

THE TOWER

April 2010

*Bethel Presbyterian Church
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Calendar - see website



From the Pastor's Desk . . .

“For if we have been united with Jesus in a death like His, we will certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.” Romans 6:5

Mrs. Cathy Norman was her church's organist. One Easter Sunday morning, she did the unthinkable...she overslept! The sunrise service was set for 6:30. At 6:31, the minister called. Ten minutes later, the lightning fast Mrs. Norman was seated at the organ, and the service began.

The following Easter, her phone rang at 5:45. It was the minister, who replied to her "Hello?" with a cheerful, "Christ is risen, and I hope you are, too!"

Easter is the premier celebration for followers of Jesus Christ. We are reminded on that day that we, too, will partake in Christ's resurrection when we place our trust in Him and remain faithful. We should remember, however, beyond Easter Sunday that we are an "Easter People." The joy and peace of knowing that should permeate our lives every day. So, looking at the spiritual side to the joke above, it might not hurt to say to ourselves as we rise each morning, "I am an Easter Person, and I am risen with my Savior, Jesus!"

Joel's Sabbatical



The Presbytery of Shenandoah provides that every minister, after six years of service at a church, shall go on a three month sabbatical. As the Sabbatical Planning Document at <http://www.shenpres.org/SabbaticalPlanning.pdf> says, “Don’t think that you have to do anything that is directly related to your work...this is a time to do something entirely different...something you haven’t had the opportunity to do before!” And, so I shall.

My sabbatical plan, which I presented to the session according to the suggested timeline, has three parts to it. First, I will be working closely with a professional trainer at Gold’s Gym to help put me on the path to physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle. It took me over forty years to get into this shape, and I realize I won’t get out of it overnight. I have already begun down that path and, hopefully, this will help regiment my life into some healthy habits that I can carry on with long after the sabbatical is over.

The second part of my sabbatical concerns an old favorite of mine...foreign languages. I have always loved languages, and I hope to begin learning a new one during my time of study. For reasons that I will explain below, I have chosen Arabic as the language of interest that I will begin learning using a unique online program that is supplemented with native speaking tutors.

The third part of my course of study will involve the study of the religion of Islam. Before you ask, no, I do not plan on converting! My interest lies in the fact that Islam is such an explosively growing faith in the world and, particularly, in the West. Some of that is due to demographics, but the truth is also that 1 out of every 4 Muslims in the United States is a convert from the Christian faith. The overwhelming majority of those converts come from Protestant backgrounds. I want to learn more about this faith and about why it is so powerfully attractive to folks from our background. I hope this study will help me to understand a major world religion and force in the world. I also hope it will help me to see some things that we might do better in Protestant Christian circles, under the guidance of our Reformed faith, to fill some of the needs that others are going elsewhere to find answers for.

Stay tuned during the coming months as more details about the sabbatical and about what will be going on here at Bethel during that time emerge. Do not worry. The session is really on the ball getting ready for this time, making sure that the congregations’ needs will be covered adequately while I am away. Blessings!

Community Good Friday Services will be held at Bethel on April 2nd, 2010, 7:00 pm. Everyone is invited!

The Easter Sunrise Service will be held at Mt. Herman Cemetery. If the weather is bad, the service will be at Redeemer. The service will be followed by a hearty breakfast at Redeemer Lutheran Church. All are invited!

The Church Office will be closed Easter Monday, April 5th, 2010. The staff of Bethel wishes you a happy and blessed Easter!

The Diaconate Meeting, due to the Easter holiday, will be moved to the second Sunday of the month (April 11th) after the worship service.

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering will be collected **Sunday, April 25 during the worship service.** Since 1949, Presbyterians have been giving from the heart in the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering to help those in great need. Our gifts support ministries of disaster response, refugee assistance and resettlement, and community development that help people find safe refuge, start new lives, and work together to strengthen their families and communities. At Bethel this year, the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering will be taken up during the worship service on April 25th. The familiar fish-shaped donation boxes that kids love to use will be available as well.

Presbyterian Women - April Emphasis - Christian Higher Education

Afternoon Circle	2:30 pm at Bethel on April 13
Evening Circle	7:00 pm at Bethel on April 13
PWCT Meeting	12:00 noon on April 11

Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School will be ecumenical again this year! We will join our friends from Mt. Tabor Lutheran, Redeemer Lutheran and St. John's UCC churches (all the same folks we do our Lenten cycle with) for VBS.

Bethel will have a Vacation Bible School meeting with all the churches on Sunday, April 25th. Everyone interested in helping with VBS plus all Christian Education Committee members is encouraged to attend!

The Christian Education Committee will not have their regularly scheduled meeting in April.



WITNESS NEWS

The Witness Committee will meet on Sunday, April 18th, following the worship service.

SPRING IS COMING AND WE ALL WANT TO BE OUTSIDE SO COME AND JOIN US!

The Witness Committee will work on a Greater Augusta Rebuilding Project on Saturday, April 24, beginning at 8 am. If you would like to help with this project, please see Peggy Smith or Derek Almarode. Details such as the location and type of project will be given at a later date. All ages are invited to help with this project.

Don't forget to join us for the Pork Dinner Fundraiser on April 18th! (See the announcement below for more information.)

PORK! PORK! PORK! Where's the PORK?!?!?!?

April 18th at 5 p.m. the **PORK will be in Bethel's Fellowship Hall** for the annual roast pork tenderloin mission dinner fundraiser. Plan to attend to help raise money for Bethel's mission team and mission work.

A Kingsway Food Drive will also be held during this event. Please bring canned goods and other staple items to donate to Kingsway's very important work in our community.

"Building Buckets" will be available to receive donations to pay for items needed in this year's mission work -- nails, sheetrock, plywood, and supplies for our Baja family.

Make your **dinner reservations** by dropping a note in the offering plate on Sunday mornings before April 18th. Reservations are not required but do help us plan for the meal.

It will be an "all donation" evening -- monetary donations for dinner and mission supplies as well as staple food products for Kingsway.

Please join us for this evening of mission fellowship!

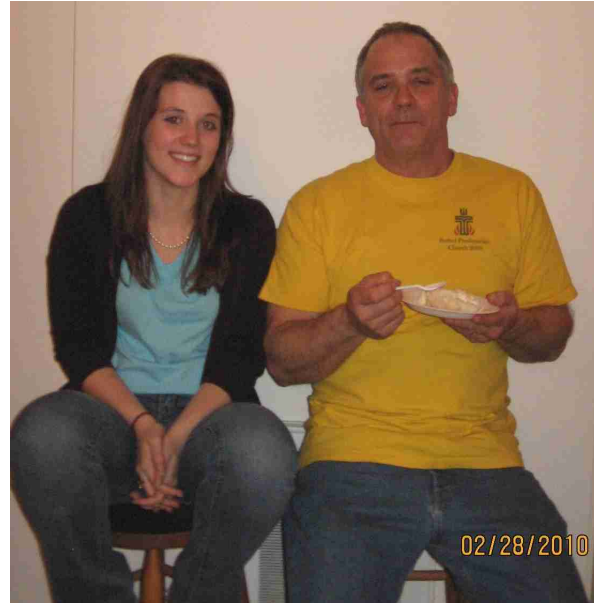


Yard Sale and Car Wash - Our Baja Mission team will hold a yard sale and car wash in Stuarts Draft on Saturday, April 17 on the parking lot of King Custom Awards and Gifts. This is just north of the intersection of Route 340 and 608, at 2573 Tinkling Spring Road. King's Customs is in the old Hershey Store. The time will be from early in the morning until afternoon. This community outreach fundraiser will raise money for Bethel missions.

If anyone has items to donate to our fundraiser, please bring them to the stage at the church, or to the sale area the day before, or call Keith Folsom at 540-294-0025. Any items are appreciated to help us with this project. If nothing else, come get your car washed.

The rain date is April 24.

Please help us support families in Mexico who desperately need us to build for them.



Bethel Scholarship/Loan Committee Report

Funds for new college student loans will be significantly reduced this year. Most available loan funds were expended for outstanding loans and repayments are not sufficient to grant new loans at previous levels.

Student loans are available yearly, providing we have the funds, and repayment is to begin one year after graduation or at the time that a student withdraws from a college or other approved post-secondary education program. Prompt repayment of loans will insure that this program will be able to give aid to our students in coming years.

Applications for new loans will be considered this year, but they must be received by April 15, 2010. Loan forms as well as lists of other documentation required for submission are available from the church office.

Youth News

On Sunday, April 18th, all ages of youth will meet at 3 pm at Bethel. The youth will enjoy an afternoon of outdoor or indoor games depending on the weather. We plan to fly "Scripture Kites" and have a craft project (which we will share with shut-ins at a later date). Come and join us for fun and exercise so we can work up an appetite for the Pork Fundraiser Meal to be served that evening!

April is one of the months that Bethel participates in Virginia's Adopt-A-Highway program. Bethel Youth (and any adults that would like to!) will meet on Friday, April 23rd in the evening, and on Saturday, April 24th to clean up Bethel's assigned section of Howardsville Road (Route 701). On April 18th, specific times to meet will be discussed and clean up teams will be set up. Any adult members of Bethel willing to participate with this project please contact Susan McCutchen-Smith at (540) 580-3315.

Any US veteran that would like and be willing to speak to the Youth Group on Sunday, May 16th, please contact Susan Mc-Cutchen-Smith (540-580-3315). The Youth Committee would like to have a program in honor of Memorial Day.

Thank you! - Youth Committee



SESSION NEWS

John Wooddell and Bill Brubeck reported on their attendance at the Presbytery meeting held at Springhill Presbyterian Church on February 13th, 2010.

Joel reported the Confirmation Class has six young people attending.

JoAnn Pendley, Bell Choir Director, plans to have a Bell Ringing at Bethel and will invited ringers from other churches to participate. No date has been set.

The One Great Hour of Sharing offering will be received on April 25th, 2010.



I'm Levi, not Grant (correction from March)

Deacons' Notes – April 2010

In our March meeting, Ken Wilkinson reported we are close to the 2010 budget at the end of February. We continue to restrain capital and improvements spending as we rebuild reserve funds. There was discussion of the need to raise funds for building repairs, and Ken Wilkinson described a church rebate program with area grocery stores as a possible opportunity and we would like to find volunteers to work on this.

Mary Jones and the Congregational Care Committee have contacted members to update Shepherd List contact information and the lists are being revised. Deacon volunteers for 2010 committees were assigned.

Mac Williams and Jon Bush will take over as co-chairs of the Building and Grounds Committee. Keith stepped down because of conflicting responsibilities, and we will miss Keith in that position. We are working with the insurance adjuster and contractors on bids to repair snow and ice damage to the church gutters and masonry. Bids were solicited for 2010 lawn care. Snow damage to the Manse carport was repaired. We thank Judy Olson for her contribution of a piano to Bethel last month. Repairs were made to the radiators. Jon Bush arranged for trimming tree limbs on the lawn.

A number of Deacons signed up to donate blood this summer. Tish Folsom is working with the Red Cross on arrangements for the blood drive.

Deacon's meeting minutes are posted on the bulletin board near Fellowship Hall. Please contact any Deacon if you have recommendations or needs.

Deacon's Prayer List

Glen Austin, Edith Beahm, Kelsey Bosserman, Covie Brandt, Marjorie Brooks, Lorine Caldwell, Melissa Coffey, Jim Crosby, Aggie Dodson, Jessie Earhart, Nellie Hamilton, Wayne Hord, Flora Law, Kyle Leonard and Family, Lucy Miller, Suzanne Perl, Roy Pilson, Les Prickett, Tom Small, Richard Smith, Charlotte Swortzel, and David P. Turner.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

During the Congregational Meeting on March 7th, Joel stated that the listing for Sunday School attendance on page one of the 2009 Annual Reports is the number on the roll books and does not accurately reflect the active attendance. The actual attendance number is 1/3 of the total of 78 attendees listed in the reports. Joel also stated that it is very important for us to study God's work and Sunday School is a wonderful opportunity to do so in a group setting. The group setting is a wonderful opportunity for discussion with other believers. I think this is a great time to let everyone know what each Sunday School Class has been studying and their plans for the near future. This month two Sunday School Classes will be highlighted, with the remaining classes featured next month.



Jeannie's Cake

The Seekers Sunday School Class, taught by Ken Wilkinson, has been studying Isaiah. On March 14th, the class had finished Chapter 23, the last of the 11 Denunciation chapters. The class will continue studying the next four chapters in Isaiah "The Future Tribulation and Kingdom" (Isaiah's Apocalypse).

The Middle and High School Sunday School Class is taught by Susan McCutchen-Smith and Tabby Moore. In a recent lesson the class discussed G.P.S. - God's Providential Spirit. In April and early May the class will continue with topics that students in the class wish to discuss. Currently six members for the class are in Confirmation Classes with Joel, which will continue until May 16th. On May 23rd, the Middle and High School Class will start a new study entitled: "**THINK - Figure Out What You Believe and Why**" by Kevin Johnson. This study is from Youth Specialties. In THINK, the class will explore what the Bible says about controversial and difficult topics. The class will discover why the Bible is worth believing and that the Bible really does have relevant things to say about life today.

I also would like to share a devotional from New Day, New You by Joyce Meyer. This is

the devotional that was read on Rally Day last September. At the risk of being redundant, I feel it bears repeating.

Become a Student of the Word

Welcome the Word which implanted and rooted [in our hearts] contains the power to save your souls. - James 1:21 (The Amplified Bible)

“Sometimes God transcends the laws of nature and speaks to us through supernatural revelation. There is nothing more supernatural than the Word of God, which is given to us by divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit speaking through His prophets and disciples. The Bible has an answer for every question we might ever have. Anyone who wants to hear God’s voice must be a student of the Word. Of all the other ways that God may speak to us, He will never contradict the written word.”

If we think we can hear clearly from God without spending time in the Word, we are mistaken. Listening for God’s voice without being dedicated to spending time in the Word on a regular basis opens us up to hearing voices that are not from God. Knowing the written Word protects us from deception. Some people only come to God when they are in trouble and need help. But if they are not used to hearing from God, they will find it difficult to recognize His voice when they really need Him.

Even Jesus resisted Satan’s lies by answering, “It is written” (see Luke 4). Any idea, or prompting, or thought that comes to us needs to be compared to the Word of God. All vain imaginations are to be cast down and ignored (see II Corinthians 10:5), but the knowledge of the Word is of vital importance in discerning the voice of God.”

I encourage you to become a student of the Word, study it and form your own perceptions, and then join us for active study and discussion each Sunday morning!

Yours in Christ,
Susan McCutchen-Smith,
Sunday School Superintendent



Lamb Cake

Bethel Missions

On behalf of the Witness Committee, it has come to our attention that there is some concern in regards to the fundraisers and the matrix on how the funds received will be used. Let me begin by saying, that our mission projects in the past have had wonderful support and we are hoping that the support continues through this coming year. Understanding the concern and the questions raised in regards to Bethel's Mission Projects, let me try and clear up any confusion.

Approved 2010 Projects



1. Appalachian Service Project
2. Baja Mexico (Shenandoah Presbytery Sponsored Mission)
3. Greater Augusta Rebuilding

The projects listed above have been approved by the Session, as they have been in years past. These projects are funded and supported by holding dinners, car washes, dessert auctions, bazaars, sponsored meals, silent auctions and missionary sponsorships. There are no special offerings during church services, because we do not want to take away from other special offerings and other missionary relief efforts such as "Four Cents A Meal". Some of these fundraisers are held at our church as well as other locations and all events are announced ahead of time. We have been blessed with great attendance in the past and have shared in some wonderful fellowship as well as great meals. All the money that will be raised from the approved fundraisers scheduled for this year and the funds from the Bethel Mission Tree will be used to pay for all three mission projects listed above. The money raised each year is in addition to our annual budget! All of our projects listed above are paid for out of our "Local Mission Line Item". The money that is raised is collected by our Receiving Treasurer and disbursed by our Disbursing Treasurer. The Witness Committee monitors these funds and the Witness Committee is responsible for overseeing the funds allocated to each project. The Witness Committee will determine the amount of focus and support given to a particular project based on the amount of interest received.

As a church we have agreed to sponsor our approved mission projects and the folks who participate as missionaries. The missionaries that have signed up to go and participate in this important work are expected to be responsible for certain expenditures depending on the mission project they have chosen. These include things such as but not limited to, travel, room and board, legal documentation, tools, medical clearances, immunizations, lost time and salary from work etc.

These costs can be considerable. Typical costs include: Passport \$100.00, all food and incidentals while traveling in the United States to and from \$150.00, Doctors Visits and

Immunizations \$100.00 minimum, Luggage Expenses to and from \$120.00, and all spending money in Mexico \$100.00. At minimum a missionary's responsibility for a foreign mission project is \$720.00 out of pocket. It is also difficult to attach the value of time due to the individual and their circumstances; however, if we did so the value of time would be equally significant. Supporting their call is extremely important and their time is of real value to us in our mission program! The missionary's dedication and devotion are imperative to our mission relief efforts here at Bethel. I hope this has cleared up any questions some of you may have had about our mission projects. If you have any further questions please contact Peggy Smith, Kathy Swisher or myself to address your concerns.

Mission Project Status as of March 1st, 2010

ASP: Due to stringent requirements placed on the churches who participate with ASP, ASP this year was cancelled. We canceled this trip because we had little to no youth interest. ASP requires that all youth participating must be at least a rising freshman and no older than eighteen years of age to qualify as a youth participant. This requirement is extremely difficult to meet for churches such as Bethel that have the majority of their active youth in a younger age bracket. ASP requires a minimum team of five people and a maximum team of seven, of which the majority must be youth.



Dennis Clemmer,
dessert auctioneer

Baja: We have closed the registration for Baja. The Witness Committee had over twenty-six inquiries in regards to being a missionary for Baja. We have eighteen people signed up and we will once again be given



Laura Barmore

the awesome responsibility as a church to provide a family with a new home, food, clothing and a better tomorrow. The Lord has blessed us for five years now with the ability to provide opportunity, hope, and love to a family that simply lives day to day because tomorrow doesn't exist. When tomorrow comes yesterday is forever gone, they have no hope of planning for tomorrow, because every day is a brand new day with its new challenges of life and the struggle to survive.

Greater Augusta Rebuilding Project: Registration is open and all are welcome. We have a spring and a fall project slated here in Augusta County. Come join us and brighten someone's day. Spread the word of Jesus Christ to your neighbors through your actions and your energy.

Thank You,
Derek Almarode, Witness Committee

Boy Scout Troop 13

Bethel is the Charter Organization for Boy Scout Troop 13. Gene Weller is the Scoutmaster. Troop 13 won First Place Overall Honors at the Klondike Derby at Camp Shenandoah in January.

Activities included cold weather camping, sled races, survival skills, and others.

The troop had 5 scouts achieve Eagle rank in 2009 – Adam Marsh, Logan Fravel,

Ethan Cempe, Dalton Painter, and Matthias Desmond. Bethel member Colin Whitaker received his Eagle Scout award in January 2010. Colin is a member of Troop 5 in Lexington.



Kingsway continues to need all types of non-perishable food: cereal, peanut butter, canned goods, dried beans, etc. Please place your donations in the designated basket in Memorial Hall. Thank you for your generosity!

April Greeters: Tobe and Pam Hewitt

Nursery Schedule

April 4	Louise Hoy; Joyce Davis
April 11	Tobe and Pam Hewitt
April 18	Keedie Leonard, Cole and Isabelle Leonard
April 25	Keith Folsom and Kayla Folsom

Deacons Offering Schedule for April

Jon Bush	Larry Damico
Steve Hord	Mary Jones

Flower Schedule for April

April 4	Easter Lilies
April 11	Jackie Law
April 18	JoAnn Pendley - Memorial
April 25	Doris True – Memorial



Mike Carpenter, Prime Time Catering, at Mission Benefit

A special thank you to Kenny and Judy Olson for donating a piano to Bethel for the Fellowship Hall! Bethel appreciates your generosity!

Congratulations to the Bosserman family on the birth of Destiny Grace Brendia in March. She weighed 6 lbs., 1 oz., and was 19 inches long. Destiny is the daughter of Kelsey Bosserman and the granddaughter of Keith Bosserman and Kelly Bosserman.

Bit Thank You's to

The Smith, Almarode, and Barmore families for the delicious Prime Rib Meal on February 28th.

Mike Carpenter (Meagan Smith's father) of Prime Time Catering for cooking the Prime Rib and Potatoes. \$2,119.00 was raised from the Prime Rib meal for the Mission Fund.

Everyone who contributed desserts for the Dessert Auction and to Dennis Clemmer for being the auctioneer. We had 52 desserts and \$2,735.50 was raised from the auction for the Mission Fund.

Members of the Baja Team that helped with serving the meal and cleaning up.

The WHOLE CONGREGATION for generous support and attendance at the meal. To the best of our ability to count over 160 people were served.

-Witness Committee

Our sympathies and condolences to Kyle Leonard and his family with the passing of his father, Dr. Gordon Kyle Leonard on Wednesday, March 3rd.

Don't Forget!!

April 1 - April Fool's Day

April 4 - Easter

April 22 - Earth Day

TAKE A MOMENT TO PRAY FOR ALL WHO STAND IN NEED OF PRAYER.