



John's Journal

I'm back!! Or at least I will be by the time you read this. I will return to the office on September 1st and to the pulpit on the 6th.

First of all, I want to

take this opportunity to thank all of you for giving me this amazing gift of sabbatical. The intention of a sabbatical is for both rest and renewal, and to engage in study and reflection on a chosen topic of interest. As you know, my focus was on the "digital church" and how the church needs to continue to be open to new ways of ministry in a world that is even more virtual than it was six months ago.

These three months have been successful for me in that, yes, I was able to find times of rest and relaxation and to fully engage in this time of "sabbath" rest. It was also successful in that I was able to explore areas of interest and to work on some things that will enhance my ministry here at Bethany.

My original plans for travel and time away had to be altered drastically in the reality of the pandemic. However, Debbie and I were able to get away on two different occasions, spending a week in Montreat at the end of June, and another week at a wonderful getaway mountain cabin in Virginia in mid-July, thanks to a wonderful gift from the Russell family). We had intended to travel to Minneapolis to visit Jackie, but instead she came home in early August and we had a wonderful visit with her.

Back in May I made a to-do list of things that I wanted to get done during these three months as it related to my focus of study. I am pleased that I have been able to accomplish all of these items.

My major project was a complete re-build of the Salem Presbytery website. Over the past several years I have been doing some of the techie work for the presbytery, which included keeping up with the website. I had worked on the website several years ago, upgrading it from a previous version. It was in dire need of a new upgrade. This project involved many, many hours of fairly tedious work moving hundreds of files from the old site to the new one,

but also some creative work in making sure the new site was attractive and user friendly. I was able to complete this project and unveiled it at the virtual meeting of Salem Presbytery on August 15th. You can view the new site at www.salempresbytery.org.

Another big project was a revamping and upgrade of Bethany's website. Although there are still some tweaks to be made, it is basically finished, and I am pleased with its new look and functionality. It can be viewed at www.bethanypreschurch.org.

One project that was something completely new for me was the creation of an interactive digital bulletin. There is a more in-depth article about this project elsewhere in this newsletter, but as we utilize technology more and more in the church, I felt that this idea might have merit.

When we go back to in-person worship, there are many who question the use of bulletins as we have done in the past - as there is possibility of the spread of germs. Having a virtual bulletin is a good alternative.

This will work on an iPad or other tablet or smartphone. The bulletin will have links for hymns, for scripture readings, for any media used in the service, and other items as appropriate. I hope to have the first one available on my first Sunday back. So, bring your tablet to church and be ready to download your bulletin.

I have worked on other projects along the way, including things around the house that needed to be done.

Again, thank you for this wonderful gift of sabbatical. I am excited about returning to work, and especially excited about my sermon series and our fall book study (see other articles).

And I cannot thank Rick enough for stepping in and being your pastor for three months. Knowing you were in good hands made it so much easier to let go.

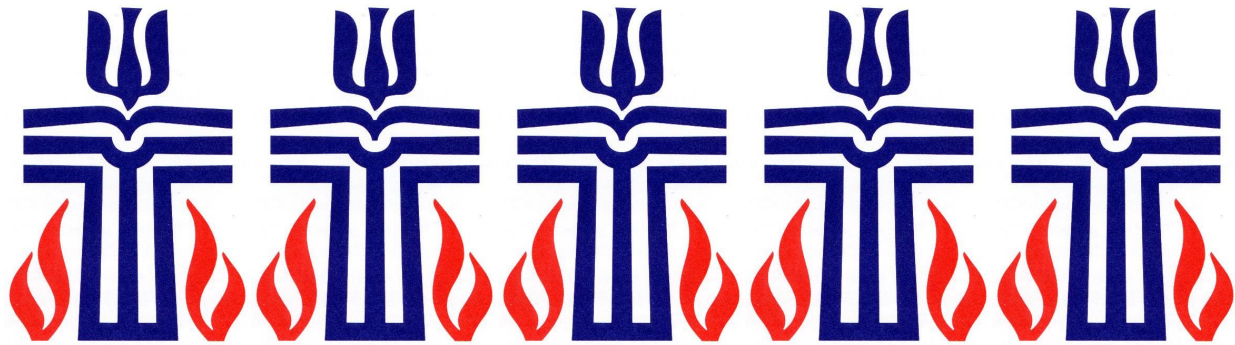
I look forward to seeing you virtually and hopefully in person soon!

As always, I am grateful to be your pastor.

Grace & peace,

Rev. Johnson

*Is currently on sabbatical
June-August 2020
He will return to the pulpit
On September 6, 2020*



*Please welcome
Commissioned Ruling
Elder*

Rick Purcell

*Serving Bethany as Pastor
June-August 2020*



Worshipping in our COVID-19 Reality - May Update

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.

It has been gratifying to see the online attendance on Sunday morning maintain consistent numbers. As the Session continues to monitor the situation in our state, and to follow the guidelines as offered by our governor and our presbytery, we will continue to worship via our Zoom platform until we return to in-person worship. Hopefully that will be sometime in June.

Once we do return to in-person worship, we will continue to live-stream our worship services through Facebook Live and possibly other platforms. We have purchased a camera specifically designed for this purpose and look forward to see what that will offer.

So, continue to pray that this pandemic will subside, and that there will not be a second wave. Continue to pray for those affected by the virus. Continue to pray for health care workers and the care for those who are sick. Continue to pray for our nation that we can heal - both physically and emotionally as the issues that divide us seem to grow every day. Continue to pray!

JWJ



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 a Transitional Administrative Presbyter with an adjusted job description to reflect the new realities that have arisen, with a 3-5 year contract.

Other staff will also be hired over the next few months, including financial, communications, stewardship, and parish engagement pastors.

Continue to pray for our presbytery during this transition.



Daylily Garden Tour

Sunday, June 14th - 1-5 pm
(rain date - Sunday, June 21st)

Home of Bill & Linda Abplanalp
1030 Glenview Ln., Burlington

Bill and Linda Abplanalp would like to once again invite the Bethany congregation to tour their beautiful daylily garden at their home, 1030 Glenview Lane, Burlington, on Sunday, June 14th. Linda is a national daylily judge and has an extensive collection in the garden. Due to the present health crisis they are not doing the usual "Walk with Daylilies" garden party but instead invite everyone to come and see the garden. The rain date would be Sunday, the 21st, also 1-5 pm. Please park on the lawn. Call if you can. Bill and Linda would love to have everyone come and enjoy the garden and they look forward to seeing you there.

Directions to the Abplanalp's:

- From I-85/40 take exit 140. Go north on University Drive about 1 mile to S. Church St.
- Turn right on S. Church st. Go about 100 yards to Huffman Lane. (Huffman Lane is a one lane road just past the Pediatric Clinic on the right.)
- Turn right onto Huffman Lane
- Turn left onto Glenview Lane
- Second driveway on the left, 1030 Glenview Lane

Park on the lawn and come and enjoy!



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 May 12th via Zoom. Here are some highlights:

- Heard a devotion from Karen Maxwell
- Heard joys and concerns of the congregation
- Received a treasurer's report from Glenn Patterson
- Received an update about the Payroll Protection Plan that the government is offering for small businesses to receive financial help / approved the plan to apply
- Discussed options for returning to in-person worship services
- The Session was reminded of John's sabbatical beginning on June 1st and that Rick will be assuming duties working 20 hours per week / preaching, pastoral care, etc.
- Heard an update from John on his plans for his sabbatical June-August, 2020

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, JUNE 9TH
ELDERS OF THE MONTH FOR JUNE
HELEN BROWN AND RANDY COUSINS**



UPDATE:

As the second round of the funds from the Payroll Protection Plan of the economic stimulus package passed by congress were made available, we did get our application submitted, and received our loan (will be considered a grant as it is used for payroll) soon thereafter. The Session will determine how these funds will be utilized. Thanks to Glenn Patterson and Pam Hurt for doing the work to get the application submitted.



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 have transitioned 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 go to 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 APRIL 2020

Year-to-date Actual Income	\$44,578.30
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Year-to-date Actual Expenses	\$57,158.73
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YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	-\$12,580.43
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**Scan this QR code for direct access to
our new Online Giving Platform**



June Birthdays and Anniversaries!

Happy Anniversary to:

Sylvia & Gerald Donley
Tracey & Brandon Troxler

June 14th

June 15th

Happy Birthday to:

Kasey Dampier
Tracey Troxler
Seth Smith
Judy Holmes
Kim Mitchell-Ayers

June 1st

June 7th

June 8th

June 12th

June 22nd

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



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

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