



John's Journal

On May 21, 1979 I graduated from the Presbyterian School of Christian Education (PSCE) in Richmond, Virginia, with a Master of Arts degree in Christian Education. It

had been an amazing two years on campus there, learning a lot about the church and how I could be a part of it as a professional Christian educator, and making friendships that have lasted to this day.

All of us in our graduating class had been going about the process of finishing school, and also finding a job for when we graduated. Fortunately, at that time, there were several prospective jobs available for each graduate. I interviewed at several different churches and ended up accepting the call of the First Presbyterian Church in Kinston, North Carolina to be their Director of Christian Education. In June of 1979 I began a journey that has taken me so many places over these 42 years, and has now brought me to this point of retirement.

As I was preparing to move to Kinston and begin my first job in the church, my parents gave me a Bible - not an unusual gift in beginning a church job. I did find it interesting that it was a copy of the *Good News Bible*, a more modern translation and easier to understand. This new translation was just gaining ground in popularity in the 70's.

My father wrote this inscription in the front of the Bible: *"For the beginning of a new endeavor, a new endearment, a new enrichment - where all will not be easy or effortless, but where you will have the encouragement of kindred and experienced spirits - we commend the consolation and challenge of this ancient book, containing truths and insights that are so old, yet forever new."*

Through the years I would return to these words often, as they were inspiring and hopeful as I did face challenges along the way. As I now stand on the brink of retirement, I find them equally as helpful and hopeful.

So many times over the past few months people have asked me what I was going to do in retirement. Other than sharing that I would be working with Salem Presbytery part-time as their Communications Director, I didn't have much of an answer.

I know that one immediate blessing will be the remembrance of an amazing career with some amazing people.

In the Presbyterian church, there is always the question of how involved a BFP (Beloved Former Pastor) could and should be with his/her former church. Salem Presbytery has specific guidelines that we as pastors are to follow as you now begin your search for the next pastor at Bethany.

This may sound harsh, but I do believe in our system and these guidelines and policies: I will not be available to preach at Bethany. I will not be available for baptisms, weddings or funerals. Although I may continue to follow Bethany on Facebook, I will not respond to events or posts having to do with the life of the church. As much as I love this place and you people, I need to make a clean break from you and move on, and you need to make a clean break from me so that you can fully embrace your next pastor when they arrive.

Debbie and I have been blessed to have made some wonderful friends in our time here at Bethany. Those friendships will continue, but I will no longer be your pastor.

When I came to Bethany in January of 2013, I kinda knew that this would be where I would retire. You have made my last pastorate one full of wonderful memories, and one where I have truly felt hope for the church. You have a unique opportunity to minister in this community, and my prayers will be with you as you make your way through this time of transition.

'Thank you' seems inadequate. So as you move forward, remember to **keep the faith, live in hope, and love one another!**

Grace & peace,



Debbie and I would like to take this opportunity to offer a word of gratitude for all that has been done to make my retirement the celebration that it already has been. We are grateful for the kind words, the phone calls, texts, emails, and Facebook posts that have made the last few weeks so meaningful. As I have made my way through these last few Sundays, your response to my final sermon series has been so gratifying.

I want to thank you especially for the past eight-and-a-half years and the joy that you have brought both of us as we have joined you in ministry. From the mission trips to West Virginia, to Vacation Bible Schools, to numerous book studies and Bible studies, to movie nights and special outings, to Bethany's 125th Anniversary Celebration, to each Sunday morning that was so special, you have made these last years of my ministry ones that will remain in my memories for a lifetime.

I want to thank you for your patience during the past year plus as we have all endured the new normal of COVID-19 and having to do church a new way. It hasn't been easy, and even with my technological know-how, there were still many glitches along the way. But we persevered and our Live Stream now works about as well as it can.

I am so grateful for the time and energy and spirit of the Transition Team, as they have taken the ball and run with it - not only in planning my retirement celebration, but in diving into the search for the Transitional Pastor. When you see them, please join me in offering a word of thanks to **Tina Patterson, Shelby Smith, Brenda Sykes, Morgan Troxler, and A. J. Campbell.**

And a **HUGE** thank you goes to **Joy Saleeby**. What a gift she is to this congregation. With dedication, patience, and an eagerness to do everything as good as she can, from day one she has been a gift to me in making sure I could carry out my job as easily as possible. She always thinks ahead and is proactive in getting things done. She willingly helps out wherever she is needed and has done so much in preparing for this transition. I can't imagine what my job would have been like if she hadn't been here. Thank you Joy!

As you will hear in my final sermon, I leave with clear eyes, with an enormously full heart, and with the profound knowledge that I can't lose. We thank you so much for all you have meant, and will continue to mean to us. JWJ





John's Final Sunday
August 29, 2021 - 11:00 am
Special Music with Brass Ensemble and Choir
In-Person and via Live Stream





HERE'S AN UPDATE ON OUR LIVE-STREAM FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP:

- We are so pleased to report that many of our wifi issues have been resolved, so the signal that we send to Boxcast (our live-streaming platform) are much stronger and more stable. This may be more information than you want, but we have hard-wired our connection to our wifi router, running a cable from the office, down through the basement, and up to the console in the sanctuary, where we have installed a new wifi access point. What this means is a much stronger and more stable signal and connection.
- We continue to use 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.bethanypreschurh.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 includes 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.

In addition to the Worship Live Stream that you can get on your computer, phone, or tablet, the Live Stream is also available on the platforms below. If you have access to these, just search for "Boxcast" and then search for "Bethany Presbyterian Graham, NC."



PASTORAL TRANSITION TEAM

Transition Team Update!

The Transition Team is pleased to report that we have a potential candidate that we are working through details with and if the way be clear, we hope they will be joining us soon. We are very excited about this positive prospect and continue to ask for prayers as we continue to move forward. The Transition Team is very thankful for the support and guidance of Rev. Amanda Anderson, our COM (Commission on Ministry) liaison and thankful for the prayers and patience of our Bethany family as we transition.

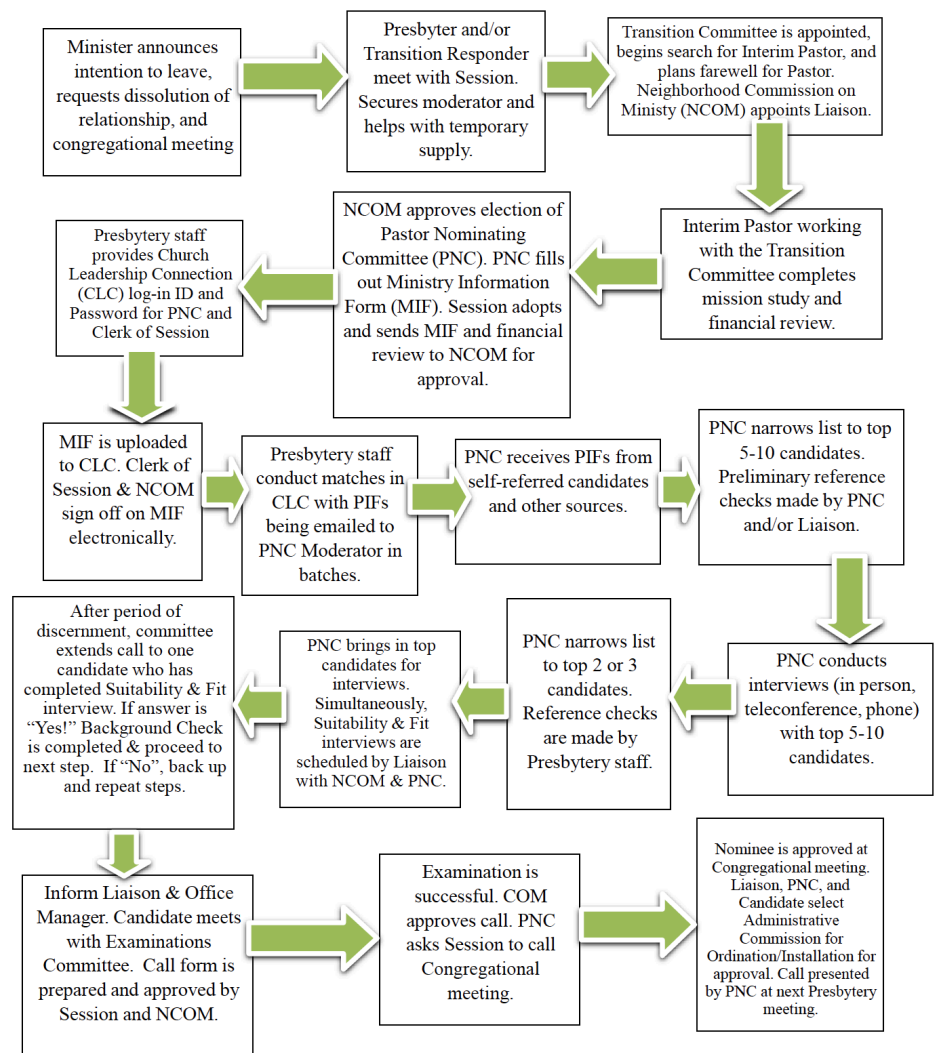
Please note on Page 8 of this newsletter, the supply preachers we have lined up for September.

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!

Pastoral Change Flow Chart



September 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<div>JOHN'S FINAL SUNDAY</div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School (as scheduled)</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship Celebration w/ Brass and Special Music</div> <div>29</div>	<div>30</div>	<div>JOHN'S LAST DAY AT BETHANY!</div> <div>31</div>	<div>1</div> <div>7:00 PM Choir Practice (as scheduled)</div>	<div>2</div>	<div>3</div>	<div>4</div>
<div>5</div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School (as scheduled)</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship (in-person and Live Stream)</div>	<div>6</div> <div>Labor Day</div>	<div>7</div>	<div>8</div> <div>7:00 PM Choir Practice (as scheduled)</div>	<div>9</div>	<div>10</div>	<div>11</div>
<div>12</div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School (as scheduled)</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship (in-person and Live Stream)</div>	<div>13</div>	<div>14</div> <div>7:00 PM Session Meeting</div>	<div>15</div> <div>First Day of Hispanic Heritage Month</div> <div>7:00 PM Choir Practice (as scheduled)</div>	<div>16</div>	<div>17</div>	<div>18</div>
<div>19</div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School (as scheduled)</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship (in-person and Live Stream)</div>	<div>20</div>	<div>21</div>	<div>22</div> <div>7:00 PM Choir Practice (as scheduled)</div>	<div>23</div>	<div>24</div>	<div>25</div>
<div>26</div> <div>9:45 AM Sunday School (as scheduled)</div> <div>11:00 AM Worship (in-person and Live Stream)</div>	<div>27</div>	<div>28</div>	<div>29</div> <div>7:00 PM Choir Practice (as scheduled)</div>	<div>30</div>	<div>1</div>	<div>2</div>



**PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

OUT OF CHAOS, **HOPE**

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Responds to Devastating Haiti Earthquake



Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has had long-standing partnerships in Haiti for decades. These meaningful relationships enable us to come alongside communities affected by disaster in the immediate aftermath, as well as support communities planning multi-year, long-term recovery projects.

Most recently, PDA is responding to the devastating 7.2 magnitude that struck Haiti the morning of August 14, 2021 that has resulted in the loss of more than 1,200 lives. Working closely with Presbyterian World Mission, our traditional partners on the ground and ACT Alliance, PDA is responding to emergency needs such as WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), emergency power generators, shelter, food, first aid and more. We remain committed to the long-term recovery.

To see how you can help, visit the PDA website at: www.pda.pcusa.org.





SEPTEMBER WORSHIP THEMES

In this time of transition following John's retirement and prior to the calling of a Transitional Pastor, during September the pulpit will be filled with supply pastors. The schedule is as follows:

Sunday, September 5th:

Commissioned Ruling Elder Sam Jenkins

Sunday, September 12th:

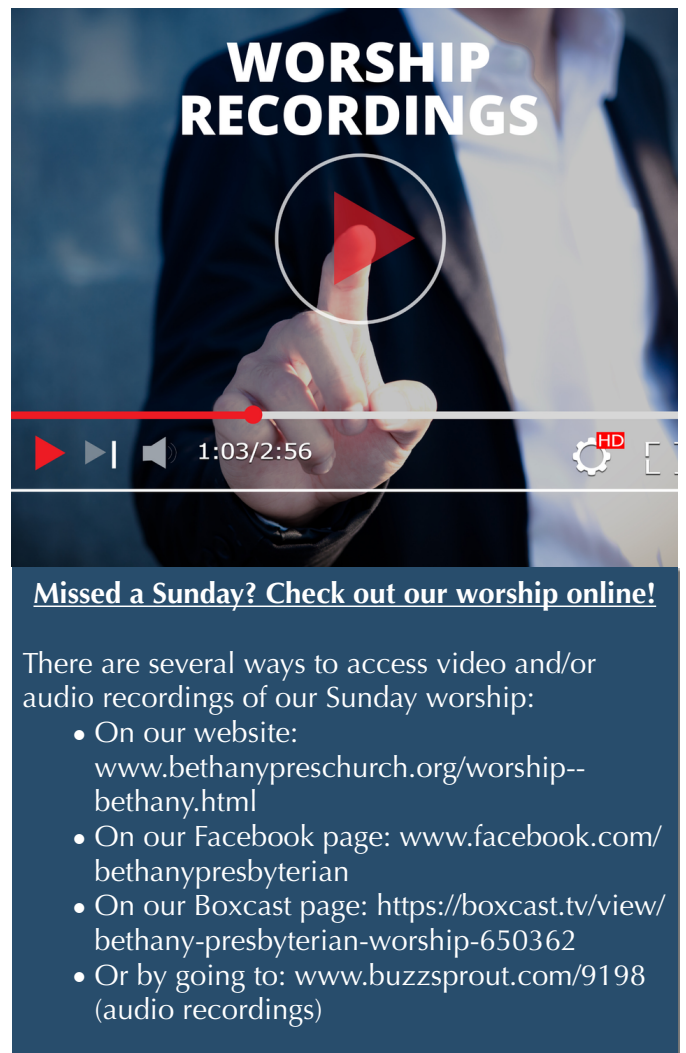
Rev. Charlie Murphy

Sunday, September 19th:

Commissioned Ruling Elder Rick Purcell

Sunday, September 26th:

Rev. Charlie Murphy



WORSHIP RECORDINGS

Missed a Sunday? Check out our worship online!

There are several ways to access video and/or audio recordings of our Sunday worship:

- On our website:
www.bethanypreschurch.org/worship--bethany.html
- On our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/bethanypresbyterian
- On our Boxcast page: <https://boxcast.tv/view/bethany-presbyterian-worship-650362>
- Or by going to: www.buzzsprout.com/9198 (audio recordings)



As we make our way through these hot summer months, we are well aware that in many parts of the country, there has been a significant increase in COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations. We continue to advocate for everyone to get vaccinated.

Recently, the CDC has updated their mask guidelines, with the recommendation that even vaccinated people wear a mask indoors in areas that have experienced high levels of infections. We are fortunate that Alamance

County has not experienced the marked increase that other areas have had, but still there remains a concern as cases are on the rise.

As a church, we will continue our latest mask guidance, encouraging everyone to act on their own personal guidance as to whether to wear a mask in worship or not. The Session will re-visit this issue at its September meeting. In the meantime, we would encourage everyone to be cautious, to remain vigilant, to get your vaccine if you haven't already, and to do everything we can to beat this virus once and for all.

Your Church Staff:

Pastor: Vacant

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 on August 10th. Here are some highlights:

- Met at Debbie & John's house / enjoyed fellowship around the evening meal outside
- Heard a devotion from Tracey Troxler
- Continued the ongoing Officer Training program, discussing the session on "Being Leaders" and viewing the video and discussing the session on "The Dynamics of Worship"
- Heard a report from the Transition Team, including an update on plans for the celebration on August 28th and August 29th, and also an update on the search for the transitional pastor / confirmed that Rick will be available on a part-time basis until the position is filled
- Followed up on discussion of urgent capital needs around the church / thanked Ben for improvements to the rear door!
- Heard joys and prayer concerns of the congregation
- As a closing, viewed the video slide show from our mission trip to West Virginia in 2014.
- John closed the meeting with words of thanks and appreciation, as this was his final meeting as moderator of the Bethany Session

**NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH
ELDERS OF THE MONTH FOR SEPTEMBER
TINA PATTERSON AND HELEN BROWN**



As Bethany ventures into unfamiliar territory over the next few weeks, it is important to remember that the work of the church continues and that steps have been taken by the Session to insure that all tasks are being covered. As we anticipate the arrival of our Transitional Pastor soon, until that happens your Transition Team has secured supply pastors to cover our worship services as needed. In addition, Elder Rick Purcell has agreed to assume some of the week-to-week duties such as service and bulletin preparation, worship leadership, and seeing to pastoral care needs of the congregation.

We are grateful for Rick and his leadership, and especially his love and care for this congregation. We are also grateful for the work of the Transition Team in preparing Bethany for the transition from John to a transitional pastor, that we hope will happen soon!

And we are grateful for Salem Presbytery and specifically the Commission on Ministry (COM) and our liaison Rev. Amanda Anderson and the assistance that has been given to the Transition Team over the past several months.

The process for finding a new pastor can be slow and tedious, but it is a process that works! Thanks be to God!

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FINANCIAL REPORT - END OF JULY 2021

Year-to-date Actual Income	\$85,589.92
Less Year-to-date Actual Expenses	\$105,305.48
Plus Other Income (from investments)	\$124,711.53
YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$104,995.97

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



Notes on Above Figures:

The roller coaster continues: very good month in May, not so great in June, another good month in July. As we move through the summer months, please remember to keep your pledges up-to-date. This can be accomplished in several ways: by mail, by bringing your pledge by the church in person, on Sunday mornings in the offering plate, or by using our secure online platform. This can be accessed from our website, or by using the above QR code.

If you have any questions concerning our finances or your giving, please feel free to contact Pam Hurt, our bookkeeper, or Glenn Patterson, our treasurer.

As always, thank you for your generosity in support of the mission and ministry of Bethany Presbyterian!



September Birthdays and Anniversaries

Happy Anniversary to:

Kim & John Snyder
Janine & Ron Osborne

September 18th
September 22nd

Happy Birthday to:

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

September 13th
September 13th
September 16th
September 18th
September 19th
September 23rd
September 24th
September 26th
September 29th
September 30th



CUB SCOUTS / BOY SCOUTS Accepting New Members

Bethany Presbyterian Church Pack 9 and Troop 9 are accepting young men/boys & woman/girls, ages 5 - 18, for their Scouting Experience. We offer both indoor and outdoor activities, while achieving rank advancement and having FUN. We Camp, Hike, Snow Ski, and participate in activities to develop Character, Citizenship, Morale and Physical Strength.

For further information, please contact Jeff Benes (336.675.9086 or email at benes.nc@att.net)

PRAY FOR OUR
TRANSITION TEAM AS
THEY SEARCH FOR THE
TRANSITIONAL PASTOR
WHO WILL LEAD
BETHANY THROUGH
THIS TIME OF
TRANSITION BEFORE
WE CALL OUR NEXT
PASTOR.



Bethany Prays

Christopher Bagley
Kathrine Bayliff
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
Glenn Harden

Stewart Dillard
Jeremy Harden
Ruby Martin
Anne McDaniels
Shelvia Russell
John & Ann Sutton
Mike Sutton
Katherine Turner
Ida Whitney
Frank Wrenn
Joyce & Norman Mize
Betty Boggs
Family of Debbie Walters

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