



John's Journal

It feels so strange - not making plans for our Palm Sunday celebration; not making sure everything is set for our Maundy Thursday Communion Service;

and not making all the proper preparations for a glorious celebration on Easter Sunday morning. It feels so strange.

But this is a first for all of us. None of us have been through anything like this, and none of us (that I'm aware of) have had to observe Holy Week and Easter because the church was closed.

Yes, we will have our online worship services - which have been meaningful and helpful - but it just won't be the same. But I'm proposing some things that we all can do to make it a special observance anyway.

We had ordered our palms for Palm Sunday months ago, and they will arrive sometime this week. We are going to put them out on the porch at the Welcome Center entrance, so that you can **drop by the church and pick up palm branches for you and your family.** Take all you need! And then, when we join together for online worship in the 5th, we can all wave our palm branches together just like we do when we celebrate here at the church.

And then, we will gather once again virtually on Maundy Thursday - always a moving and meaningful worship service. The PC(USA) has given churches permission to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper virtually. And so, be sure before you log in to gather for our Maundy Thursday service, **have a piece of bread or cracker, or really anything you want to use to represent the body, and something to drink - again, anything is fine - your choice - to represent the cup.** We will all hold up our bread to break it at the same time, and hold up our cup and partake at the same time. And, just like we do each year, the service will end in silence.

But we will gather once again on Sunday, the 12th for our celebration of Easter Sunday. We will announce

the amazing good news that Christ is alive. We will sing our Easter hymns, and pray our Easter prayers. And what I'm asking for this service, is for everyone to **bring an Easter flower - much like you would to place on our Easter cross.** We will end our service with everyone showing their Easter flowers as we share the good news of the resurrection.

So, yes, it will be different, but we are still the church and we will still do church. The buildings may be empty, but the church has left the building and is living and breathing in the world so in need of some good news right now.

We are still tweaking our online experience, and are trying to make improvements each week to make it more meaningful for those who are gathering. On page 7 of this newsletter there are more detailed instructions for how to join our online worship. As noted there, you can join on your computer, on your smartphone, or on your tablet. It's easy and it is so great to see everyone's faces each Sunday.

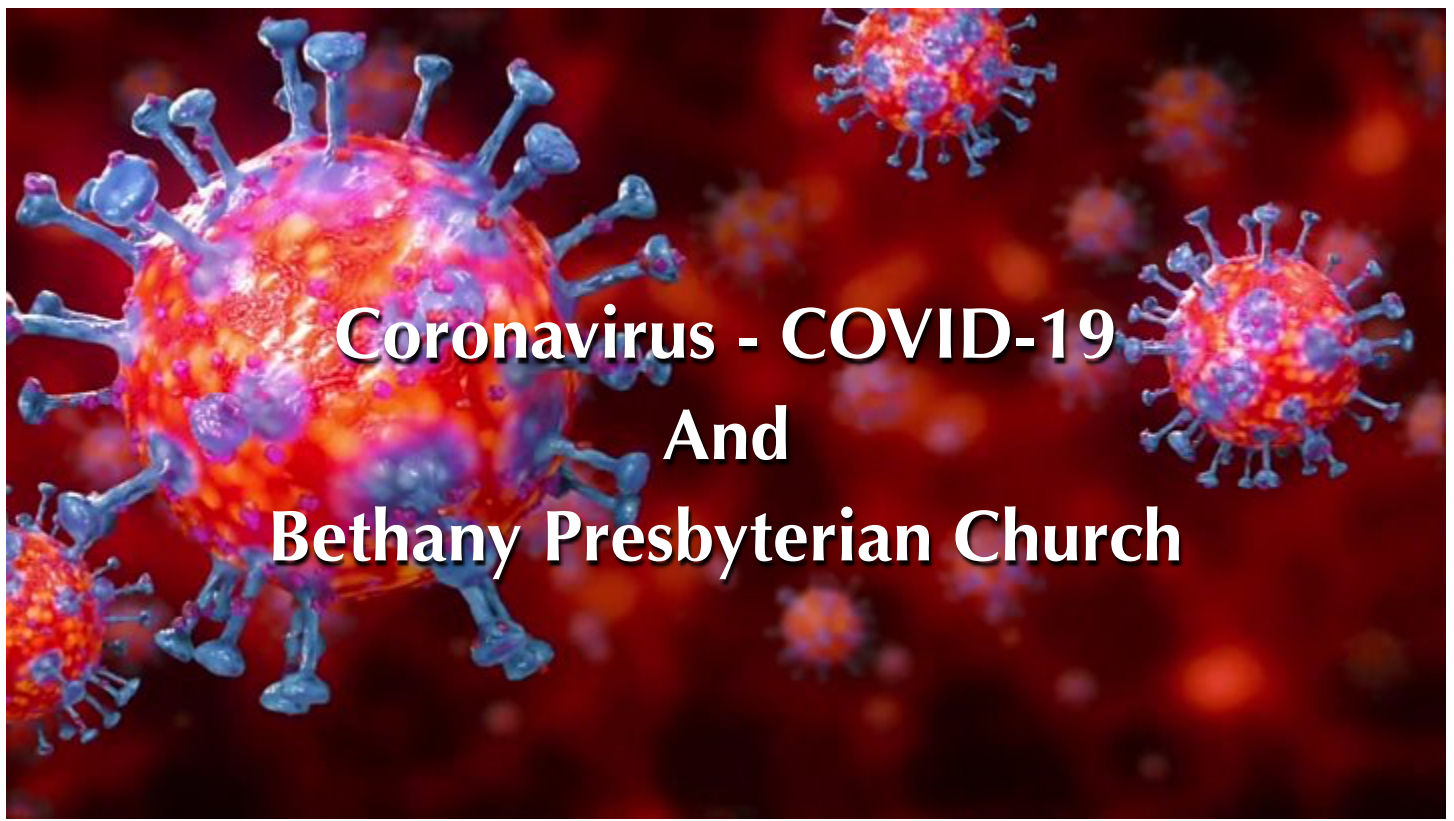
I am comforted in the knowledge that there will be time when this crisis will be behind us and we can return to normal routines. I ask you to continue to join me in prayer for all those on the front lines of this battle - the medical professionals who tend to the sick and dying, the first responders who care for those who are in harm's way, our governmental leaders who are making decisions based on what is best for everyone. They all need our prayers.

I hope by the time I write this article for our May newsletter, that we will be at a point where we can be back together. If not, then we'll deal with that when we get there.

I am grateful for the technology that can bring us together - if not in person, then virtually. And I am grateful for the kindnesses shown by you as you care for this family of faith. We are in this together, and together we will make it to the other side. Grace and hope abounds!

As always, I am grateful to be your pastor.

Grace & peace,



Coronavirus - COVID-19

And

Bethany Presbyterian Church

I remember after 9/11, I wondered if life would ever return to normal. But, after awhile, life did return to a new normal. We were more aware of things that didn't seem right. We took our shoes off when we wanted to fly somewhere. We had our baggage searched more diligently. We went through metal detectors at most any large gathering of people. And we got used to that.

Although there are certain similarities in the crisis that we face now with the Coronavirus and the worldwide health pandemic that we are in, there are differences as well. After 9/11 we gathered in groups to be comforted. Now we are told we can't gather in groups. After 9/11 churches were packed as we prayed for peace. Now churches are closed to those who want to gather to worship.

And so, we make adjustments. Following the guidelines from our governor and from Salem Presbytery, the Session made the difficult decision to not hold worship services at the church beginning on March 22nd. We will continue to monitor the situation, but the likelihood is that we will not return to worshipping together in person for several weeks.

This is not easy for any of us. We thrive on each other's company and the fellowship that we share on Sunday mornings. We miss the handshakes and hugs. But we value the health and well-being of our church and community as well, and we will continue to abide by the guidelines around gathering in groups, and the guidance of our presbytery. The Session will meet virtually periodically to reevaluate the situation.

Joy and I will continue to come to the office unless the situation worsens and we do not feel safe. Since there are only two of us here, the risk for infection is very low.

The situation is causing disruptions in everyday life for everyone. Unlike 9/11, we are all directly affected by this health crisis - whether we get sick or not. Let us continue to do what we need to do to stop the spread of the virus. Stay at home unless you need to get out. Wash your hands often. If you're out and about, keep your distance from other people.

And pray for a swift resolution to this crisis, so that we can return to another new normal.

JWJ



A Challenge: Serving Our Congregation

Here at Bethany we are blessed with those with a giving heart - always looking for ways to reach out to help in times of need. We are now in such a time.

Tina Patterson and Randy Cousins are our elders responsible for our SERVE Ministry Team. Tina has come up with some ideas of ways that we can reach out even when we can't physically reach out. Here are some ideas and challenges:

As we are all somewhat homebound right now, we are all probably wondering what we can and can't do, and when will our lives be "normal" again? I would love for us to do some things that we can all hopefully do within the comfort of our own homes.

Challenge 1.

Call or message each other – or drop a card to your church members that you Pass the Peace to each Sunday. Tell them that you love them and miss them and can't wait to be able to give them a hug or a handshake again. When you think of someone that you miss at church, take a minute to let them know that you thought about them, and that you miss them. Younger ones check on those who shouldn't be out and see if they need anything. If you know of a need that you cannot fulfill - Call me and I will take care of it or find someone who will. Tina - 336 260-6082

We have to love each other through this And hopefully when this is over or the danger has lessened, we will love each other a lot "better" anyway!

Challenge 2.

Most of us have blank cards or Thinking of You cards on hand. The local care homes are full of people who are locked down and not able to have any visitors at all. Sometimes they are already fearful and knowing that they can't see their families makes it worse.

I challenge each member to send at least one card to either someone that you know is in this situation ... like our own member Mary.

Mary Moore
Alamance House
2766 Grand Oaks Blvd
Room 107
Burlington, NC 27215

AND/OR Support our local Presbyterian Home – Send a Thinking of You card to
"Any Resident"

Hawfields Presbyterian Home
2502 S North Carolina Hwy 119
Mebane, NC 27302

Challenge 3:

If you know of a child who may be hungry and may not be able to get to one of the schools that are "feeding sites" – please reach out to me. Michael Bayless who has been playing Organ for us recently has a feeding site at Ray Street and we can possibly plug in there to get meals and deliver them. A five-minute phone call, and/or the cost of a few stamps may have way more impact than you could ever know!!! I love you all and I want us to be a shining example! If we can't be IN the church then we must BE the church!

God bless you all, and I can't wait to see how you respond and how much joy you each get out of this.
Tina

The Church Directory that you may have at home is probably out of date. We can easily email you a new one. Just call the church office and one will be emailed or mailed to you.

And remember that we will gather once again this Sunday via Zoom. I'll send out the link later in the week. Hopefully those who were unable to get on yesterday will have better success next time!

Take care of each other - keep your distance - stay at home - and wash your hands!!

JWJ



APRIL WORSHIP THEMES

April 5th - Palm/Passion Sunday:

Matthew 21:1-11

The Quirky Truth

April 9th - Maundy Thursday - Communion:

TBA

TBA

April 12th - Easter Sunday:

Matthew 28:1-10

The Experts Were Wrong

April 19th - Second Sunday of Easter:

John 20:19-31

Doubtful Design

April 26th - Third Sunday of Easter:

Luke 24:13-35

When Jesus Drops In



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

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



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

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

April 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<div>29</div> <div>Fifth Sunday in Lent</div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship</div>	<div>30</div> <div>7:00 PM The Walk Lenten Study</div>	<div>31</div>	<div>1</div> <div>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</div>	<div>2</div>	<div>3</div>	<div>4</div>
<div>5</div> <div>Palm/Passion Sunday</div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship</div>	<div>6</div> <div>10:00 AM Circle #1</div> <div>7:00 PM The Walk Lenten Study</div>	<div>7</div>	<div>8</div> <div>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</div>	<div>9</div> <div>7:00 PM Maundy Thursday Communion Service</div>	<div>10</div> <div>Good Friday</div>	<div>11</div>
<div>12</div> <div>Easter Sunday</div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship</div>	<div>13</div> <div>Easter Monday</div>	<div>14</div> <div>7:00 PM Session Meeting</div>	<div>15</div> <div>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</div>	<div>16</div>	<div>17</div>	<div>18</div>
<div>19</div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship</div>	<div>20</div>	<div>21</div>	<div>22</div> <div>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</div>	<div>23</div>	<div>24</div>	<div>25</div>
<div>26</div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship</div>	<div>27</div>	<div>28</div>	<div>29</div> <div>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</div>	<div>30</div>	<div>1</div>	<div>2</div>

The past couple of Sundays had us gathering to worship “virtually” using the Zoom video conferencing platform. Several of you are getting more and more comfortable using Zoom, but there were others who had some issues connecting. Hopefully these instructions can help get more of us together this Sunday.



If you are using a laptop or desktop computer, you can connect to a Zoom meeting on your web browser (Chrome, Safari, etc.). If you connect on a smartphone or tablet, you can also connect via a web browser, but it is easier to download the Zoom app from your App Store (it is free).

When your weekly e-newsletter is sent on Thursday or Friday morning, it will include a link to this Sunday's service. **DON'T CLICK ON THE LINK UNTIL YOU ARE READY TO CONNECT ON SUNDAY MORNING!**

When you click on the link, it will send you either to your web browser or the Zoom app. If you get a pop-up question about permission to connect, just say yes.

Once you are in the meeting, which just takes a few seconds, make sure that your video is on. Go to the bottom left corner of your screen and make sure there's not a red line through the video camera icon. You will be muted for audio automatically when you join the meeting.

If you are on a laptop or desktop, it's better if you enter full screen mode.

You can also connect from a cell phone or land line. The phone-in number with the meeting ID number will be included in the email with the link.

One important note: if you phone in on a land line, there is no way to mute you, so all audio from your connection will be heard by everyone. Keep that in mind!

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to either email or text me. (Call the church if you don't have my number - I don't want to put my phone # out for scammers to grab it!)

Another option for joining the service will be on Facebook Live - hopefully! There is a feature of Zoom which allows direct streaming from Zoom to Facebook live. Last Sunday we couldn't get this to work, but we'll try again this week. It will be streaming to the Bethany Facebook page.

If you want to learn more about Zoom, you can go to their website (www.zoom.us) where there are lots of tutorials, or just go to YouTube and search for Zoom tutorials.

And we remember that the church is not closed. The building is, but the people are the church and we will continue to gather in this way. It was wonderful to “see” everyone last week, and our Lenten Book study also continued to meet last evening via Zoom.

I hope that everyone who had issues last week is able to join us this Sunday. Look for the link in this week's e-newsletter and I'll see you on Sunday!

JWJ



Thanks to the generosity of Katie and Lexie Glenn, deceased members of Bethany Presbyterian church, a bequest was left to the church for a scholarship fund. Since 1988, Bethany has offered scholarships to students planning to further their education beyond high school. The purpose of the scholarship fund is to provide financial assistance to qualified students who have demonstrated that their financial need and resources are such that they can benefit from a scholarship award. The

funds can only be used for pursuing a course of study at a level above that of high school.

Scholarship Info:

- First priority for scholarship assistance will be given to students from Bethany Presbyterian Church (membership is not a requirement if the student has been participating in the program of the church or applicants related to church members or church employees).
- The scholarships are awarded for a period of one year.
- Funds are awarded annually and are not guaranteed for subsequent years in which you make application.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be pursuing a course of study at a level above that of high school
- Acceptance or pending acceptance in a college/university or other institution of higher learning

Application Procedures:

- Complete Scholarship Application
- Provide a cover letter with summary of your educational and career plans

All applicants meeting basic application requirements will be considered by the scholarship committee. Recommendations for awards will be submitted to the selection committee for final awarding of all scholarships. Follow-up information or interviews may be requested at the discretion of the scholarship/selection committee.

Scholarship funds will be awarded in the form of a check, made payable directly to the parent, student, or the educational institution at the discretion of the committee. Scholarship is dependent upon official acceptance of applicant into an institution of higher learning.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE CHURCH OFFICE. APPLICATIONS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS MUST BE RETURNED TO THE CHURCH NO LATER THAN APRIL 30, 2020.



The transition to a new structure for Salem Presbytery continues, although with some adjustments and changes. The financial challenges of the presbytery have made it necessary 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 March 10th. Here are some highlights:

- Heard a devotion from Chip Allen
- 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
- Received information regarding a reformatting the rental contract for the Recreational Building, with an adjustment in fees.
- Heard a detailed report on the meeting of Salem Presbytery from Elder Bill Abplanalp
- Received information about insurance payments regarding the automobile accident on the front lawn
- Graham High School Choir will provide music for worship on Sunday, May 3rd.
- Discussed the duties of the Bereavement Team and how this can be adjusted in light of current realities
- Heard a report on our Cub Scout Pack from Rick Purcell
- Made the decision to cancel the Easter egg hunt for this year
- Heard an update from John on his plans for his sabbatical June-August, 2020

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, APRIL 14TH
ELDERS OF THE MONTH FOR APRIL
BEN RUSSELL AND TRACEY TROXLER**





GIVE+Church

Giving to your church is as easy as 1-2-3

Go to the App Store or Google Play and search for "GivePlus Church" to download for FREE.

Due to an increase in fees, we are transitioning to a new platform for online giving to the church. We believe this option will be easier to use, decrease fees that the church pays, and will increase our giving. This giving platform is sponsored by and run through The Presbyterian Foundation.

For those who are currently using our online giving on our website, you may continue to use that for the next little bit, but it will be disabled soon. Pam will be contacting those who are using it, to notify them of this action. The link to the new website is already on the home page of the website.

One added feature - also free - is the option of using an app on your smartphone. Just to go your app store and search for "GivePlus Church" and download it for free. You can then search for Bethany and follow the instructions.

There are two documents that you will find useful in answering your questions about this new electronic giving portal. They are on our website here: <http://www.bethanypreschurch.org/online-giving-faq.html>

In this time of upheaval in our normal routines, it is important to remember that the work of the church continues as we continue to live up to our commitments. We are confident that this new platform for electronic giving will be a great enhancement to our stewardship efforts at Bethany.

Please make every effort to keep your pledge up-to-date, either giving by check or using this convenient method of giving online - securely and safely.



FINANCIAL REPORT - END OF FEBRUARY 2020

Year-to-date Actual Income	\$20,343.30
Year-to-date Actual Expenses	\$27,725.42
YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET SURPLUS	-\$7,382.12
(DEFICIT)	



THANK YOU FOR YOUR
**FINANCIAL
SUPPORT**

April Birthdays and Anniversaries!

Happy Anniversary to:

Judy & Darrell Holmes
Pam & Mark Hurt

April 7
April 27

Happy Birthday to:

Dusty Kimrey
Tommy Lane
April Troxler
Gerald Donley
Helen Brown
Eleanor Thompson
Maureen Kelly
Morgan Troxler

April 8
April 12
April 12
April 17
April 22
April 23
April 24
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.

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
Family of Harry Smith

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