

THE TOWER

Bethel Presbyterian Church

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24401

540-886-6041 or bethelpc@gmail.com

Website –bethelpresbyterianstaunton.org

January, 2015



From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Church Family,

It is hard to believe that 2015 is already upon us. It seems like just yesterday that we were moving into the new millennium.

Concern with Y2K was rampant, and we were all trying to figure out how we were going to abbreviate the year 2000 ('00 just doesn't have the same ring that '99 had).

Of course, I was sick December 31st, 1999 so I did not see the new millennium arrive. Oh well, there's always next millennium. But here we are, entering into 2015 and the time has flown by. For that matter, this last year has flown by. I hope you all had a good one. How did you all do on your 2014 New Year's Resolutions?

If you are anything like me, then you can't even remember what you resolved to do in 2014. Exercise more? Eat healthier maybe? I don't even know. But as we are entering into this New Year, let us all resolve to do something.

Let us dedicate 2015 to the Lord. Let us resolve to listen to him more. Let us resolve to do his will better. Let's make 2015 a year about God. Let's worship him and pray to him more. Let us show his love to those around us.

I offer you this challenge. This next year, each of you resolve to invite one person to church. If each of us were to invite one person, imagine what we would look like as we enter into 2016. Let this be a year of bringing people to God.

God bless,
Reverend David Shearer



As I See It

Ebenezer Scrooge is offered this challenge at the end of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. After being an intolerable human being for his entire life, the Ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future encourage him to carry the spirit of Christmas, which he had only recently discovered, throughout the entire year.

What a good idea. Now don't get me wrong, I don't think we need to be listening to Silent Night next September. But at the same time, there is something about keeping that Christmas idea all year long. In *A Christmas Carol*, the spirit of Christmas is a spirit of love and charity, and we should all be encouraged by Scrooge's transformation from an uncaring, unloving person into a charitable individual.

But charity is only part of the Christmas spirit. On January 4th we will be celebrating Epiphany. This holiday marks the moment that the Magi, wise men from the east, arrive in Judea in search of the new King. Eventually they find the Christ child and worship him.

As you probably know our Church calendar does not begin in January. Rather the Church's New Year is the beginning of Advent. But I do find it interesting that our secular calendar, beginning in January, matches up so nicely with Epiphany. We end one calendar year celebrating the birth of Christ and we begin the next celebrating the Magi who have found him.

It is this spirit of searching for the Christ that we should take with us throughout the entire year. Throughout Advent we waited in hopeful expectation for the Christ to arrive. Now he has. Now is not the time for return to our normal lives. The Christ has arrived! That is incredible! Let us be like the Magi, willing to travel countless miles just with the hope of worshiping our Lord! Let us take that spirit throughout the rest of the year.



January Worship Schedule

January 4, 2015

Epiphany

Holy Communion

Ordination & Installation of Church Officers

11:00 am

Read: Jeremiah 31:7-14 Psalm 147:12-20 Ephesians 1:3-14 John 1:(1-9), 10-18

January 11, 2015

Baptism of the Lord

11:00 am

Read: Genesis 1:1-5 Psalm 29 Acts 19:1-7 Mark 1:4-11

January 18, 2015

2nd Sunday after Epiphany

11:00 am

Read: I Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20) Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 I Corinthians 6:12-20
John 1:43-51

January 25, 2015

3rd Sunday after Epiphany

11:00 am

Read: Jonah 3:1-5 Psalm 62:5-12 I Corinthians 7:29-31 Mark 1:14-20

Communion will be held during the worship service on Sunday, January 4th, Epiphany Sunday.

On January 4th, Bethel will be ordaining and installing our newly elected officers in a special Sunday morning worship service. Come and be a part of this important and moving moment in the life of the church.

If you are an officer and will be unable to be at the service please let Pastor David or the Church Office know as soon as possible. Thank you.

If you have a mailbox in Memorial Hall, please check it and clean it out by January 4th, 2015. Remember to check your mailbox in Memorial Hall periodically for updates, church information, etc. Thanks!



Bible Study Resumes . . .

Thursday Nights Starting January 8th . . . 7:00 pm in the Bethel Fellowship Hall
Bible Study theme continues to be: "The Life and Times of Jesus Christ"
Questions: Contact Pastor David at 540/490-2258 or jdavidshearer@gmail.com

The Church Office will be closed on December 31st, 2014 and January 1st, 2015 for New Year's. The staff of Bethel wishes you a blessed and Happy New Year!

The Church Office will be closed on Monday, January 19th, 2015 for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

Witness/Mission Committee:

The Witness/Mission Committee invites everyone to the Mission Appreciation Luncheon after worship on Sunday, January 11th, 2015. There is no need to bring anything - just come to enjoy the fellowship and learn about what we did last year and the many projects we have planned for this year. Without you, none of this would be possible and we want to take this opportunity to thank you!

The deadline for the Annual Reports for 2014 is January 15th, 2015. If you were a chair of a committee for 2014, please have your report and statement to the Church Office by the above date. Thank you!

Please send your announcements for the weekly bulletin to the Church Office by 3 pm each Wednesday. Feel free to email the information to: bethelpc@gmail.com or you can place it in Adrienne's mailbox in Memorial Hall. Thank you!

The February Tower Deadline will be Thursday, January 15th. Please have all articles and announcements to the Church Office by noon. Articles and announcements for the February Tower can be left in Adrienne's mailbox in Memorial Hall or you can email them to: bethelpc@gmail.com. When writing announcements for the newsletter please keep in mind the 5 W's: Who? What? When? Where? Why?. Please remember if you turn in items after the deadline Adrienne cannot guarantee they will be included in the Tower. Thank you!

Family Fun Night

The Christian Education Committee will host a Family Fun Night on Saturday, January 17th, from 6 pm to 8 pm in the Fellowship Hall. So get rid of those WINTER BLAHS. Bring your family and friends and join us for a fun filled evening of games and activities. Hot dogs, popcorn, snacks and drinks will be provided. We look forward to seeing you on January 17th for this time of fun and fellowship!

Communion Schedule - 2015

January 4th - Epiphany

February 15th - Transfiguration of the Lord

March 29th - Palm Sunday

April 2nd - Maundy Thursday

April 12th

May 24th - Pentecost Sunday

June 14th

July 12th

August 23rd - Homecoming

September 13th

October 4th - World Communion Sunday

November 1st

November 29th - 1st Sunday of Advent

Presbyterian Women

January 2015

Emphasis: Witness Season

***The Afternoon Circle** will meet at the church on January 13th, at 1:30 pm.

***The Evening Circle** will meet at the church on January 13th, at 7:00 pm.

January 4th - PWCT Meeting



2015 Baja Mission Trip Announced

Applications are now being accepted for the 2015 Baja Mission Trip sponsored through World Wide Ministries. There are openings for 60 people. The trip is scheduled for July 19th - July 25th, 2015. This will be the 15th year that churches from the Shenandoah Presbytery have sent people to Vicente Guerrero, Baja California, Mexico to participate in the house building ministry there. You can learn more about the mission trip by downloading the “Frequently Asked Questions about 2015” at <http://shenpres.org/baja-mission/>. Meetings for everyone participating in the trip will begin in late January and registrations will close March 1st, 2015. Participating in this Mission Trip will make a difference in your life.

ATTENTION YOUTH!

Make plans now to attend a weekend conference Jan. 30th - January 31st in Richmond, VA. Acquire The Fire presents “RESILIENT”, a weekend, Christian themed event that is engineered to deliver the gospel to young people in an immersive, unique, and powerful way. Acquire the Fire is one of the oldest and largest events of its kind. Experience life-changing worship by award-winning Christian artists, dynamic speaking from major Christian speakers and authors, powerful, professionally choreographed skits and dramas by the Acquire the Fire drama team and more. Content is designed and geared towards ages 12-18. Please contact Irene Elliott for further details.

Please save your Christmas cards for an Advent project for next year. There will be a box in Memorial Hall that you can place the cards in. Thanks! - Peggy Smith



SESSION NEWS

The Session met Saturday, December 6th, at 10:00 am along with the Deacons, Trustees and newly elected officers. There were 23 Church Officers in attendance. We had training, the joint meeting, lunch and our separate meetings.

*The Session, Deacons and Trustees had a thorough discussion on ways to improve the church and its programs.

*The newly elected officers for the Class of 2017 were approved.

*The painting of Memorial Hall was approved.

*The former Preschool Room will be renovated and used as Bethel's History Room and for meetings.

*Jon Bush has spoken for some of the cabinets from the Preschool Room. For any cabinets remaining, please contact the Church Office. Final disposal will go to Habitat for Humanity.



Financial Stewardship

Estimated Budget through November 30th, 2014: \$165,056.00

Receipts: \$163,628.00 Expenses: \$162,757.00

Financial Stewardship 2015

Pledges 2015: 23 pledges for a total of \$85,600 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!

Offering Envelopes for 2015: Are 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 or want to discontinue use, please contact the Church Office with your request.



Directory Updates

Devon and Mary (Williams) Dransfield
540/294-1855
78 Haytie Lane
Swoope, VA 24479

Dustin and Sarah (Heizer) Smith
310 Thomas Street
Staunton, VA 24401
sheizer1987@gmail.com31

Maurice and Odell Smith
540/886-2823
Brightview Assisted Living
Woodlee Road; Apt. 306
Staunton, VA 24401

Robyn Smith
2130 Stuarts Draft Highway
Stuarts Draft, VA 24477

Bethel Congregation and Friends:

Please submit any changes to your address, phone numbers, email, etc. to the Church Office. If we do not have your correct information, you may miss out on Bethel events and news. You can send update information to the Church Office at bethelpc@gmail.com. Thank you!



Our sympathies and condolences to the family and friends of Charlie Lamb who passed away on Monday, November 17th, 2014.

Our sympathies and condolences to Stephanie Rivers and her family on the passing of her father, Ray Diamond on December 3rd.



Our sympathies and condolences to Pam Prickett and her family on the passing of her mother on December 13th.



Bethel Prayer List:

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 & her sister-in-law Patricia Stiles & great-niece Reese Burdette, Judy Clark & Tony Teague & their Families (friends of Drury Whitaker), Jim & Betty Crosby, Ginger Damico (Larry Damico's mother), Jarod Davis (please send cards), 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), Friends & Family of Charlie Lamb, 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 family, Carol Richardson (Yvonne Goodson's sister), Stephanie Rivers and Family (father passed away), Jeremy Shipe, Friends and Family of Tommy Stephenson, Charlotte Swortzel, Jerry Utz (Cynthia Williams brother), Friends and Family of Chloe Vint, Bruce Webb (friend of Corbett Smith), Keith Williams (Pam Prickett's brother), 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.

In the event of bad weather on Sunday mornings, please tune into WHSV - TV3 (Harrisonburg) or log onto their website (www.whsv.com) for information on whether church has been cancelled. Thank you!



Did you know that Libby Smith coordinates the flowers that are in the church every week? Thank you, Libby.

While the schedule has been set for 2015, there are Sundays available. If you would like to provide an arrangement some Sunday, please call Libby at (540) 487-8494 or the Church Office to see what dates are available.

January 2015 Schedules

Flowers:

January 4th - Libby Smith/Communion
January 11th - January 25th - Libby Smith

Transportation:

January 4th - Derek Almarode
January 11th - January 25th - Susan McCutchen-Smith

Nursery

January 4th - Chris and Therese Schooley
January 11th - Keedie Leonard; Cole/Isabelle Leonard
January 18th - Keith Folsom; Kayla Folsom
January 25th - James and Cynthia Williams

Deacons' Offering

Barb Gough
Charlie Johnson
Tabby Moore
Mac Williams



Thank you so much for all your prayers, the wonderful cards, and comforting words after the passing of my father. Again, thank you all. - Pamela Prickett and Family

I would like to thank everyone for all the calls and cards during the loss of my husband, Charles Lamb. Also, thanks to David Shearer for the nice graveside service and to the Women of the Church for the wonderful refreshments following the service. - Sara Ann Lamb

We would like to send a special thank you to all of those that assisted with the services for Jessie Earhart. She was a faithful member of Bethel for many years. She loved her church, and more and importantly her church family. Special thank you to the Elders and Deacons for being pallbearers, thank you to the women of the church for the refreshments, thank you to Kay Swisher, Kathy Swisher and Libby Smith for the special meal made for the family. Thank you Sara Ann Lamb for the always beautiful music, and thank you to pastor Shearer for all your support, kind words and prayers. Jessie would have been honored by everyone's contribution. The family truly appreciates everyone's assistance with honoring Jessie. She will be greatly missed.

Thank you all,
The Potter Family and The Snell Family

Evergreen wreaths represent the unending cycle of life and have been the symbols of victory and honor. As early as 1444, evergreen boughs were used as Christmas decorations in London. In 16th century Germany, evergreen branches were intertwined in a circular shape to symbolize God's love, which has no beginning and no end and remind us of the everlasting life that is ours through Christ Jesus. Isaiah 60:13 says, "The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the juniper, the fir and the cypress together, to adorn my sanctuary." Thank you to Betty and Jim Crosby for, again donating the wreaths that adorn the doors of the church during Advent and Christmas.

Our thanks to all who helped decorate the church over the Thanksgiving weekend. To Bill Francisco for donating the beautiful tree and to Justin Swisher, Laura Swisher and Jesse Resnick for decorating it. To the Worship Committee, Bill, Sally, Irene and the Shearer family, for hanging the garland and advent wreath and candles. To Dale Thompson for cleaning the advent wreath stand and adapting it for the oil candles. To Derek Almarode for donating the nativity scene that was made by his mother. To Cynthia Williams and Keedie Leonard for decorating the windows and adding live greenery to the garland and to all who provided the greenery. A special thank you to Jon Bush for cleaning up after us. Another special thank you to all the children and youth who took part in the Hanging of the Greens service, Isabelle, Cole, Maggie, Bayleigh, Ashlyn, Ayla, Samantha, Cate, James, Moose, Harleigh and Lydia.

Congratulations Bethel for helping the Salvation Army “Doing the Most Good”! Our volunteer house went from three hours from the Baja Team in 2013 to 22 hours in 2014. Thank you to the following Red Kettle Ringers: The Almarode Family, Laura Barmore, Bill Brubeck, Barbara Damico, Keith and Kayla Folsom, Barbara Gough, Rhonda Johnson, Jackie Law, Ken Miller, Sarah Frances Ralston, Chris Schooley, David Schooley, Kymberlee Schneider, David Shearer, Marion and Marty Simmers, Peggy Smith, Kathy Swisher, Doris True, Jill Webb, and Tom Whitaker. Many of you were out in the cold and the rain. Well done team!



Thank you to all the children and youth who participated in the Joy Gift program. Special thanks to Maggie Rivers, Cole Leonard, and Isabelle Leonard for being great stage hands, and also willing participants. Many thanks also go to Bonnie Shearer for assisting with costumes and JoAnn Pendley for her amazing gift of music.



Thanks to Laura Barmore for donating a television and a DVD player to our Faith Quest room.

Belated thanks to David Turner for his time and talent given to us by painting the stained ceiling and dated colored walls in the new Youth Room. Blessings to you all in the New Year! -
- Susan McCutchen-Smith

I would like to thank all the people who made the Advent Workshop a great event. Thanks to Ellen Fitzgerald, Pearle Rowe, Jug Smith, Cindy & Derek Almarode, Keedie Leonard, Isabelle Leonard, Cole Leonard, Mo Kyle, Libby Smith, Susan Smith, Mary Ann Anderson, Emily Williams and Rhonda Johnson. We had over 50 people! Also thanks to all the adults who helped with the projects and clean up. One of the projects was to make Christmas cards that we send to our shut-ins. Thanks to all who attended and helped with the Advent Workshop. -- Peggy Smith



Blessings to all who participated in the Salvation Army Christmas Tree Gift Project and who donated money to BERF! Because of you, some local families will have a happier Christmas and a better life. The BERF Fund and the Salvation Army Christmas Tree Gift Project are separate mission projects. **The Christmas Tree Gift Project** is sponsored by the Witness Committee, and delivers your gifts to the Salvation Army's neediest families. Because of you there will be two happy families this year. You are loving people who are willing to help others. Blessings to each one.

The Bethel Emergency Relief Fund is a year round project, funded by our congregation, for distribution to local families who are in need of money mostly for utilities or rent.

Thank you for your generosity!
Doris True, Witness Committee



Don't Forget!

January 1st - New Year's Day
January 19th - Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.

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

