



John's Journal

Nostalgia is a strong emotion. As I get closer and closer to my retirement, nostalgia is almost an everyday occurrence for me. Memories of 42 years of ministry are strong, and

they fill my soul with good thoughts and wonderful remembrances.

Those of you who are on Facebook are aware of my weekly "Countdown to Retirement" posts with pictures of the past that I've collated. Going through these pictures has truly been a walk down memory lane. And then seeing the comments from those who have crossed my path over the years has been so gratifying.

As I look at these pictures I remember the experiences, for sure. But an even clearer and stronger memory are of the people that I have been privileged to meet over the years. The youth that have been a part of the programs in the churches that I have served continue to fill me with wonderful memories as I recall service trips and retreats and Montreat conferences and Sunday nights and lock-ins and youth choir musicals and on and on and on. So many amazing experiences over the years! And each one has informed my ministry in so many ways. Plus, they have certainly given me a great deal of sermon illustrations and inspiration!

But even as I have my bouts of nostalgia, my work here continues. I have been gratified by your response to my current sermon series on The Beatitudes. I have been challenged in my preaching on these familiar verses, and I hope that you have benefitted from what I have gleaned from my study and research. I can't believe that I have gone all this time and not preached on them. I have taught a series of classes on them, but never have preached on The Beatitudes. So, I am grateful that I have this opportunity to explore these words of Christ in a new way.

As you may or may not know, I do worship planning for three or four months ahead. So, I recently completed worship planning for May through August.

And yes, this takes me through the end of my time with you.

Here are some highlights for worship for the next four months. I will complete my series on The Beatitudes just in time for Pentecost Sunday on May 23rd. For the end of May and through June, I will return to the Lectionary for sermon planning, concentrating mostly on the Gospel readings from Mark.

I will be away on the first and third Sundays of July, but beginning on July 25th, I will begin a final five-week sermon series on "The Gospel According to Baseball." There is a very personal and meaningful reason behind this series. As you know, my father was a Presbyterian minister. But he was also an avid baseball fan. Baseball was our thing. We spent many Saturday afternoons together watching the "CBS Game of the Week." Throwing the ball around outside was another of our pastimes.

My father taught me a lot about life. I draw on his inspiration daily in my quest to be a good pastor. But he also instilled in me my love of baseball and appreciation for the game. So, as my time as a pastor comes to an end, this will be my tribute to my father. I hope I can do the series justice.

Planning my final Sunday with you (August 29th) was emotional. Choosing the hymns that I want sung was surprisingly easy, but definitely emotional as I thought about the words and what they mean. I picked two scripture passages that have always meant something special for me: Micah 6:6-8, and Isaiah 40:28-31. The sermon title is taken from the highly acclaimed TV show "Friday Night Lights," as I will preach on "*Clear Eyes, Full Heart, Can't Lose.*"

I know the next four months will fly by, and I know that we will properly celebrate when the time comes. Bear with me as I reminisce, and if I get nostalgic, I know you'll understand.

As always, I am grateful to be your pastor.

Grace & peace,



THE BETHANY STREAM TEAM



WATCH LIVE WORSHIP



What a joy it has been to gather in-person for worship for the past few weeks. Being able to experience Easter Sunday with our church family was so joyous and soul-filling. As we continue to worship in-person, we will also continue to offer online options for those who are not able to join us in person - because of health issues, being out of town, or just a choice!

Our Bethany Stream Team has been hard at work with the goal of making our online worship as close to the experience of being at worship in-person as possible. There have been challenges along the way, but we are making progress and hopefully we'll get to where we want to be very soon.

One of our goals was to make our live stream as easy as possible to access. We realize that those who have been joining via Zoom have been having some issues. **Although we will continue to offer the Zoom option for the time being, we are encouraging our "Zoomers" to explore a new option that we feel will be a better experience.**

Here's some information on that option:

- We are using a streaming service called **Boxcast**. In each week's worship email (which you should receive on Saturday mornings) there will be a link to the worship page on our website (<https://www.bethanypreschurch.org/worship--bethany.html>). There you will find a link to our Sunday morning live stream. **This is the easiest way to get the live stream.**
- The **live stream** is also going to **Facebook Live** and **YouTube Live**, and can be accessed on either of these platforms. But again, the easiest way to access the live stream is on our worship page as indicated above.
- **In addition**, you can find our **live stream on Apple TV, Roku, or Amazon Fire TV streaming sites**. If you subscribe to any of these services, just search for "Boxcast" and once you have that app, you can search for Bethany and watch our live stream on your TV!
- Recordings of each service will be available on the worship page on our website, as well as on our Facebook page.
- Our live stream will include not only the live camera feed from the sanctuary, but also the slides that you would see on the screen if you were in-person.

Those who continue on Zoom will have a little different stream, but you should see everything as well. But, as was mentioned above, we encourage those using Zoom to explore this other upgraded option and we feel that this will be easier and problem-free!

We are so grateful for the technology that has enabled us to continue to worship together over the past year during the pandemic. And we are grateful that this technology continues to improve and expand that gives us even more options to continue our online opportunities.

If you have any problems getting online, please don't hesitate to contact us and let us know what's going on. We are ever-aware that technology always presents challenges, but we are confident as we move forward that we can offer high quality options for viewing our live stream.



Transition Team Update!

Your Transition Team passes along this update:

The team has had an initial meeting with our Presbytery / COM liaison Amanda Anderson. She helped us to understand what our role is as a team during the transition process.

Amanda and COM will begin to determine the availability of Interim ministers who may be ending current assignments, or who are ready for a new call. She will assist the team in all phases of the process of finding our Interim pastor.

We discussed potential options for celebrating John in his retirement.

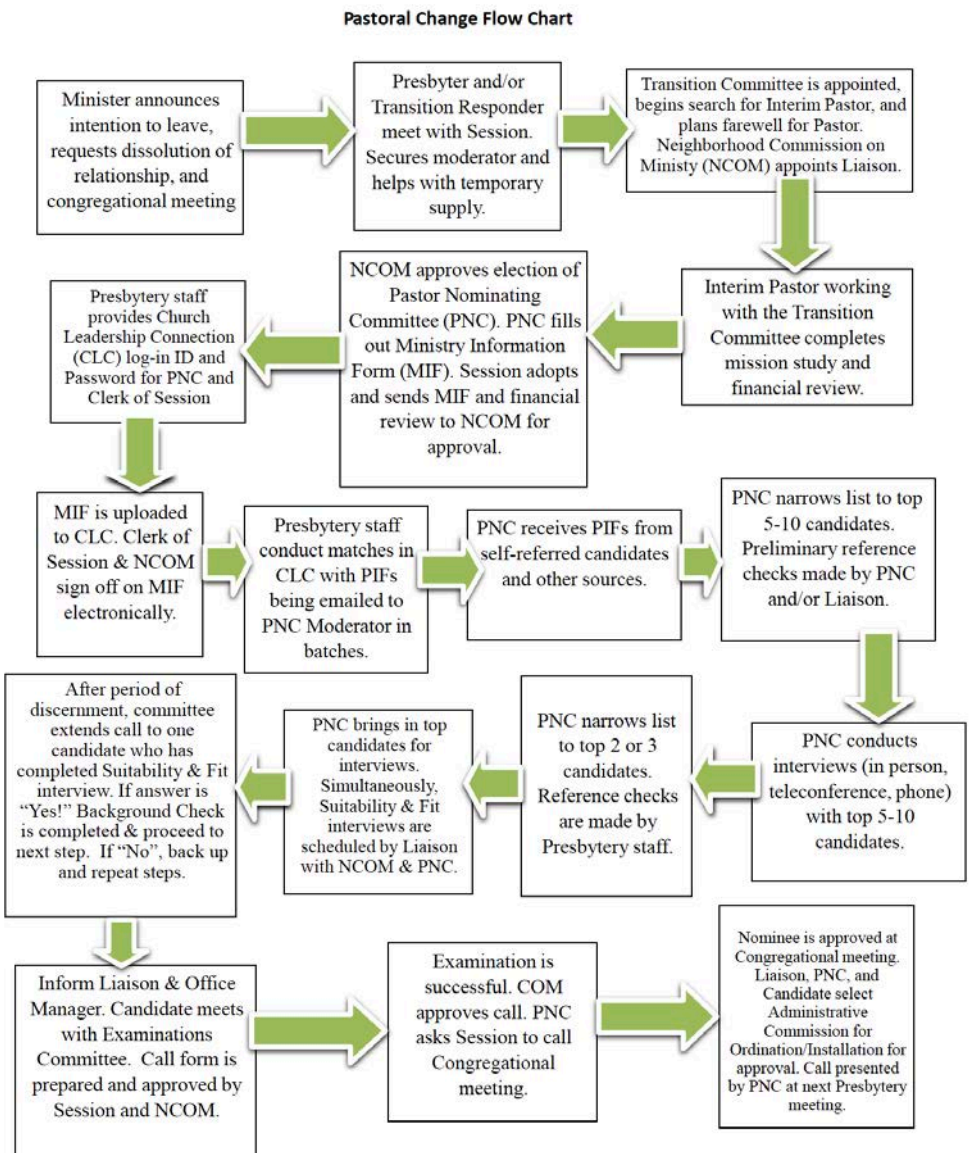
We obtained session approval to invite the congregation to donate towards a fund to be used for Retirement gift/s for John. Donations should be earmarked for "John's Retirement".

We meet again on Thursday April 29th.

A reminder that members of the **Transition Team** are **Tina Patterson** and **Shelby Smith** (from the Session), **Morgan Troxler**, **Brenda Sykes**, and **A. J. Campbell**.

Please note the 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!



Flowering of the Cross Easter Sunday



What a joy it was to gather back in person on Palm Sunday, and the Sundays following. Thanks to all who have joined us in person for adhering to our guidelines. As we continue to recover from the pandemic, and as restrictions continue to ease, we will continue to adjust our guidelines here at Bethany. But for now, here's what you need to know:

- **There are four options for worshipping with your Bethany family: in person here in the sanctuary, via Zoom online, or via Facebook live and YouTube Live (see page 2 for updates).** 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.

Choosing Safer Activities

	Unvaccinated People	Your Activity	Fully Vaccinated People
		Outdoor	
Safest		Walk, run, or bike outdoors with members of your household	
		Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated family and friends	
		Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people	
Less Safe		Dine at an outdoor restaurant with friends from multiple households	
		Attend a crowded, outdoor event, like a live performance, parade, or sports event	
		Indoor	
Less Safe		Visit a barber or hair salon	
		Go to an uncrowded, indoor shopping center or museum	
		Ride public transport with limited occupancy	
		Attend a small, indoor gathering of fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people from multiple households	
Least Safe		Go to an indoor movie theater	
		Attend a full-capacity worship service	
		Sing in an indoor chorus	
		Eat at an indoor restaurant or bar	
		Participate in an indoor, high intensity exercise class	

Get a COVID-19 vaccine



Prevention measures not needed

Take prevention measures

Fully vaccinated people: wear a mask

Unvaccinated people: wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart, and wash your hands.

• Safety levels assume the recommended prevention measures are followed, both by the individual and the venue (if applicable).

• CDC cannot provide the specific risk level for every activity in every community. It is important to consider your own personal situation and the risk to you, your family, and your community before venturing out.

May 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:45 AM Sunday School (as scheduled) 11:00 AM Worship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM Spring Bible Study 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM Bethany Stream Team 7:00 PM Choir Practice (not currently meeting) 			
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MAY WORSHIP THEMES

May 2nd - Fifth Sunday of Easter:

Matthew 5:1-12

You Are Blessed: A Child of God

May 9th - Sixth Sunday of Easter:

Matthew 5:1-12

You Are Blessed: Persecuted

May 16th - Seventh Sunday of Easter:

Matthew 5:1-12

You Are Blessed: Rejoice and Be Glad

May 23rd - Day of Pentecost:

Acts 2:1-21

Listening for the Spirit

May 30th - Trinity Sunday:

Romans 8:12-17

Children and Heirs



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



Join us as we celebrate

PENTECOST SUNDAY

Sunday, May 23, 2021

11:00 am

WEAR RED!!

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 April 13th. Here are some highlights:

- Heard a devotion from Randy Cousins
- Continued the ongoing Officer Training program, discussing the session on “Being Leaders” and viewing the video and discussing the session on “Who is the Church?”
- Heard a report from the Transition Team
- Received an update on the sale of the property from Glenn Patterson
- Received a treasurer’s report from Glenn
- Heard a report from the Bethany Stream with options for virtual worship in conjunction with in-person worship moving forward
- Elected Shelby Smith as commissioner to the virtual meeting of Salem Presbytery on May 11th
- Heard joys and prayer concerns of the congregation

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, MAY 11TH
ELDERS OF THE MONTH FOR MAY
HELEN BROWN AND BEN RUSSELL**



Hymn Stories

During the month of May we recognize two significant Sundays – Pentecost (May 23) and Trinity (May 30). One of the most beloved of our hymns, “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty”, is utilized during both of these special services. Following is the story behind this well-known hymn.

And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” Revelation 4:8

Reginald Heber was born in 1783 to a minister and his wife in an English village. He enrolled at Oxford where he excelled in poetry. Following graduation, he succeeded his father as vicar in his family’s parish. And for 16 years he faithfully served his flock.

His bent toward poetry naturally gave him a keen and growing interest in hymnody. He sought to lift the literary quality of hymns and dreamed of publishing a collection of high-caliber corresponding to the church year for use by liturgical churches. But the Bishop of London would not support his efforts and his dream was curtailed.

He continued writing hymns for his own church and it was during those 16 years that he wrote all 57 of his hymns, including the great missionary hymn, “From Greenland’s Icy Mountains”, which exhorted missionaries to take the gospel to faraway places like “Greenland’s icy mountains” and “India’s coral strand”.

This hymn represented an earnest desire for Reginald. For he felt God was calling him as a missionary to India’s coral strand. His desire was fulfilled in 1822 when, at age 40, he was appointed to oversee the Church of England’s ministries in India.

Arriving in Calcutta he set out on a 16-month tour of his diocese, visiting mission stations across India. In February of 1826 he left for another tour. While in the village of Trichinopoly on April 3rd, he preached to a large crowd in the hot sun, and afterwards plunged into a pool of cool water. He suffered a stroke and drowned!

It was after his death that his widow, finding his 57 hymns in a trunk, succeeded in publishing his *Hymns Written and Adapted to the Weekly Service of the Church Year*. In this volume was the great hymn, “Holy, Holy, Holy”!

Respectfully submitted,
Christopher A. Bagley, Director of Music



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FINANCIAL REPORT - END OF MARCH 2021

Year-to-date Actual Income	\$32,560.82
Less Year-to-date Actual Expenses	\$44,649.58
Plus Other Income (from investments)	\$2.32
YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	-\$12,086.44

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 sometime soon.

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.

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

Daniel Mitchell-Ayers

May 25th

Mackenna Mitchell-Ayers

May 25th



Thank
you

Dear Bethany Presbyterian,

Thank you to everyone who has reached out to me during the loss of my sister, Brenda. Your cards and FB messages have made me smile on days I struggled to smile. Brenda loved Bethany Presbyterian and so does my family! Bethany will always have our hearts!

Love in Christ. Always!

Jill Bullis



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

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
 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
 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
 Joyce & Norman Mize

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