



John's Journal

As you may or may not know, for the past two and a half years I have been privileged to have been serving on a General Assembly Special Committee. The

members of this committee are appointed by the Co-Moderators of the denomination, and are from all over the country - from Puerto Rico to California, and all spots in between. (It is interesting to note that two of the members of the committee are from right here in Alamance County - me, and Charlotte Allbright, who is the Educator at First Presbyterian in Burlington.)

The official name of our committee is The Special Committee to Study the Reformed Perspective of Christian Education in the 21st Century. I just call it The (Very) Special Committee!

Our charge included six tasks, that I have written about previously in this newsletter. The committee made several recommendations to the 2016 General Assembly - all of which passed. Due to time constraints, we were unable to complete our work and were granted an extension to report and make recommendations to the 2020 General Assembly meeting in Baltimore next summer.

The committee meets via video conference calls several times over the year, and I have just returned from a face-to-face meeting that took place in Montreat August 25th-28th. We will meet by video call over the next couple of months, and then meet again in person in January at Austin Seminary in Texas. The deadline for submitting the recommendations is mid-February, in order to be a part of the General Assembly's work in June.

There were three main areas that still needed our attention as we moved forward following the last assembly. One is educator certification. Our denomination offers a path for educators to be certified, and this is recognized in our *Book of Order*, and supported by presbyteries.

There are still issues surrounding the process for certification and our committee is continuing to try to address those issues in order to lift up educators who want to continue to grow and learn.

Another area that we were tasked to consider is the area of education within racial/ethnic congregations. This is an important issue that needs our attention, and the committee continues to work on this.

The area in which I was working (with a few others on the committee) was the area of education in smaller congregations. Part of our work included interviewing several people who would have knowledge of this area, and then pooling those interviews to see what common issues are at the forefront.

The people that I interviewed all agreed that the issues of aging and smaller congregations, and the challenge of competing with other options for children, were areas that certainly need to be addressed.

As we move forward toward making our recommendations, I am prayerful that all three of these important areas in the life of the church can be addressed in such a way that as we move forward in the 21st century, the vital area of faith formation will not be lost for a generation.

I covet your prayers as well, as this committee of dedicated and smart people tackle these important issues that are vital to the health of the church. I am hopeful that by our January meeting that we can have some substantive and workable recommendations to pass on to the General Assembly in June.

It has been a great summer here at Bethany, and I thoroughly enjoyed leading our *Feasting on the Word* series. I hope you all received much from it as well. And now I'm looking forward to our new book study (see page 3) beginning on September 9th.

As always, I am grateful to be your pastor.

Grace & peace,

sabbatical

rest | refresh | refocus

Over the past several months I have given updates in this space about my sabbatical proposal for 2020, and waiting for the notification from the Clergy Renewal Program of the Lilly Foundation about whether I received the grant that I had applied for or not.

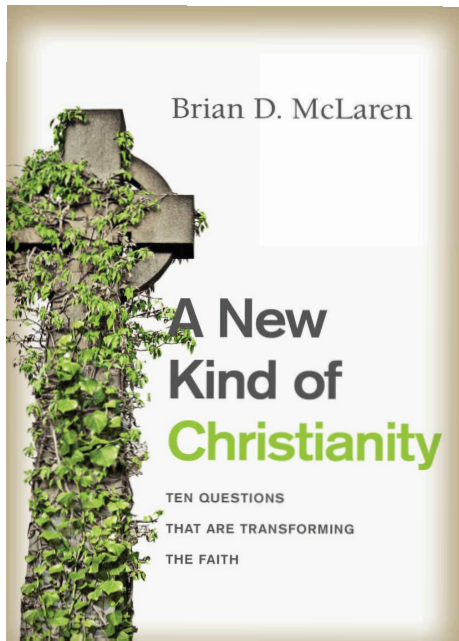
Well, on Monday, August 12th, I received a letter which stated that my application for the grant had been denied. So, it's back to the drawing board to decide what my options are for a sabbatical and how I can obtain the necessary funds to do what I wanted to do. I may have to alter my plans and make other adjustments, but I have some time to figure out what my options are.

I appreciate the support of my team that worked with me on the proposal, for your support for my ministry all along the way. I'll keep you posted on further plans.

Stay tuned. JWJ



FALL BOOK STUDY BEGINS ON SEPTEMBER 9TH



We are thrilled to offer this exciting and engaging new book study for the fall, looking at theologian Brian McLaren's work *"A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions That Are Transforming the Faith."* Here are the ten themes that we will be considering:

Book One: The Narrative Question

Book Two: The Authority Question

Book Three: The God Question

Book Four: The Jesus Question

Book Five: The Gospel Question

Book Six: The Church Question

Book Seven: The Sex Question

Book Eight: The Future Question

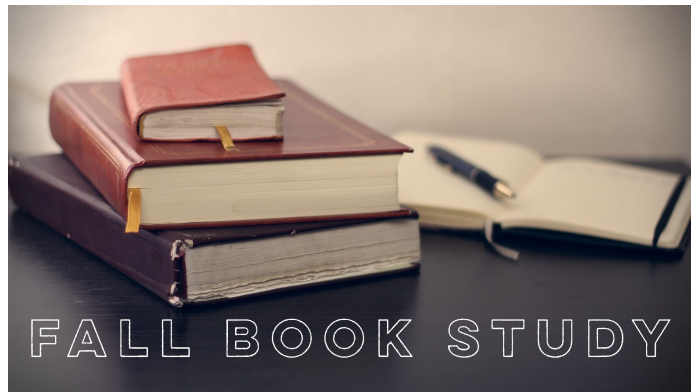
Book Nine: The Pluralism Question

Book Ten: The What-Do-We-Do-Now Question

Each of these units have sub-themes that will help our discussion along.

We will gather **on Monday evenings at 6:30 beginning on September 9th at Burlington Beer Works** in downtown Burlington. Participants are invited to order dinner, their favorite beverage, and join in for some lively conversation on this marvelous book. We will have a private room upstairs to hold our gatherings.

You will need to register so we will know how many to expect so we can tell the restaurant. Use the form below, or register on the form available on our website. **Please register no later than Sunday, September 8th.** Everyone is responsible for purchasing their own books. They are available on Amazon for around \$10 each. Register now for this engaging study and time of fellowship.



Fall Book Study Reservation Form

Name _____

Email Address _____

Telephone # _____

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE CHURCH OFFICE NO LATER THAN SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8TH
OR REGISTER ONLINE ON OUR WEBSITE (www.bethanypreschurch.org)**



SEPTEMBER WORSHIP THEMES

September 1st:

Luke 14:1, 7-14

Soul Dysmorphia

September 8th:

Philemon 1-21

How Do You Spell "Koinonia"?

September 15th:

1 Timothy 1:12-17

From Worst to First

September 22nd:

Jeremiah 8:18-19:1

Have a Good Cry

September 29th:

1 Timothy 6:6-19

The Price of a Clean Life



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



Mark Your Calendars
World Communion Sunday
October 6, 2019

Jewelry Benefit Sale

benefitting
Residential Treatment Services of Alamance
Women's Recovery Home

Sept. 13 & 14
Holly Hill Mall

RTSA
Changing Lives

WOMEN HELPING WOMEN

Residential Treatment Services of Alamance will be having their Annual Jewelry Benefit Sale to assist women in recovery at the RTSA Mebane Street Recovery Home. The sale will be September 13th and 14th at Holly Hill Mall. This sale is open to the public. On September 12th from 6-8 pm there will be a "Women's Night Out" event with decadent desserts at a cost of \$10 per person. These women have first chance to purchase jewelry. Call 336.227.2994 to reserve a ticket.

TREATMENT WORKS!

September 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship 	<p>2</p> <p>Labor Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:00 AM Circle #1 7:00 PM Circle #4 					
<p>8</p> <p>Christian Education/Youth Sunday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship 	<p>9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30 PM Theology on Tap Book Study 7:00 PM Circle #3 	<p>10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM Session Meeting 	<p>11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 			
<p>15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship 	<p>16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30 PM Theology on Tap Book Study 		<p>17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 			
<p>22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship 	<p>23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30 PM Theology on Tap Book Study 		<p>24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 			
<p>29</p> <p>Fifth Sunday @ Bethany</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship 	<p>30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6:30 PM Theology on Tap Book Study 		<p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John on Vacation 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 			

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 August 13th. Here are some highlights:

- Heard a devotion from Ben Russell.
- Continued with our discussion of the book *Canoeing the Mountains*
- Shared in joys and concerns of the congregation
- Heard a treasurer's report from Ron Osborne.
- Were reminded of Blessing of the Backpacks and School Supply collection on August 25th
- John shared information about the upcoming Fall Book Study - *A New Kind of Christianity*, by Brian McLaren - beginning on September 9th
- Randy Cousins was elected commissioner to the August 17th meeting of Salem Presbytery
- Chris shared news from his work and plans moving forward with Choral Scholars Program.
- John reported on serving Homebound Communion to Mary Moore, Eleanor Thompson, Pat Kennedy, and Ruby Martin, accompanied by Jean Payne.

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10TH
ELDERS OF THE MONTH FOR SEPTEMBER
RANDY COUSINS AND JEAN PAYNE**



Nominating Committee Completes Their Task!

We are thrilled to report that the Nominating Committee that the congregation elected several weeks ago (Randy Cousins, Kim Snyder, and Shelby Smith) have secured the commitments of three people to fill the Class of 2022.

The Session will call a Congregational Meeting in the very near future to elect these folks.

We offer prayers of thanksgiving for the work of the committee, as well as for the dedication of these three who have answered this very important call.

Thanks be to God!

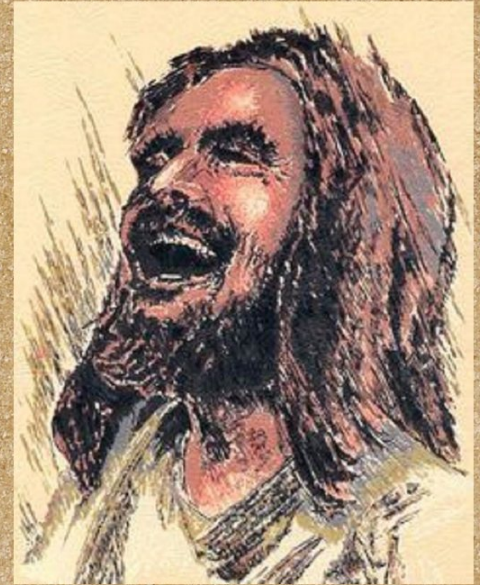
Stewardship Season 2019

November 10, 17, & 24

... sowing seeds ...

... healing hearts ...

... cheerful charity ...



"For God loves a cheerful giver."

-2 Corinthians 9:7

Plans are underway for our **2019 Stewardship Season**, as your Generosity Team (Glenn Patterson, Jean Payne, Nancy Purcell, Rick Purcell, and John Johnson) have met to decide on dates for the campaign, and our theme. You can see from the above that our overall theme is **"Cheerful Giving"** - which is based on 2 Corinthians 9:5-7, which states:

"This is why I thought it was necessary to encourage the brothers to go to you ahead of time and arrange in advance the generous gift you have already promised. I want it to be a real gift from you. I don't want you to feel like you are being forced to give anything. What I mean is this: the one who sows a small number of seeds will also reap a small crop, and the one who sows a generous amount of seeds will also reap a generous crop. Everyone should give whatever they have decided in their heart. They shouldn't give with hesitation or because of pressure. God loves a cheerful giver."

Beginning on **November 10th and continuing for three Sundays**, we will look at this passage in depth as we consider the future of Bethany for the coming year, and how we have been entrusted to be good stewards of this place and the many gifts we have been given.

The season will culminate on **Sunday, November 24th - Consecration Sunday - and our Celebration Luncheon.**

You will be hearing more about this over the next month or so, but please put these dates on your calendar as we celebrate our "cheerful giving"!

It has been a very hot summer - the hottest on record in many areas. July was recorded as the hottest July since records have been kept. Whether we acknowledge the problem of climate change or not, the fact that it's hot right now cannot be argued.

Fortunately, except for those who work outdoors, we have the comfort of air-conditioned buildings to make our day so much easier to handle. However, for many, working outdoors is the only option they have. For those who toil in the heat of the summer, sweltering under the unrelenting summer sun, the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (USA), Rev. J. Herbert Nelson (who preached at Bethany as part of our 125th Anniversary Celebration) offered the following prayer for farmers and farmworkers. But it could also be for any who work in the out-of-doors.



Extreme weather from violent tornadoes, heavy rain, and intense heat have put farm operations in a difficult place. Add the rising cost of maintaining a farm, the loss of land, and the effects of the U.S. trade dispute with China, and farmers are finding themselves in a difficult place.

The challenges of growing crops, coupled with the financial threat of losing their farms, have driven many farmers to take their own lives. Farmworkers and the rural communities that depend on a healthy farm economy also suffer.

The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk of the General

Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), has issued a prayer for farmers and their communities as they navigate a valley of uncertainty and despair.

God of all creation and all who produce food for our sustenance throughout the ages and around the globe, we give you thanks this day for the witness and the work of farmers and farmworkers. As your children face innumerable challenges and yet persevere, we are grateful for their persistence, skill, and wisdom. We recognize that without farming families and farming communities, we would have no food to nourish us. We confess that some of us are so far removed from the food we eat that we are less mindful than we should be of the troubles our sisters and brothers face and of the strength and courage they muster on a daily basis.

We know that you are present in all that farmers face—from loss of income and loss of family land to falling prices, extreme weather, and more. We acknowledge that our well-being is interconnected. Help us to commit ourselves to pray for and act on behalf of the health and well-being of farmers and rural communities, to embrace the great gifts that farmers and farmworkers bring to the world, to advocate for policies that will uplift and care for them, and to live our faith even in times of great distress. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Photo courtesy of Soul Fire Farm





FINANCIAL REPORT - END OF JULY 2019	
Year-to-date Actual Income	\$94,116.48
Year-to-date Actual Expenses	\$97,385.02
YEAR-TO-DATE SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	-\$3,268.54

STEWARDSHIP SEASON 2019

Your Generosity Team (Glenn Patterson, Nancy Purcell, Rick Purcell, Jean Payne, and John Johnson) have met to begin plans for this year's Stewardship Campaign. Mark your calendars for **Sunday, November 24th**, which will be the culmination of our Stewardship Season.

One focus for this year will be capital needs of the church. The Generosity Team, as well as others will be compiling a list of capital needs and will be prioritizing these needs. With anticipated income from the sale of the property across the street from the church, as well as designated funds that we have on hand, we should have funds available to tend to the physical upkeep of our property, as well as to consider upgrades and other issues.

As always, the input of the congregation is encouraged. Please contact any of the above named team to offer suggestions.

And the team covets your prayers as we look to providing a strong budget for 2020.



"LIFE IS NOT MEASURED BY HOW MUCH YOU OWN."

LUKE 12:15, NLT



Blessed
to Be a
Blessing

September Birthdays and Anniversaries!

Happy Anniversary to:

Shirley & Tommy Lane
Kim & John Snyder
Janine & Ron Osborne

September 15
September 18
September 22

Happy Birthday to:

Amy Kimrey
Kim Snyder
Hailee Thomas
Sandy Cook
Katherine Bayliff
Peggy Burwell
Kim Davis
Linda Abplanalp
Nancy Purcell
Glenn Patterson
Jay Fuller

September 13
September 13
September 16
September 18
September 19
September 22
September 23
September 24
September 26
September 29
September 30



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.



Good luck to all of our students and teachers who are heading back to the classroom as school gears up for another year!

Find your place!

ADULT MINISTRIES

Christian Education Opportunities

The Fellowship Class - Bible study class using our denomination's *Present Word* curriculum.

Fall Book Study (see page 3) - beginning on Monday, September 9th and running for ten weeks we will be studying Brian McLaren's book, "A New Kind of Christianity."

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
Randy Thompson

Barbara Cousins
Pat Kennedy
Donna Mitchell-Ayers
Pete Campbell
Ben Johnson
Alex Thomas
Robert Sykes
Frederica Beatty
Glenn Thompson
Family of Don Boggs
Janie Holt Clapp



**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

