



John's Journal

My television watching for the most part is either news or sports. With sports not being much of an option - unless you like replays of games from the past - my

intake of TV news has reached a point where I've about maxed out. No matter what news channel you might turn to, the topic of conversation always seems to be the COVID-19 pandemic.

Don't get me wrong - I think it's vitally important to inform the public of the pertinent facts around this most serious situation in which we find ourselves. But hearing stories and more stories about the death totals and the dire situation in hospitals has become just about more than I can take.

Like all of us, I'm sure, I long for the day when we can get back to normal - whatever that new normal is going to look like. I have been fortunate that I have been able to get out and get to the church without feeling in danger. With it being only Joy and myself in the building for the most part, we both feel safe and we are able to keep to ourselves in our own offices.

My heart goes out however, to those who are not able to get out - those who don't feel safe outside their own homes. This is not a satisfying way to live. My heart goes out to students who are unable to be with their friends and are unable to experience school life as they are used to.

My heart goes out to teachers who have had to learn on the fly how to teach online, and who struggle to relate to their students on a personal level as they are used to.

My heart goes out to parents - who are having to be teachers and caregivers and husbands and wives and cooks and cleaners and play companions and employees or employers - all at the same time.

And watching news stories about all of this on TV can be depressing. So, for me, the solution has been to either re-watch some favorite series on Netflix or

Amazon Prime Video, or to explore shows I haven't watched that have been recommended by friends. I have found this to be very entertaining and it helps me escape just for a little bit, the reality that fills the airwaves almost all of the time.

I would encourage us all to not get sucked into the 24-hour news channels. Whether it's CNN or Fox News or MSNBC or whatever - don't let the constant beat of bad news dominate your life. Watch a comedy that will make you laugh. Watch a drama that will make you think. Or just turn the TV off and read a book or take a walk.

I have been heartened to see some of the major networks' news shows highlighting some of the positive things that have been going on during this pandemic. Seeing the goodness in people and how people are reaching out and taking care of each other has been gratifying and helpful. We need some good news right now, and I'm glad that we are getting some of that.

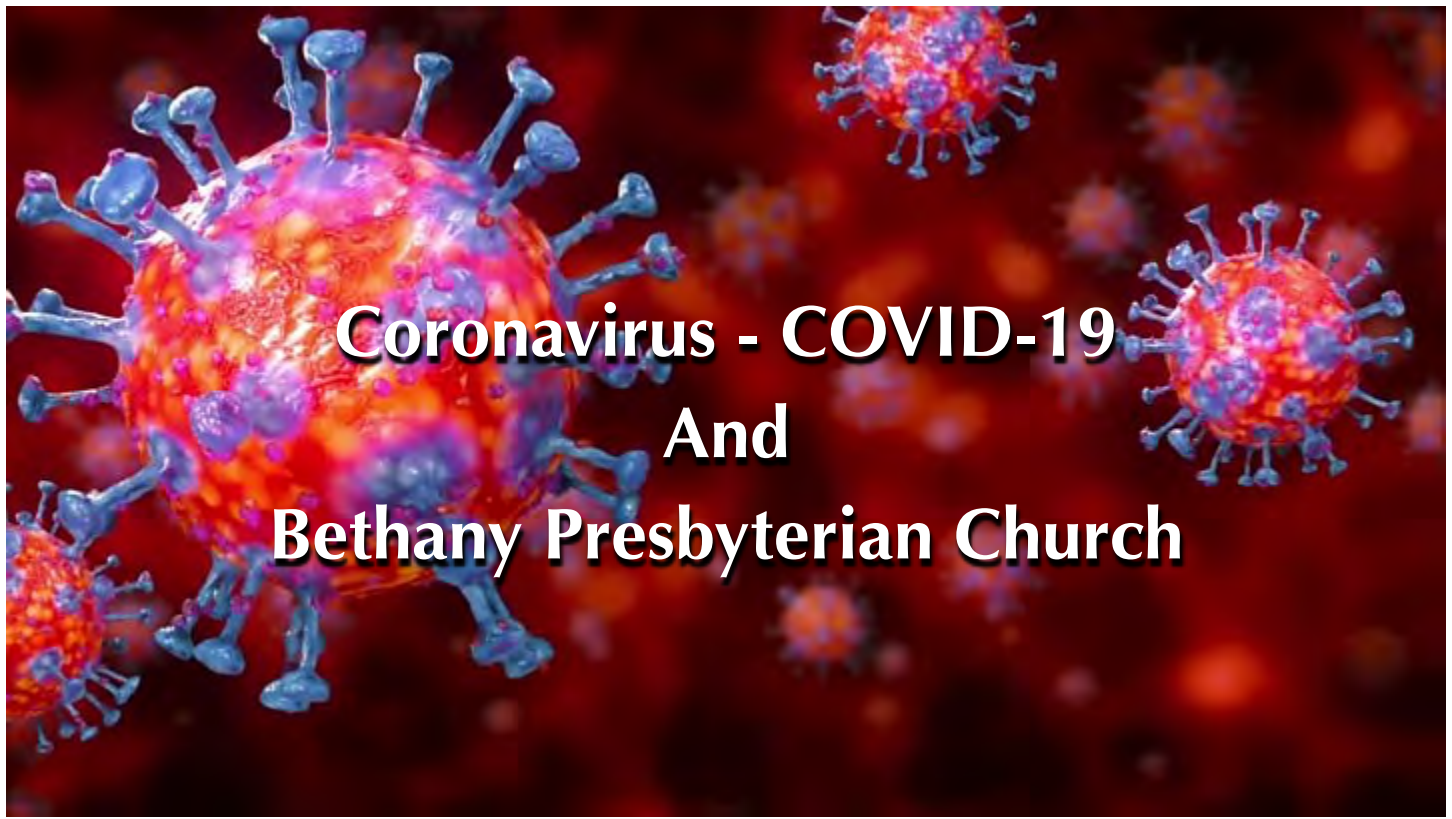
It has been widely reported that when he was a little boy, Fred Rogers (who grew up to be the highly respected and much loved Mr. Rogers) would watch the news and be upset whenever there was a tragedy or something bad was going on. His mother would always tell him, "*Look for the helpers.*" No matter what the situation - and we see this time and time again in our country and indeed across the world - no matter what the situation, there will always be people who step up and go out of the way to be of help to their neighbors in need - or even strangers halfway around the world.

So, to keep our spirits up, look for the helpers. Look for those whose main goal is to think more about others than about their own needs. Look for those who put others above self. Those are the people to look up to and to emulate. Those are the stories that need to fill our airwaves.

We will get through this. Of that I am sure. Hang in there and take care of each other.

As always, I am grateful to be your pastor.

Grace & peace,



Coronavirus - COVID-19

And

Bethany Presbyterian Church

If you're like me, you are eager to get back to how things were before this pandemic hit and our lives were disrupted. But I wonder if we will ever return to that normal. I imagine that when things reopen and we can come and go more or less freely, things will still be different. We may need to wear masks for awhile. We will need to continue to practice social distancing. When we finally get to go out to eat at our favorite restaurant, there may be fewer tables and they will be farther apart.

I'm probably going a little too far to say we've gotten used to this new way of living. I know those with school-aged children continue to try to make home life as close to normal as they can. Teachers have had to learn to teach in new and creative ways - seeing their classes only through little boxes on their computer screens. And church has certainly been different (see another article on that!).

We heard last week that the current guidelines for our state will stay in place until May 8th. If the current downward trends continue, we will begin to open up things in the state for the following couple of weeks, and then move into Phase 2 of the plan later in May.

I will talk about worship plans in another article, but please know that we hope to return to in-person worship as soon as it is safe, and when restrictions have been lifted to the point where it is allowed. Please know that if you need anything from the church, we are still open five days a week! Joy and I are here every day (Joy from 9-12), and we both feel safe in doing so.

Let us all lift up prayers for those who have been affected by this pandemic, and let us pray for the development of successful treatments, and for a vaccine that will protect us all in the future. Let us also pray for those who work in the midst of this virus day-in and day-out - the doctors and nurses, the police and firefighters, the EMTs and other medical personnel - all those who literally put their lives on the line each and every day. We offer prayers of thanks for the work they do to make our world a safer place to be.

Let us be patient as we continue this life that none of us has ever seen before - and hopefully will never see again. And let us remember that we worship a God of compassion who weeps at every death, and rejoices in every healing. Hang in there! We're gonna make it!

JWJ

sabbatical

rest | refresh | refocus

There have been some who have asked me if I still planned on taking my long-awaited sabbatical this summer. The answer is an emphatic YES! I realize that my plans for my sabbatical will probably have to be altered somewhat, but I am still looking forward to this time of rest and renewal, so that I can serve this wonderful congregation in new and creative ways, and with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

The travel plans that we had made for my time away will certainly need to be altered. I have already heard that the Montreat Worship and Music Conference that I had planned on attending in late June will now be virtual. I still hope to be able to at least be in Montreat that week, even though the conference will be online only. We'll just have to wait and see about that. We do have housing reservations for that week, and won't cancel them yet!

Our planned National Park Tour that we had planned for mid-June may need to either be postponed until August, or delayed until maybe next year. I'm hoping that the restrictions that we are currently living under will be eased by then, and travel will not be such an issue. If we can't do the National Park Tour, we will at least travel to Minneapolis to visit with Jackie.

My focus of study for my sabbatical will obviously not change - and even has taken on more interest in light of much of our world turning to online interactions. My plans to study how the church can respond to the growing digital world - while still reaching those who may not be as plugged-in, will be even more relevant in light of the past few months. I'm excited about digging into that a bit.

I am planning on blogging about my sabbatical adventures, and I invite those who may be interested to follow along. There will be a link to it on the church's website, and I'll share that in the June newsletter.

The June newsletter will also include more definite plans, my itinerary, and more details of what our church life will look like while I'm away. Thanks again for your support and prayers.

JWJ

welcome
MAY
please be good





MAY WORSHIP THEMES

May 3rd:

John 10:1-10

The Gatekeeper

May 10th:

John 14:1-14

Travel Plans

May 17th:

John 14:15-21

A Dog's Life

May 24th:

John 17:1-11

Tying Up Loose Ends

May 31st - Pentecost Sunday

Acts 2:1-21

A Church Re-Born



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



Worshipping in our COVID-19 Reality

Like most all churches across our denomination - indeed across our world - our worship life looks very different as we live in this pandemic reality. But as has been said many times, the church is not the building - the church is the people, and we continue to gather each Sunday morning - just not in person.

Interestingly, our attendance on Zoom and Facebook Live has been running at or above what we had been having in person before our worship plans had to be altered. And we seem to add a few more each Sunday. The picture below shows my set-up for worship on the few Sundays I "broadcast" from the sanctuary. But I found that I really needed to have the resources of my computer in my office, so I returned to that on the 26th of April - but used a picture of the sanctuary as my background!

We continue to get better at this virtual worship and I have been gratified at the response. The Session has discussed the idea of continuing to live-stream our worship once we return to in-person worship, and has authorized the purchase of some equipment to help us do that. I'm excited about the ability we will have to offer our worship to those who may not be able to get out, or may be out of town.

Many are asking and wondering when we will be able to worship again in our beautiful sanctuary. I have no way of knowing, but looking at the guidelines as issued by the governor, I am hoping against all hope that we will be able to gather once again on Pentecost Sunday - May 31st. And yes, we will celebrate that day - a Church Re-Born!! I'm trying not to get my hopes up, but . . .

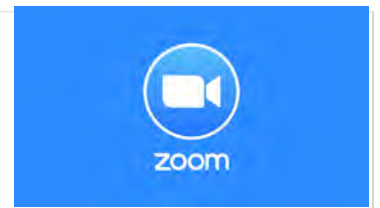
If you haven't joined us via Zoom or Facebook Live, please do so! You won't regret it! The service is simple, and includes our hymns that have been recorded by Chris. It's been great to hear him play again.

And let us continue to pray that we can gather once again - in person - to worship our risen Lord!

JWJ



UPDATED INSTRUCTIONS!



The past month or so has had us gathering to worship “virtually” using the Zoom video conferencing platform. It has been gratifying to see more and more of you joining us on Sunday mornings, 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.

You will first be sent to a “waiting room” for a brief time, until one of the hosts of the meeting will let you in. This is a security feature that we have added to help protect us from having folks that are up to no good getting in the meeting.

Once you are in the meeting, make sure that your video is on. Go to the bottom left corner of your screen (on a computer; tap the screen on a tablet or phone) and make sure there’s not a red line through the video camera icon.

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. We actually got this to work on April 26th, so hopefully the bugs have been ironed out and there will be this option as well.

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 is such a wonderful thing to see everyone’s faces appear on my screen every Sunday. Join us!

JWJ

May 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	27	28	29 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Rick	30	1	2
3 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	4	5 Cinco de Mayo	6 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	7	8	9
10 Mother's Day 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	11 7:00 PM Session Meeting	12 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	13	14	15	16
17 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	18	19 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	20	21	22	23
24 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship	25 Memorial Day	26 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	27	28	29	30
31 Pentecost Sunday 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship 12:00 PM Fifth Sunday Lunch	1 John on Sabbatical	2 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	3	4	5	6

BETHANY'S SUNDAY AFTERNOON DRIVE-BY LOVE PARADE!

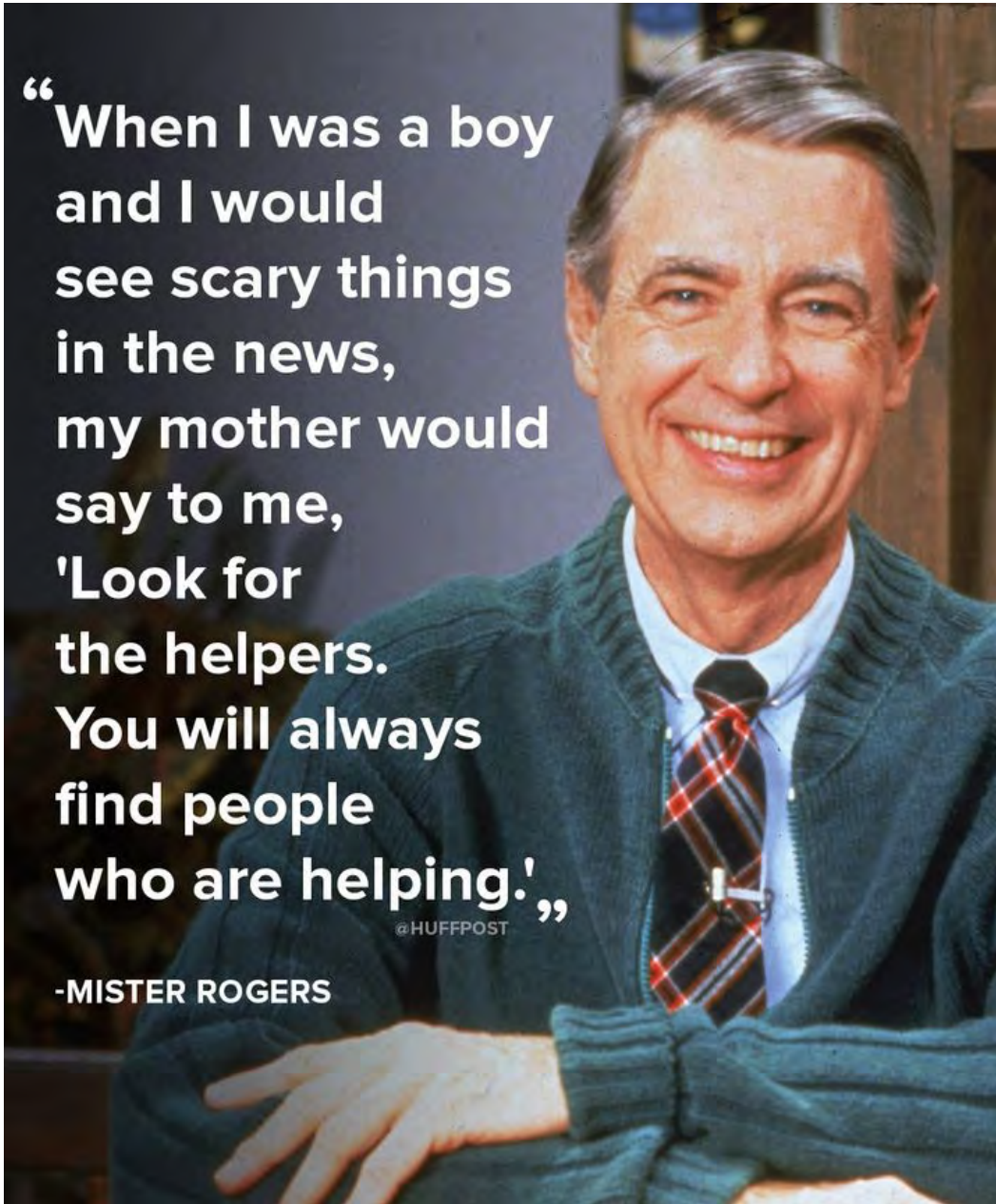
It all started back on Easter Sunday, April 12th, when Tina Patterson and a few others decided it just wasn't right that April Troxler had to spend her 18th birthday confined pretty much to home. So a caravan was put together at the last minute and traveled down to safely-distance wish her a happy birthday. Then Nancy Purcell had the idea to divide up the Easter flowers and take them around to a few people to say hello and wish them a Happy Easter. On the two Sundays since Easter, there have been two other Love Parades, as we have visited several church members with a gift of a small plant and waves of hellos from a safe distance. And on the 26th we also celebrated Morgan's 21st birthday! We are grateful for this small way that we can keep in touch with our Bethany family.



**“When I was a boy
and I would
see scary things
in the news,
my mother would
say to me,
'Look for
the helpers.
You will always
find people
who are helping.'”**

@HUFFPOST

-MISTER ROGERS



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 April 14th via Zoom. Here are some highlights:

- Heard a devotion from Ben Russell
- Heard joys and concerns of the congregation
- Received a treasurer’s report from Glenn Patterson
- Received information about the Payroll Protection Plan that the government is offering for small businesses to receive financial help / approved the plan to apply
- Received information about insurance payments regarding the automobile accident on the front lawn
- Discussed our current worship realities and the positive responses we’ve had / approved purchasing equipment that will enable us to live-stream services once we return to in-person worship
- Heard an update from John on his plans for his sabbatical June-August, 2020

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, MAY 12TH
ELDERS OF THE MONTH FOR MAY
KAREN MAXWELL AND NANCY PURCELL**



At the (virtual) Session meeting on April 14th, Treasurer Glenn Patterson reported on his research into church’s applying for a loan through the Payroll Protection Package of the stimulus package that had recently been passed by Congress and signed by the president. Unfortunately, the original offering of these funds ran out fairly soon after small business could apply. Churches are considered small businesses for this program.

Glenn attended a webinar presented by professionals who had spent a considerable amount of time reading the lengthy explanation of the program, and concluded that it would be good

stewardship for churches to apply for funds.

We are fortunate here at Bethany that we can continue paying our staff as usual, and we are grateful for those who continue to maintain their pledges. But these funds would help in the event this crisis continues longer than we anticipate. So the Session unanimously approved the application for these funds and Glenn and our bookkeeper Pam Hurt will take appropriate steps to make application.

Although the money is called a loan, if the church/business does not lay off or fire any staff, the loan is forgiven and the funds are considered a grant. We anticipate making application during the second round of these funds being available - with no guarantee that we will receive anything. But we are hopeful.



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 Reports

FINANCIAL REPORT - END OF FEBRUARY 2020

Year-to-date Actual Income	\$36,077.30
Year-to-date Actual Expenses	\$42,041.55
YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	-\$5,964.25

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



May Birthdays and Anniversaries!

Happy Anniversary to:

Joyce @ Norman Mize

May 2nd

Happy Birthday to:

Ron Kimrey

May 8th

Ron Osborne

May 11th

John Johnson

May 12th

Christel Schappacher

May 15th

Shirley Lane

May 22nd

Daniel Mitchell-Ayers

May 25th

Mackenna Mitchell-Ayers

May 25th



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



Dear Bethany Presbyterian,

On behalf of the families of Ray Street Academy, I would like to thank Bethany Presbyterian Church for your generous donation. Your donation has directly helped many families impacted by the COVID-19 virus in our community. We can't thank you enough.

Sincerely,

Michael Bayless, Principal

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

Bill Faucette

Jack Cook

Joan Richardson

Tiffany Tauchren

Jean Berry

Christy Lutterloh

Eleanor Thompson

Nancy Sutton

Norma Proctor

Family of 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

Richie Fishburne

Janie Holt Clapp

Robert Sykes

**BETHANY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1500 S. MAIN STREET
GRAHAM, NC 27253
336.227.4041**

Email:

office@bethanypreschurch.org

Website:

www.bethanypreschurch.org

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian

Twitter:

@bpresbyterian

