring you hope and gratitude and peace and promise.

As always, it is a privilege to be your pastor. Grace & peace,



# sabbatical

rest | refresh | refocus

The last four 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, here's question #3, and the response:

- 3. Present a thorough narrative description of the pastor's activities and timeline for the renewal program. Include a brief description and a rationale for each of these activities. This section is where you will give the fullest description of your plans and describe how the pieces fit together into a coherent whole. Use the Outline of Renewal Program form to list in sequence the proposed date(s) for each activity and the names of any family members or associates who will attend or travel with the pastor as a part of this program.**

The sabbatical will begin with a time of rest, of rejuvenation and reenergizing. I will identify items that I will need to read prior to the trip, including background information for places that we will travel. I will utilize this time also to set up a blog, that I will use to share my experiences with those who may be interested.

The first leg of our adventure will be a long-anticipated trip to the Holy Land. As someone who has been in church life for my whole life, this is truly a "bucket list" item that is long overdue. This tour (probably through Educational Opportunities Tours) would include Galilee, Cana, Nazareth, Megiddo, Caesarea, Jericho, Qumran, Mount of Olives, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, The Old City, and some optional side trips.

At the end of the Holy Land tour, we would fly to Rome, and have three days to explore there. The visit to Rome would include city tours and exploring this unique and beautiful city.

The new adventures continue as we use our Eurail Pass to explore Europe for the next ten days. Beginning in Rome, the plan is to leisurely make our way to Florence, Milan, Zurich, Geneva (important stop for us Protestants!) Paris, and finally, London. In Geneva I would hope to visit the Bossey Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches and make contact with students or faculty to learn about what they are doing in the use of technology in the global church.

We will plan this part of the trip out carefully, to take advantage of important stops along the way, and to have plenty of time to explore this unique part of the world. Each stop along this part of the trip would include local tours, seeing important local sights, and will include a cooking school in Florence, an experience highly recommended by friends!

From London, we would make our way to Durham, England, where I would spend the next week enrolled in the MediaLit Conference at the University of Durham. This will also be a wonderful opportunity to visit family, as my niece, her husband, and son live there. My niece actually teaches at the university.

Following this week, we would make our way through northern England, and on into Scotland. This will give me an opportunity to explore my roots, as one stop I'm hoping to make is Gifford, to find the birthplace of my ancestor, John Witherspoon - a Presbyterian minister and the only minister to sign the Declaration of Independence. (My full name is John Witherspoon Johnson!)

After traveling back to the U.S., I would spend the next week at the Montreat Conference Center in the mountains of North Carolina for a time of personal sabbath. Montreat has long been my "go-to" place for renewal and rest, and is where my soul is filled each time I visit. My participation in the Worship and Music Conference will allow me to worship without any responsibilities, and to renew my soul in this very special place.

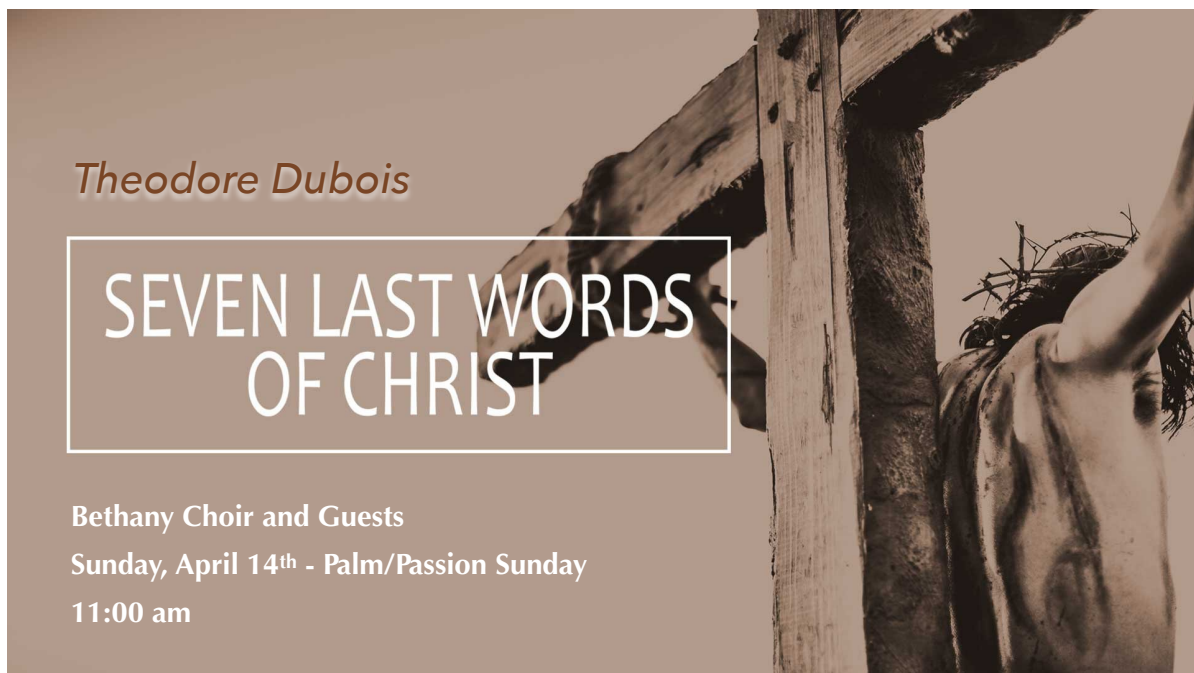
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The next week would be spent at home, resting and relaxing and preparing for the next section of the sabbatical. My love of travel will continue to be met as we embark on a 13-day road trip across this great land of ours, exploring National Parks and other points of interest. I would imagine that we would include such places as The Alamo, Carlsbad Caverns, The Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Rocky Mountain National Park, perhaps Mt. Rushmore, and other possible stops along the way, ending up in Minneapolis to spend some time with our daughter and son-in-law.

And finally, back home to rest, recuperate, and prepare to return to my work with the good people of Bethany.

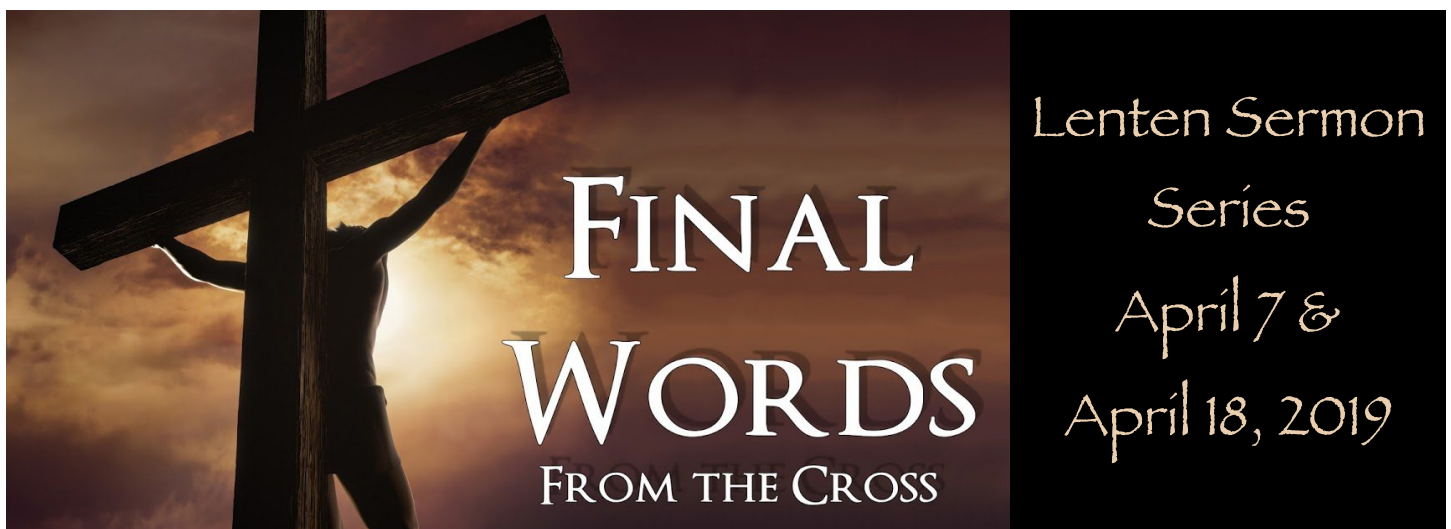
Stay tuned. JWJ



*Theodore Dubois*

SEVEN LAST WORDS  
OF CHRIST

Bethany Choir and Guests  
Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup> - Palm/Passion Sunday  
11:00 am



FINAL  
WORDS  
FROM THE CROSS

Lenten Sermon  
Series  
April 7 &  
April 18, 2019





# APRIL WORSHIP THEMES

**April 7<sup>th</sup> - Fifth Sunday in Lent:**

John 19:28-29

*I Thirst*

**April 14<sup>th</sup> - Palm / Passion Sunday:**

*Musical Presentation: Seven Last Words of Christ* by Theodore Dubois

**April 18<sup>th</sup> - Maundy Thursday Communion Service**

John 19:30a / Luke 23:45-57

*It Is Finished . . . Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit*

**April 21<sup>st</sup> - EASTER SUNDAY**

Luke 24:1-12

*Jesus Is Dead?*

**April 28<sup>th</sup>:**

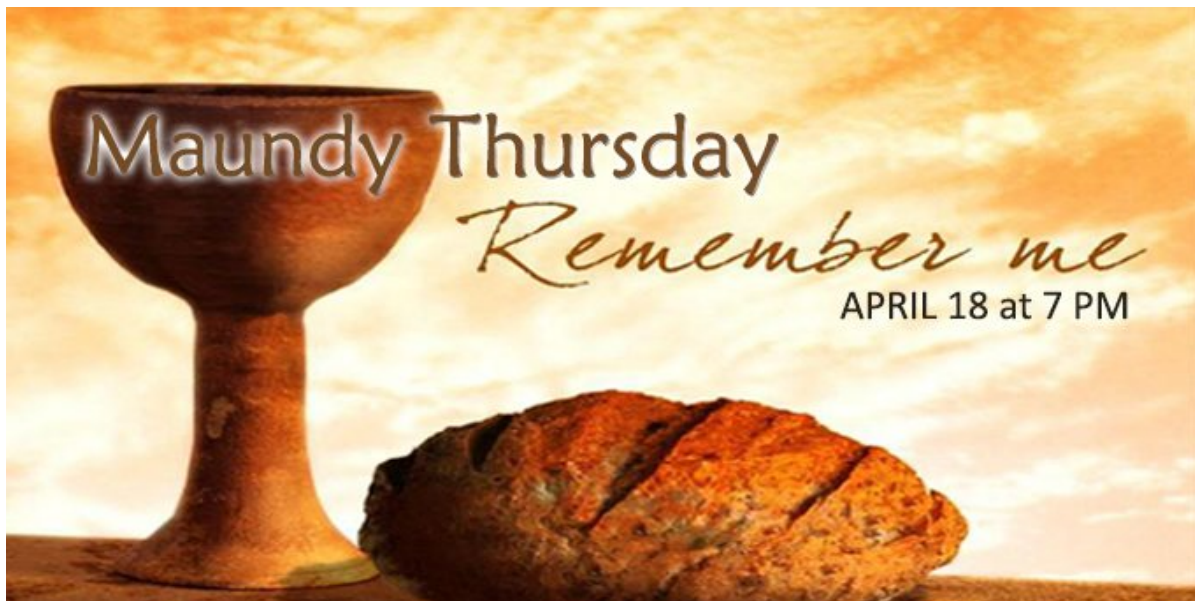
John 20:19-31

*Doubtful Design*



**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](http://www.bethanypreschurh.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)



**A special note about our Maundy Thursday Service: The service will include the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the Stripping of the Table and Draping of the Cross in black, and Sylvester Allen singing *Gethsemane* from *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Make your plans to join us at 7:00 on Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup>.**

**HE IS RISEN**

CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTION

JOIN US ON EASTER SUNDAY

**Join us in celebration of the Resurrection  
Easter Sunday, April 21, 2019**

**Worship at 11:00 am**

**Announcement of the Resurrection**

**Unveiling of the Cross**

**Music, Prayers, Praise, and Proclamation!**

**Service ends on the side lawn with the  
Flowering of the Cross (bring flowers)**

# April 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>31  <b>Fifth Sunday @ Bethany</b>                      Fourth Sunday In Lent                      9:45 AM Sunday School                      11:00 AM Worship</p>	<p>1                      10:00 AM Circle #1                      7:00 PM Circle #4</p>	<p>2                      7:00 PM Disciple Bible Study: Into the Word, Into the World</p>	<p>3                      12:00 PM Lenten Lunch Study Series                      7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>4                      7:00 PM Maundy Thursday Communion Service</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>7  <b>Fifth Sunday In Lent</b>                      9:45 AM Sunday School                      11:00 AM Worship</p>	<p>8                      7:00 PM Circle #3</p>	<p>9                      7:00 PM Session Meeting</p>	<p>10                      12:00 PM Lenten Lunch Study Series                      7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>14  <b>Palm/Passion Sunday</b>                      9:45 AM Sunday School                      11:00 AM Worship / Choir presentation "Seven Last Words of Christ"                      2:00 PM Easter Egg Hunt</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16                      7:00 PM Disciple Bible Study: Into the Word, Into the World</p>	<p>17                      7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>21  <b>Easter Sunday</b>                      9:45 AM Sunday School                      11:00 AM Worship</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23                      7:00 PM Disciple Bible Study: Into the Word, Into the World</p>	<p>24                      7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>28                      9:45 AM Sunday School                      11:00 AM Worship</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>1                      7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>



**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 March 12<sup>th</sup>. Here are some highlights:**

- Heard a devotion from A. J. Campbell.
- Engaged in a fruitful and thoughtful discussion of our book study *Canoeing the Mountains*.
- Shared in joys and concerns of the congregation
- Approved minutes from February stated meeting, and Congregational Meeting / Meeting of the Corporation on February 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Heard an update from Rick about ongoing plans for startup of Cub Scout Pack.
- Heard a treasurer's report from Ron Osborne.
- Received an update on several projects around the church from Buildings and Grounds elder, Chip Allen.
- John shared further information about upcoming sabbatical in 2020, including the completed grant application and proposal. Session was given two weeks to read and respond to approve.

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, APRIL 9TH  
ELDERS OF THE MONTH FOR APRIL  
JEAN PAYNE AND BEN RUSSELL**



The following have made memorial gifts in March in memory of Faye Campbell:

Danny Smith & Family

Mike & Nancy Sutton

Christel Schappacher

The following have made memorial gifts in March in memory of Ruth Younts:

Christel Schappacher



mark  your **Calendar**

Don't miss our annual

# Easter Egg Hunt!

Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup>

2-4 pm

Fellowship Hall





# FINAL WORDS FROM THE CROSS

We have had engaging and lively discussions each Wednesday during Lent, as we have considered the final words of Jesus from the cross. It's not too late to join us for the final two sessions as noted below - Session 5 and 6, April 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.

## Mark your calendars for this Lenten Lunch & Learn Series

Session 1: "Father, Forgive Them"

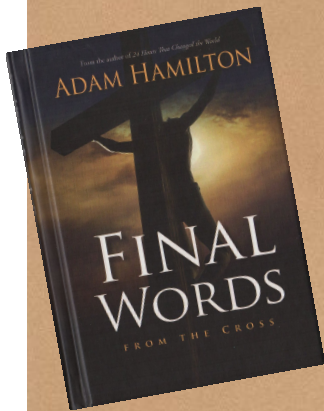
Session 2: "Today You Will Be With Me in Paradise"

Session 3: "Behold Your Son . . . Behold Your Mother"

Session 4: "My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?"

Session 5: "I Thirst"

Session 6: "It is Finished . . . Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit"



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 12<sup>th</sup>.

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 FEBRUARY 2019	
Year-to-date Actual Income	\$38,277.90
Year-to-date Actual Expenses	\$27,852.44
<b>YEAR-TO-DATE SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>\$10,425.46</b>

**SPECIAL NOTE ON ABOVE REPORT:**

On first glance, the end-of-February report looks very good, with a \$10,425 surplus. However, looks can be deceiving. Included in the income figure is several thousand dollars of interest income from our interest-bearing accounts. Removing those interest figures, the actual to-date income is \$25,509.80. That would make our year-to-date deficit at **\$2,342.64**.

We appreciate all who are keeping their pledges current. Our pledge figures are right on target - meaning that compared to our anticipated deficit from adopting a deficit budget, we are actually ahead of the game by almost \$1,500!

Your support of the mission and ministry of Bethany is greatly appreciated. With your continued support we will wipe out the deficit in no time!

**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.





## April Birthdays and Anniversaries!

### Happy Anniversary to:

Judy & Darrell Homes April 7  
Joan & Jerry Perdue April 21  
Pam & Mark Hurt April 27

### Happy Birthday to:

Dusty Kimrey April 8  
Don Boggs April 10  
Tommy Lane April 12  
April Troxler April 12  
Gerald Donley April 17  
Abby Straughan April 17  
Helen Brown April 22  
Eleanor Thompson April 23  
Maureen Kelly April 24  
Morgan Troxler April 27

## 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.

**Disciple Bible Study - Into the Word, Into the World** - meets on Tuesday evenings throughout the school year. New members always welcome.

*thank you*

**From Christel Schappacher:**

*Thank you for all the cards and prayers in the recent passing of my sister, Else Weber.*

### Presbyterian Women Circles April Schedule!

**Circle #1:** Monday, April 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 am

**Circle #3:** Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm

**Circle #4:** Monday, April 1<sup>st</sup> 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  
Levi Byrd

Randy Thompson  
Barbara Cousins  
Pat Kennedy  
Donna Mitchell-Ayers  
Pete Campbell  
Ben Johnson  
Alex Thomas  
Bill Abplanalp  
Robert Sykes  
Randy Thompson  
Dusty Kimrey





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