



John's Journal

As I write this article, I am deep into planning for Palm Sunday. And what a great day it will be as we gather in person for the first time since November. As more and more people

get vaccinated (Debbie and I have gotten both of our shots!), it has been gratifying to see the number in North Carolina continue to decrease. It seems like the trend is downward in number of cases, number of hospitalizations and number of deaths. Thanks be to God!

It is mind-boggling to look back to the past year and to think about all that we have endured. I remember thinking this time last year that surely we would be back in person by Easter. Surely! Well, that was true, just not 2020 but 2021!

Doing church online has been a challenge. It has been gratifying at times and insanely frustrating at times. In thinking about my approaching retirement at the end of August, I realized that I was going to have to pass off some of the technical aspects of worship that I have been doing all these months, and let others learn the ropes. I have been gratified as the Bethany Stream Team has been formed by volunteers who have taken on the responsibilities of making sure our Sunday morning live-streaming happens. The Bethany Stream team members are: Chip Allen, Debbie Johnson, Glenn Patterson, Rick Purcell, and Seth Smith.

The team has met several times trying to get a handle on just what goes into getting our service online on Sunday mornings. Our first sort-of dry run was on March 21st. To say it didn't go well might be an understatement. What had worked well in getting ready for the service, didn't work well at all when we tried to carry it out.

We discovered that the main problem was having way too many devices online at the same time. Our wifi system in the sanctuary just couldn't handle all of that traffic. We are exploring options to make that better and to thus alleviate the problems we encountered on the 21st. Until those problems are

taken care of, I will continue to do what I have been doing over the past several months in getting the service online. We'll get there - it just might take a little longer than what I had hoped for.

As we approach Holy Week and all that means, I hope that we can step back from the routines of everyday life, and the challenges of living in a pandemic, and consider all that this season means.

Palm Sunday - also known as Passion Sunday starts the week off as we remember Christ's triumphal final entry into Jerusalem. The crowds are cheering and supportive. But all that quickly changes.

Jesus makes his way through this week knowing full well what was ahead, and yet he continued his walk, knowing he had to fulfill his Father's will.

Maundy Thursday arrives and we find Jesus gathering with his disciples for one final meal. Then he makes his way to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. But his time of prayer is broken by the betrayal of one of his own as Judas gives him up to the authorities.

He is arrested, tried, beaten, and Friday taken to the hill called The Skull and hung on a cross, where he died. The Easter vigil begins and continues through Saturday until Sunday when the women go to the tomb, only to find it empty.

On Easter Sunday we will gather to hear once again the glorious good news of the resurrection. We will sing our Easter hymns and hear the scripture and the Easter sermon. We will pray our prayers and fill our Easter cross with flowers.

As spring brings new life to our created world, we remember that Easter brings new life to our spiritual world - and indeed to our whole world.

Without Easter, none of this would matter. Without Easter, we would just be a group of people who may or may not gather once a week to worship . . . what?

Easter is everything. Easter. Is. Everything.

Thanks be to God that we get to celebrate it once again!

As always, I am grateful to be your pastor.

Grace & peace,



We are grateful that we can gather in-person, as well as virtually for our annual **Maundy Thursday Communion Service**. Plan to join us at **7:00 on April 1st** as we remember Christ's final night on earth. We will focus on the time that Jesus spent in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. We are privileged to have our friend **Sylvester Allen**, who will sing for us at this service, as he has the past two years.

This moving and meaningful service will conclude with a darkened sanctuary, the table stripped and draped in black, and the congregation leaving in silence, remembering the horrors to come on Friday, but also remember that Sunday is coming!



What a thrill it will be to gather as a church family to celebrate the resurrection on **Easter Sunday, April 4th**. Our 11:00 worship hour will be available in-person, or virtually via Zoom, Facebook Live, or YouTube Live.

The service will conclude with our custom of flowering the cross outside. There will be flowers available, but feel free to bring your own as well.

A lot has happened since last Easter, and so we will certainly celebrate with gusto the joy we have at the empty tomb, and that we can celebrate that together!

PASTORAL TRANSITION TEAM

As Bethany begins this time of transition from one pastor to another, there will inevitably be many questions. And Bethany doesn't have much experience in transitions, as there have only been two in about 50 years! But we're off and running, and each month there will be an update on progress in this space.

At the March Session meeting, we had a very helpful introduction to the process from Rev. Thom Bureson and Rev. Amanda Anderson. Thom serves on Salem Presbytery's Commission on Ministry (COM) co-moderating the Transitional Ministry Network, and Amanda also serves as co-moderator of COM (with John), and

is serving as the liaison to Bethany from COM. Amanda will be working closely with the Transition Team preparing for the calling of a Transitional Pastor, and celebrating John's ministry with us.

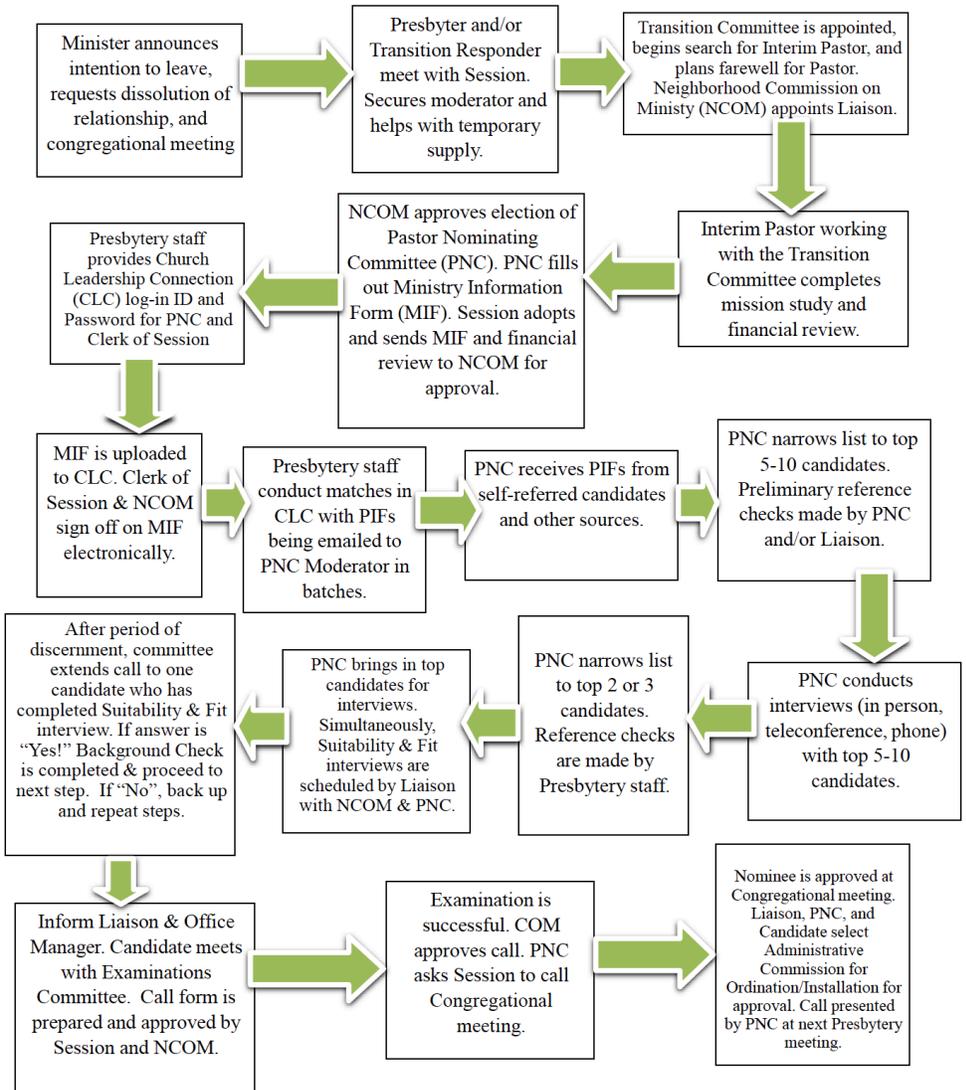
Also at the March Session meeting, elders **Tina Patterson** and **Shelby Smith** stepped up and agreed to serve in leadership for the **Transition Team**. This team will be responsible for insuring that the transition from one pastor to the next goes smoothly. As of the writing of this article **Morgan Troxler** and **Brenda Sykes** have also agreed to serve on the Transition Team, with one other person being recruited.

Below you will see a Pastoral Change Flow Chart provided by the presbytery, which kind of gives a visual image of what the transition may look like. Some of this has evolved over the years and may look a little different now, but this gives an overall picture of what Bethany can expect over the next little while. And yes, it may be a while before Bethany calls its next pastor. The work of the Transitional Pastor usually takes about 18 months or longer. Patience is key in listening to the Spirit and doing the necessary work of transition so that that unique mission and ministry of Bethany and continue unabated moving forward.

Please make it a regular practice to keep the Transition Team in your daily prayers. And watch this space each month to keep up-to-date on the work of the team. God has great things in store for Bethany. Consider the possibilities!



Pastoral Change Flow Chart



SPRING WORK DAY



Thanks to the Scouts and all who helped make our Spring Work Day such a huge success!

At the March meeting of the Session, the decision was made to return to in-person worship on **this Sunday, March 28th - Palm Sunday!** With the numbers in North Carolina continuing to decrease, and the number of vaccinations continuing to increase, the Session feels confident in the safety of our returning to worshipping in person. Here's what you need to know:

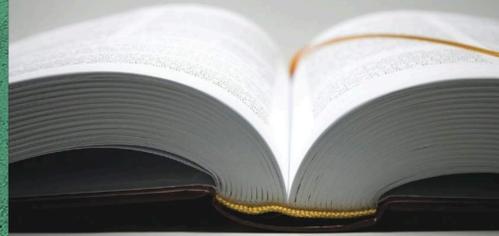
- **Beginning on March 28th there will be four options for worshipping with your Bethany family: in person here in the sanctuary, via Zoom online, or via Facebook live and YouTube Live.** Refer to your weekly emails or the Watch Worship page on our website for the links to online worship.
- If you choose to worship in person, here are the guidelines that we will follow:
 - **Masks must be worn at all times.**
 - **Social-distancing** will be observed. Every other pew will be blocked off. We have a beautiful large sanctuary. We can use it all!
 - Hand sanitizer and wipes will be available.
 - Offering plates will be placed at the door to receive the offering.
 - As you exit the sanctuary following worship, you will be asked to observe social-distancing guidelines and not congregate in close groups. It's hard not to because we want to visit, but we must remain safe.
 - Paper bulletins will be available at the door. Hymns will be printed in the bulletin and will be on the screen as usual, so using hymnbooks will not be necessary.
- Special request: if you worship on Facebook Live or YouTube Live, please leave a comment so that we know you are there!
- **PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE - IF YOU FEEL ANY UNEASE ABOUT ATTENDING WORSHIP IN PERSON, PLEASE STAY AT HOME!** As much as we would like to see you, safety is our number one concern.

Spring Bible Study
 Monday, April 12th
 7:00 pm
 Zoom & In-Person
 7 week course
 Sign-up on our
 website or call the
 church.

ACTS

from Scratch

THE NEW TESTAMENT
 FOR BEGINNERS



DONALD L. GRIGGS
 PAUL W. WALASKAY



April 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 Palm/Passion Sunday 9:45 AM Sunday School (not currently meeting) 11:00 AM Worship	29	30	31	1 7:00 PM Maundy Thursday Communion Service	2	3
4 EASTER SUNDAY 9:45 AM Sunday School (not currently meeting) 11:00 AM Worship	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 9:45 AM Sunday School (not currently meeting) 11:00 AM Worship	12 7:00 PM Spring Bible Study	13 7:00 PM Session Meeting	14	15	16	17
18 9:45 AM Sunday School (not currently meeting) 11:00 AM Worship	19 7:00 PM Spring Bible Study	20	21	22	23	24
25 9:45 AM Sunday School (not currently meeting) 11:00 AM Worship	26 7:00 PM Spring Bible Study	27	28	29	30	1



APRIL WORSHIP THEMES

April 1st - Maundy Thursday:

Mark 14:32-42

(Not) The Last Prayer

April 4th - Easter Sunday:

Mark 16:1-8

Stone Rolling and Doom Scrolling

April 11th - Second Sunday of Easter:

Acts 4:32-35

Crowdsourced Christianity

April 18th - Third Sunday of Easter:

John 3:1-7

A Holy Imagination

April 25th - Fourth Sunday of Easter:

John 10:11-18

Life Value



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



We continue to explore new avenues to make our virtual worship services on Sunday morning the best experience possible for the viewer. We have been primarily focusing on using the Zoom platform, as well as streaming live to Facebook and YouTube. The utilization of streaming software has made this effort a little easier, but we are still learning! We appreciate your patience.

In an effort to make it easier for viewers to find what they need to find, we have created a new **“Watch Worship Online”** page on our website. On this page you will find a link to download that Sunday’s bulletin, a “Connect Card” link as a way of getting information from possible visitors to our site, a link to our online giving platform, a link to the live stream for that Sunday’s worship, as well as a link to the Zoom gathering. There are also videos of previous services that are available, and a link to our YouTube channel (please subscribe!). If you are reading this online, you can access the page [HERE](#). If you are reading a paper version, go to www.bethanypreschurch.org, and follow the Watch Worship link on the home page.

Our goal has always to have our online worship experience as close as possible to the in-person worship. We know that is a goal that is difficult, if not impossible, to attain. But we keep trying! And we know we must be doing something right because you keep coming back each Sunday. The plan is to continue online worship options even when we are back worshipping in person. We know this is a wonderful gift to those who are unable to get out.

Thanks for your patience as we continue to learn!

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 (Clerk of Session)

Tina Patterson

Nancy Purcell

Ben Russell

Shelby Smith

Tracey Troxler

Glenn Patterson (Treasurer)



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

- Heard a devotion from Chip Allen
- Welcomed visitors from Salem Presbytery's Commission on Ministry (COM) who led a discussion of what to expect in the transition process
- Named by consensus Elders Tina Patterson and Shelby Smith to lead the Transition Team
- Received an update on the sale of the property from Glenn Patterson
- Received a treasurer's report from Glenn
- Agreed to return to in-person worship on Palm Sunday, March 28th, with online options still offered
- Heard an initial report on the work of the new Bethany Stream Team as work begins to upgrade our online presence on Sunday mornings
- Were reminded of Maundy Thursday Communion Service on April 1st and Easter Sunday on April 4th

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, APRIL 13TH
ELDERS OF THE MONTH FOR APRIL
RANDY COUSINS AND TINA PATTERSON**



SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE CHURCH OFFICE. APPLICATIONS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS MUST BE RETURNED TO THE CHURCH NO LATER THAN APRIL 1, 2021.

Thank You!

As we enter the season of Eastertide, I want to express my thanks to Michael Bayliss for the many times he has made himself available to serve our congregation as the substitute organist for our services. Below is a biography for Michael. Please join me in offering our sincere gratitude for a job well done.

Michael Bayless is currently the Principal of Ray Street Academy in Graham, NC. He has been in that position since 2014. He comes to us by way of Kentucky where he has an extensive background with working with at-risk-students and families. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from The University of Kentucky where he also studied the organ. Yes, he is a University of Kentucky Wildcat. Don't hold that against him. He earned a Masters of Arts in Special Education and a Masters of Arts in Instructional Leadership from Eastern Kentucky University as well as his Ed.S. from UNCG. Michael is currently working on his Doctorate of Education at UNCG.

He began his teaching career in 1997 teaching 4th and 5th grade. In 1999, he moved to the high school level to teach special education, specifically students with behavioral and emotional disabilities. He eventually became the department chair of the largest special education department in the state of Kentucky. He was there until he became an Assistant Principal of a Middle School of mostly at-risk students.

In 2013, he received a call from a friend in Alamance County who is a current principal of one of the high schools encouraging him to apply for Assistant Principal Position at a new and innovative Alternative School. Michael applied and was offered the position of Assistant Principal. He was the Assistant Principal for only 9 months before being elevated to Head Principal.

Michael enjoys cooking, watching movies when he is not working on his dissertation, working out at the gym and of course playing the organ.

Respectfully submitted,
Christopher A. Bagley, Director of Music



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FINANCIAL REPORT - END OF FEBRUARY 2021

Year-to-date Actual Income	\$21,156.01
Less Year-to-date Actual Expenses	\$30,341.73
Plus Other Income (from investments)	\$0.84
YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	-\$9,184.88

Scan this QR code for direct access to
our Online Giving Platform



Thanks for Keeping Your Pledge Up-to-Date

We are so grateful that we were able to end 2020 with such a positive bottom line. In a year of such turmoil and uncertainty, your generosity was amazing and so greatly appreciated.

As you can see from the above numbers, the first part of 2021 has been challenging. We hope that as we settle into 2021 that that red number will continue to decrease so that our mission and ministry can continue. Remember that there are several options you have of making your pledge or donation:

- Drop your donation off at the church any time. Joy is at the church in the morning and John is usually at the church most of the day.
- Mail in your pledge to the church, to the attention of Pam Hurt, our bookkeeper.
- Or use our convenient and secure online giving platform. Use the QR code above, or go to our website and go to our online giving page there.

Thanks again for your continued support of Bethany.

Update on Sale of the Property

We still are waiting on some final details to be worked out before the sale of the property across the street from the church is finalized and closed. That should be happening early in April.

We are grateful for Glenn Patterson and his tireless work in getting this sale completed. The Session will make a determination as to the best use of these funds. And we look forward to seeing work begin soon on the building of housing units on the property.

April Birthdays and Anniversaries

Happy Anniversary to:

Judy & Darrell Holmes
Pam & Mark Hurt

April 7th
April 27th

Happy Birthday to:

Sandy Russell
Dusty Kimrey
Tommy Lane
April Troxler
Gerald Donley
Helen Brown
Eleanor Thompson
Morgan Troxler

April 1st
April 8th
April 12th
April 12th
April 17th
April 22nd
April 23rd
April 27th



Children & Youth Ministries

- **Sunday school for Youth and Children** / Meets on second floor of Education Building at 9:45 each Sunday (as announced during the pandemic)..
- During **Worship**, (when we return to in-person 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. The class will resume when we return to our normal schedules.



Bethany Prays

Christopher Bagley
Frederica Beatty
Jean Berry
Jack Cook
Bill Faucette
Christy Lutterloh
Norma Proctor
Joan Richardson
Joan Sutton
Nancy Sutton
Tiffany Tauchren
Eleanor Thompson
Randy Thompson
Grace Johnson

Karen Maxwell
Carol Brooks
Pat Kennedy
Peter Slater
Diane Miller
Barbara Cousins
Ben Johnson
Joey Leake
Pete Campbell
Shannon Russell
Alex Thomas
Sylvia Donley
Janie Holt Clapp

Stewart Dillard
Richie Fishburne
Jeremy Harden
Ruby Martin
Anne McDaniels
Shelvia Russell
John & Ann Sutton
Mike Sutton
Katherine Turner
Ida Whitney
Frank Wrenn
Penny Rice

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