



John's Journal

My sermon this past week (May 24th) was titled "Tying Up Loose Ends," and I began by talking about trying to get everything done before I begin my sabbatical on June 1st.

As I write this on this last week of May, it really is all about tying up loose ends. I will use this space to share some thoughts as my sabbatical quickly approaches.

I guess the starkly unique aspect of this sabbatical is that it will be taken during a pandemic. As I have noted in other correspondence, my plans for my time away have dramatically changed.

As you know, if you have been reading my articles each month updating my plans, originally I had applied for a sizable grant from the Lilly Foundation. The Center for Clergy Renewal annual awards grants to pastors seeking a time of sabbatical. Unfortunately, my application was not approved, so this was the first time my plans had to be altered.

So, I applied for a much smaller grant from the Board of Pensions of the PC(USA), which was awarded. This will give me some funds to use during this time.

I guess one good thing is that if I had gotten the Lilly grant and had planned for extensive travel in the Holy Land and Europe, that would have all had to be canceled anyway. As it stands, Debbie and I had planned a road trip National Park tour, which will undoubtedly need to be postponed.

As to our travel plans, we will be in Montreat at the end of June, and will travel at some point to Minneapolis to visit with Jackie.

There are some who view this time of sabbatical as a vacation. Although it certainly includes times of rest and renewal, there is an expectation of study and exploration of a topic of the pastor's choosing. As I look at the to-do list that I am making, I will be very busy over the next three months.

My topic of interest and what I will be concentrating on is the "digital church." Our current situation

during this pandemic has made this topic even more pertinent.

I will be looking at the theology behind who we are as a church in an ever-increasing digital world. How can the church continue to adapt to this world without watering down its message and mission? How can the church minister to those who may not be as "plugged-in" as others? I will be seeking to answer those and other questions through my reading and study.

On the practical side of the coin, I will be working to improve and expand our digital footprint as a church here at Bethany. I will be giving our website a much-needed overhaul, and will be looking at other alternatives for communicating with you. I will also be looking at the idea of creating a digital bulletin to enhance your worship experience.

As you may or may not know, I serve the presbytery in the temporary role as Communications Director. I will continue to do that work during my sabbatical, and will also be working to re-build and upgrade the presbytery website, which is also much needed!

So, you can see that I will be very busy, and I'm sure the three months will go by very quickly. I am looking forward to this time of exploration, study, rest, and renewal - with a little travel thrown in as well.

I will be forever grateful to Rick Purcell for agreeing to step in and serve Bethany during my absence. Rick is scheduled to work about 20 hours per week, and will concentrate on worship leadership and preaching, pastoral care concerns, and moderating the Session. I am so grateful that the congregation will be served by someone who knows you, and you know him!

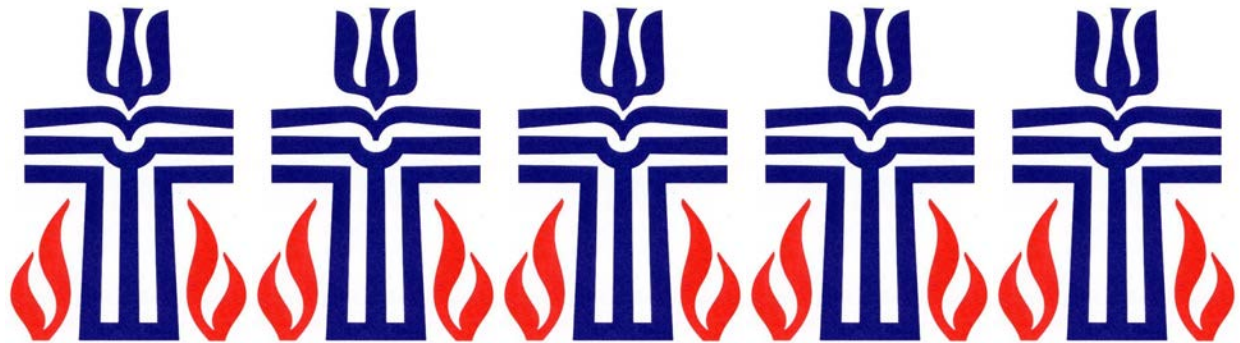
I covet your prayers as I enter this time away. I pray that I will return in September rejuvenated and ready to explore new and creative ministries with you.

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

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



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)

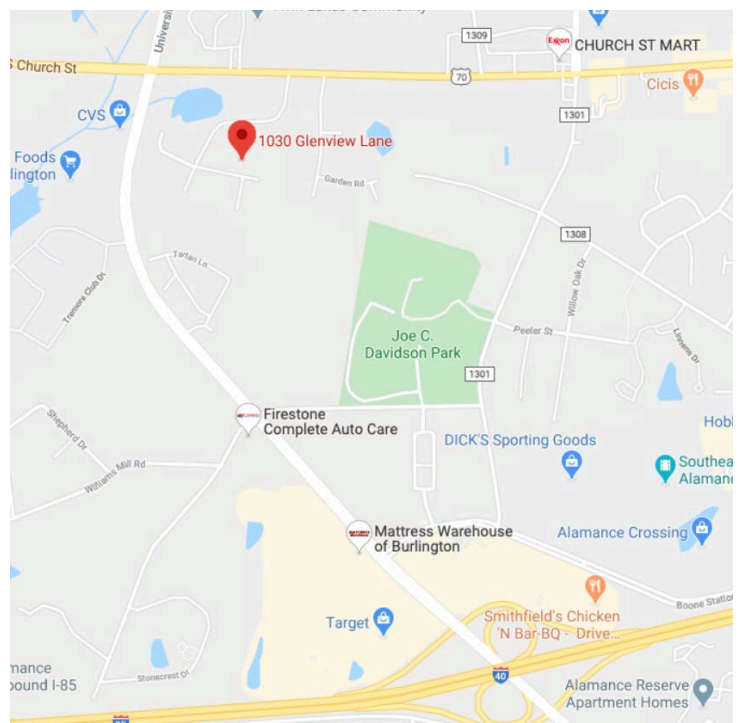
Home of Bill & Linda Abplanalp
1030 Glenview Ln., Burlington

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
Year-to-date Actual Expenses	\$57,158.73
YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	-\$12,580.43

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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