

THE TOWER

Bethel Presbyterian Church

563 Bethel Green Road, Staunton, Virginia 24401
540-886-6041 or bethelpc@gmail.com
Website –bethelpresbyterianstaunton.org

December, 2014

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Church Family,

Ahhh, December. Here we are, as a new Church year begins, as we move through Advent and into the Christmas Season. Something changes around this time of year. Something magical happens. And it's not just for the kids.

As the days shorten and the nights grow colder, the first frost happens, and we all decide that it would be a good idea to move a tree or two indoors, something more than just the climate changes. It's that childlike glee as we move through this holy time.

But of course it is not just gifts and Santa and tinsel. This is one of the most holy times of the year, as we await, with bated breath, for God to do something amazing. And that amazing thing, that incredible event is what we look forward to celebrating and what we carry with us throughout the year.

I look forward to my first Advent and Christmas season as a pastor. I cannot wait to share in this journey and celebration with you, my new Church family. It will be an adventure as we go through the hopeful expectation of the coming Messiah, through the inbreaking of God into this world, and continue on as that radical change affects us throughout the coming year.

God bless,
Pastor David Shearer



As I See It

It's common for pastors to remind people to keep Christ in Christmas, and that is a noble goal. It might be cliché but Christ is the reason for the Season. Despite the hustle and bustle of sales and shopping lists, parties and turkeys, it is Jesus himself that should be our central focus.

But even as we set our eyes on Jesus and put the commercialism of the holiday season into the background, I want us to remember all aspects of this holiday. We all might be tempted to play our favorite Christmas tunes on repeat throughout all of December, indeed, I probably will, but it's important to progress through this season step by step and not just move ahead to the nativity scene.

It may be a temptation for us to jump into singing Joy to the World and be grateful for the coming Messiah, but we must give Advent its due also. Advent is a time of expectation. It is when we prepare for the coming Lord more than celebrate his arrival. As we move through the four weeks of Advent we are called to wait in hopeful anticipation for God to act in our lives through Jesus Christ, and just as importantly, we are called to evaluate those very lives, look at our shortcomings and repent from our sin.

If Christmas is the time of joyful recognition that Jesus Christ has come to save us from our sins, then Advent is the time that we recognize that we need Jesus Christ to come and save us from our sins. It is this tension between repentance and joy that makes this season so special.



Class of 2017 Officers

New officers for the Class of 2017 were elected at the Congregational Meeting on November 16th after the worship service. The following people were nominated and elected to the Class of 2017:

Elders

Ken Miller
David Schooley
Kathy Swisher
Jill Webb

Deacons

Tammy Barbour
Barbara Gough
Charlie Johnson
Marty Simmers

Trustees

Kenny Olson
Dale C. Smith

December Worship Schedule

December 7, 2014

2nd Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

December 14, 2014

3rd Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 21, 2014

4th Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:47-55; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

December 24, 2013

Christmas Eve

Candlelight Service 9:00 pm

Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14

December 28, 2014

1st Sunday after Christmas Day

Isaiah 61:10 - 62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

Our annual Christmas Eve candle lighting service will be held at 9 pm. The service is always a moving and beautiful experience as we hear the Good News both read and sung. Come and take part as we sing, as we pray, and as we praise God for the birth of our Savior!

There will be Officer Training and a joint meeting of the Session, Diaconate, and Board of Trustees on Saturday, December 6th from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. All current officers and all newly elected officers (Elders, Deacons, and Trustees) who will be serving in 2015 need to make plans to attend. If you are unable to be there please let Pastor David know as soon as possible (540/490-2258; jdavidshearer@gmail.com).

Salvation Army Christmas Tree

Watch for the Salvation Army tree which will be on the table in Memorial Hall soon. We need to make sure that all of those gift tags are taken so that the families we are helping can receive the Christmas that they have dreamed of and prayed about. Remember that the gifts will need to be returned to the church by December 7th and will need to be wrapped with the tag attached. Also, don't forget that you can "team up" to buy gifts (especially expensive ones) if you want to. Thank you so much for your great generosity! Bethel's people can always be counted on to be a blessing!

Joy Gift Program - December 14th, 2014

The Joy Gift program will be held on Sunday, December 14th following the worship service. We will be having a covered dish meal so bring your favorite dish to share! Following the meal we will be having a program presented by our young people under the direction of Susan Smith. Come and join us for a great meal and the program that will follow!

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

EVERYONE "Let's go Christmas Caroling", on Sunday, December 21st!

Following the worship service we will have lunch and then carpool to the homes of our members who are homebound. Let's join together to make the Christmas Holidays more special for our homebound members!

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE UNTO THE LORD. REJOICE AND SING PRAISE. - PSALM 98:4



Adrienne Barker will be out of the Church Office from Monday, December 1st through Thursday, December 4th. Penny Lee will be filling in as Church Office Manager that week. Office hours will still be Monday through Thursday from 9 am until 3 pm. Many thanks to Penny for filling in while Adrienne is on vacation!

The January Tower Deadline will be Thursday, December 11th. Please have all articles and announcements to the Church Office by noon. Articles and announcements for the January Tower can be left in Adrienne's mailbox in Memorial Hall or you can email them to her at bethelpc@gmail.com. When writing announcements for the newsletter please keep in mind the 5 W's: Who? What? When? Where? Why?. Answer all of these in your announcement and you can be sure that your news will be communicated well. Please remember if you turn in items after the deadline Adrienne cannot guarantee they will be included in the Tower. The January Tower will be mailed out a week early on Thursday, December 18th due to the Christmas holiday.



Presbyterian Women
December 2014

***The Afternoon Circle** will meet on Tuesday, December 9th, at 11:00 am (note the time change!). The meeting will be at the home of Libby Smith, (180 Howardsville Road; Staunton). Please contact Libby at 540/337-2058 if you have any questions.

***The Evening Circle** will have a Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 9th, at 6:00 pm at the church. We will eat dinner together and exchange gifts. Please bring a dish to share and a small gift. If you have any questions, please call Yvonne Goodson at 540/712-0678.

Want an idea for Christmas presents? The Growth & Strengthening Committee has new Bethel travel mugs with the Bethel logo on them for \$10.00 each. You can see the mug and sign-up to order mugs at the table in Memorial Hall. The deadline to sign-up if you want the mugs in time for Christmas is DECEMBER 2nd. If you have questions please see Barb Gough or Tom Whitaker.

The Bumgardner Classroom will not be available for use from Monday, December 15th through Wednesday, December 17th while the floors are being refinished. Thank you for your patience while this project is being completed.



Bethel Christmas Poinsettias or Donations To BERF Form

You may order Poinsettias at a cost of \$10.00 (tax included) each or you may make a monetary donation to BERF (Bethel Emergency Relief Fund). The Poinsettias purchased and the donations made to BERF will be acknowledged in the bulletin on December 21st and Christmas Eve. Please fill out the form below, attach the check or cash and place in the offering plate or mail to the Church Office: Attn: Church Office; 563 Bethel Green Road; Staunton, VA 24401. If you are purchasing a poinsettia please make checks payable to Bethel Presbyterian Church. If you are making a donation to BERF please make the check payable to Bethel Emergency Relief Fund. **The deadline is Monday, December 15th at 3 pm.**

**Note: Please fill out the form completely. Sometimes forms come back not completely filled out and it can make things difficult when compiling them for the bulletins. Also, if you would like to order a poinsettia and make a donation please use two forms (one for the poinsettia and one for the donation). Thank you!*

Christmas Poinsettias and BERF Donations Form

Please fill out the form below, attach the check or cash and place in the offering plate or mail to the Church Office: Attn: Church Office; 563 Bethel Green Road; Staunton, VA 24401. If you are purchasing a poinsettia please make checks payable to Bethel Presbyterian Church. If you are making a donation to BERF please make the check payable to Bethel Emergency Relief Fund. **The deadline is Monday, December 15th at 3 pm.**

Number of Poinsettias _____ Check or Cash Total _____
or
Donation to BERF _____ Check or Cash Total _____

In Honor Of : _____

Given By: _____

In Memory Of: _____

Given By: _____

*Poinsettias will be on display in the church on December 21st, Christmas Eve and December 28th. ****Remember to pick- up Poinsettia(s) following the Christmas Eve Service or on Sunday, December 28th, following the worship service.*****

Church Office Closed

The Church Office will be closed for the Christmas holiday season on Wednesday, December 24th and Thursday, December 25th and on Wednesday, December 31st and Thursday, January 1st for New Year's. Thank you!

Pastor David is switching his days off. From now on, unless noted otherwise, Pastor David will have Mondays and Fridays off. Adrienne will continue to be in the office Monday through Thursday from 9 am until 3 pm.

SESSION NEWS

The Session met Monday, November 10th, 2014 with nine members and the Moderator present.

Others present were Barbara Gough and Chris Schooley.

Chris Schooley gave a report from the Deacons and the 21st Century Fund.

The next meeting of Session will be on Saturday, December 6th, 2014, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm for Officer Training and our regular Session Meeting.

Ordination and Installation of Officers will be on Sunday, January 4th, 2015 during the morning worship service.

Approval was given for David to be off on Monday and Friday of each week.

The Joy Gift Program will be on Sunday, December 14th, 2014 following a covered dish lunch.

Christmas Caroling will be on Sunday, December 21st, after having lunch at the church.

The Growth & Strengthening Committee plans to provide coffee mugs with the Bethel logo for sale to anyone interested.



Bethel Prayer List

Friends and Family of Catherine Armstrong (Kay Thompson's mother and Penny Lee's grandmother), Catherine Bryan (friend of Stephanie Rivers), Barbara Burroughs (friend of Laura Barmore), Hunter Butler (son of Laura Showalter and Jamie Butler and grandson of Steve Hord), Lorine Caldwell (Dean Caldwell's mother), Debbie Callison and her sister-in-law Patricia Stiles and great-niece Reese Burdette, Judy Clark and Tony Teague and their Families (friends of Drury Whitaker), Jim and Betty Crosby, Ginger Damico (Larry Damico's mother), Jarod Davis, Bobbye D'Orsi and her daughter Pam Boone (Jill Webb's neighbor), Friends and Family of Jessie Earhart, Sissy Guerrieri (friend of Sally and Bill Brubeck), Joe Hagee (uncle of Laura Barmore), Danielle Hanger, John & Gwen Haspels (PCUSA Missionaries in Ethiopia), Frances Humphries (friend of Margaret Wade), Travis Hutchinson (friend of Rhonda and Charlie Johnson), Jessica Jordan (friend of Summer Barmore), Bill Klitzman (nephew of Louise Hoy), Matt Koogler (Riverheads High School student), Charlie and Sara Ann Lamb, David Law, Margaret Liptrap, Meade Loomis (sister of Anne Jones), Anna Losh (grandmother of Susan Smith's friend), Judy Olson, Christy Glover Pilson (John Pilson's niece), Carly Pond (12 year old great niece of John Pilson), Pam Prickett and her mother, Carol Richardson (Yvonne Goodson's sister), Jeremy Shipe, Charlotte Swortzel, Jerry Utz (Cynthia Williams brother), Friends and Family of Chloe Vint, Bruce Webb (friend of Corbett Smith), Rev. Rob Woodfin (Pastor - St. Paul's UMC), MISSIONARY: Michael and Rachel Weller and Ethiopian friends

With any additions or updates, please call Tammy Barbour, 540-471-0450, Barb Gough, 540-255-6521, or the Church Office, 540-886-6041.

Receiving Treasurer Report

Estimated Budget through November 1st, 2014: \$147,832

Receipts: \$144,313 Expenses: \$132,426

21st Century Fund

Pledges Received: 46 Amount Pledged: \$65,490

Total Received on Pledges: \$53,228 (Due 2014 & 15: \$12,262)

Total Received, all sources 2012, 13, 14: \$142,586

Total Expected, all sources: \$154,848



Financial Stewardship

Offerings 2014: It is requested that offerings for 2014 be made no later than Sunday, December 28th. Thank you for your continued support.

Pledges 2015: 23 pledges for a total of \$67,640 have been received. Thanks to those who pledged. If you have not already pledged, please prayerfully consider pledging now for 2015 - it is never too late! A pledge card is included below, and they are also available at the church. Send completed cards to the church (Attn: Receiving Treasurer), or put in the Receiving Treasurer mailbox in Memorial Hall or in the offering plate any Sunday.

Offering Envelopes for 2015: Beginning Sunday December 14th, numbered offering envelopes will be available in the vestibule. If you received numbered envelopes in 2014 you will have the same number reserved for 2015. If you do not currently use envelopes but would like to, please contact the Church Office with your request.

NAME(S) _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT FOR 20_____
Grateful for God's love in Jesus Christ, I (we) make the following commitment to support the mission of the church through our congregation, presbytery, synod, and General Assembly.
\$ _____ per <input type="checkbox"/> week <input type="checkbox"/> month <input type="checkbox"/> other _____
<i>(This commitment may be increased due to changing circumstances)</i>
I (we) wish to receive information about giving through Estate Planning <input type="checkbox"/>
Keep this portion as a record of your financial stewardship commitment for the year 20_____.
My (our) financial stewardship commitment
\$ _____ per <input type="checkbox"/> week <input type="checkbox"/> month <input type="checkbox"/> other _____
<i>(This commitment may be increased due to changing circumstances)</i>

Congratulations to Bethel Youth who recently received outstanding agricultural awards!



Ayla Janney was the Reserve Junior Champion in judging livestock at the Virginia State Fair in Richmond in September.



Isabelle Leonard earned National recognition as the 2014 Individual High Point Winner in evaluation and management of dairy cattle at the National FFA Convention in Louisville, KY in October.



Cole Leonard and Jennifer Callison were part of a team that won a Virginia State Competition in June and represented Virginia at the National FFA Convention. Nationally, the team placed 5th and Cole placed 7th individually.

The FFA organization for high school age youth was once called Future Farmers of America. It focuses on career, leadership, life skills, problem solving, and management through agriculture.

Twelve Riverheads students traveled to Louisville for the 2014 national event to join more than 60,000 students from all over the country.



Cold Feet - Warm Hearts

Sock donation for the needy (all ages) In cooperation with the Valley Mission

Empty your sock drawer of gently worn or new socks you never wear (fasten with a safety pin) and drop off at Grandma's Bait at 24 E. Beverly Street in downtown Staunton.

Thank you for your generosity!





The Waynesboro Choral Society presents “Once Upon A Christmas” concert on Monday, December 1st and Tuesday, December 2nd. The concert begins at 7:30 pm each evening with the doors opening at 6:30 pm. The concerts will be held in the Louis Spilman Auditorium at Waynesboro High School. Tickets are \$10.00 per person ages 12 and up. They may be purchased at Bookworks in Staunton, Waynesboro Garden and Landscape Center and Wrights Hallmark in Waynesboro, Party Umbrella in Stuarts Draft, or at the door. Begin the Christmas season with an enjoyable evening of sacred and secular Christmas music.

Christmas Dinner and Sounds of the Season featuring SOUND DIRECTION singers Betsy and Keith Dishman, David Tate, Bettie and John Tindall. Join us for the inspiring harmonies and moving music of one of Virginia's finest a'capella groups.

December 5th, 2014, Massanetta Springs, Harrisonburg, VA

6:00 Dinner - Historic Hotel 7:00 Concert - Wellford Room

Dinner \$18.00 Adults \$14.00 Children Ages 6-12
Dinner and Lodging Reservations through December 1st
540-434-3829 conferences@massanettasprings.org

Our sympathies and condolences to the family and friends of Jessie Earhart who passed away on October 23rd, 2014.



Our sympathy and condolences to Pam Prickett and her family in the death of her father in Florida. Pam's mother is also ill so please keep her in your prayers as well.



I would like to thank everyone for their sympathy, prayers and acts of kindness in the loss of my mother, Catherine Armstrong. Also, a special thank you to Pastor David for the wonderful service.

- Kay Thompson and Family

December 2014 Schedules

Transportation (Charlotte)

December 7th - Tom Heizer
December 14th - Tom Heizer
December 21st - Dale Thompson
December 28th - Dale Thompson

Transportation (Jeb)

December 7th - TBA
December 14th - Tammy Barbour
December 21st - Chris Schooley
December 28th - Tom Heizer

Nursery

December 7th - Evelyn Laporte; Libby Smith
December 14th - Joe and Sally Williams
December 21st - Brian and Penny Lee
December 28th - Joyce Davis; Louise Hoy

Flowers

December 7th - Bettie Swisher
December 14th - Bettie Swisher
December 21st - December 28th - Christmas Poinsettias

Deacons' Offering

Bob Olson
Chris Schooley
Tim Turner
Joe Williams



Congratulations to the family of Abigail Marie Woods who was born on October 20th. She is the daughter of Preston and Emily (Hord) Woods and the granddaughter of Steve Hord and Nancy Reichard. Abigail weighed 6 lbs, 14 oz and was 18 1/2 inches long. Congratulations on this new addition to your family!

Thanks to all the people listed below who made my job a million times easier throughout 2014! I could never get everything done without the help of my faithful volunteers!

- Adrienne Barker, Bethel Office Manager

A special thank you to all the people who have helped me fold the Tower during 2014:

Jackie Law, Evelyn LaPorte, Joyce Miller, Marty Simmers, Marion Simmers, Betty Heizer, Penny Lee, and Irene Elliott. I could never get the Tower mailed without your help! Also, a special thank you to Ken Wilkinson who faithfully proofreads the Tower every month before publication.

A special thank you to Ken and Joyce Miller for emailing and adding photographs to the email version of the Tower every month. Also, thanks to Ken for emailing important Congregational News and Prayer Requests.

A special thank you to the Communications Committee - especially Tim Turner and Jill Webb for all their work on the Bethel website. Special thanks also to Penny Lee for all of her help with the graphic art on church publications.

A special thank you to Jill Webb for all the help you give me with a thousand different tasks including helping with folding bulletins, folding bulletin inserts, getting mailings ready, and getting supplies ordered.

The Witness Committee would like to thank Kenneth LaPorte and sons for installing the railing on the front steps, Rhonda Johnson, Kathy and Wayne Swisher and Peggy Smith for installing downspout drains for the Renewing Homes of Greater Augusta to complete the project. Thanks for all your hard work and time!

Many thanks to everyone who provided a shoebox for Operation Christmas Child this year. Twenty shoeboxes were collected for needy children. Thanks for all the support for this worthwhile project! - Peggy Smith

HARVEST FESTIVAL Thanks to Susan Smith for a wonderfully planned Harvest Festival! The children and adults had a great time as they carved pumpkins, played games, decorated cupcakes, and enjoyed crafts. The evening was concluded with Trunk or Treat and a piñata. It was a fun filled evening for all! A big THANKS to everyone who helped make it a success!





Don't Forget!

December 21st - First Day of Winter
December 24th - Christmas Eve
December 25th - Christmas Day
December 31st - New Year's Eve

Don't forget to "Like" us on Facebook! 

