



The Tower

December 2015

563 Bethel Green Road * Staunton, Virginia 24401 * (540) 886-6041
bethelpc@gmail.com * www.bethelpresbyterianstaunton.org

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Church Family,

Advent is upon us. That means that we are in a time of self-reflection and anticipation. Advent is a time of waiting for and looking forward to the miracle that is Christmas, when the Second Person of the Trinity comes into this world to save us.

But part of that anticipation means that we turn our eyes inward and examine our lives. Jesus comes to us in order to forgive us from our sins and so it is good during the Advent season to reflect on why it is that we need saving.

In the hustle and bustle of the month of December I encourage you to take some time out and reflect on what it means for us that Jesus Christ comes to forgive us. What is it that each of us needs to be forgiven of? And how can we prepare during this season of preparation to be more Christ-like?

God bless,
Pastor David

As I See It

This Advent season St. John's and Bethel are partnering in a weekly gathering similar to our Lenten services. I know that December is a busy time for most, but I hope that some of you can come out and join us.

One of the things that we will be discussing is consumerism and Christianity. But I want to start thinking about that early. It is a shame that the average person in America associates Christmas more with giving and receiving gifts more than with the greatest gift of all: Jesus Christ.

Now, I am not telling you to stop giving gifts this Christmas, but I would like you to consider holding back a little. Don't go all out with the shopping and gift giving. Focus on what is truly most important: that God loved the world so much that he sent his only Son as the greatest gift of all. And maybe you can even take some of that money that you are saving and donate it to a worthy charity.



December Worship Schedule

December 6, 2015

2nd Sunday of Advent

Malachi 3:1-4 Philippians 1:3-11 Luke 3:1-6

December 13, 2015

3rd Sunday of Advent

Zephaniah 3:14-20 Philippians 4:4-7 Luke 3:7-18

December 20, 2015

4th Sunday of Advent

Micah 5:2-5 Hebrews 10:5-10 Luke 1:39-45

December 24, 2015

Christmas Eve

Candlelight Service 9:00 pm

Isaiah 9:2-7 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14

December 27, 2015

1st Sunday after Christmas Day

I Samuel 2:18-20, 26 Colossians 3:12-17 Luke 2:41-52



After Church Refreshments

We have had some wonderful participation from the congregation for our after service receptions. The Growth & Strengthening Committee extends their gratitude to all those who have signed up, brought refreshments and shared fellowship. We have enjoyed being together in the Fellowship Hall and also in Memorial Hall, watching snapshots on the video screen of past Bethel events and members of the congregation. Please look at the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board and see if there may be a date you and a friend could take a turn at providing light refreshments. There are still openings in November and December, as well as into 2016. We hope to make this a tradition as it provides another opportunity to informally be together in God's house.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Our annual Christmas Eve candlelight service will begin at 9 pm. (The prelude will be played beginning at 8:30 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!



Mid-Week Advent Services

Bethel and St. John's Reformed are partnering to do a midweek service during the Advent Season. Please mark your calendars. The service will be on Tuesday evenings. Soup will be served at 6:30 pm followed by worship and discussion at 7:00 pm. Bethel will host the services on December 1st and December 15th and St. John's Reformed will host the services on December 8th and December 22nd. Everyone is welcome!





Class of 2018 Officers

New officers for the Class of 2018 were elected at the Congregational Meeting on

November 15th after the worship service. The following people were nominated and elected to the Class of 2018:

Elders

- Bill Brubeck
- Rhonda Johnson
- Marion Simmers
- Peggy Smith

Deacons

- Wade Cash *(not pictured)*
- Mitch Lathrop
- Brian Lee
- Joe F. Williams

Trustees

- Guy D. Brooks
- Joe F. Williams



Mitch Lathrop
Deacon



Brian Lee
Deacon



Joe F. Williams
Deacon
Trustee



Bill Brubeck
Elder



Rhonda Johnson
Elder



Marion Simmers
Elder



Peggy Smith
Elder



Guy D. Brooks
Trustee



The January Tower Deadline will be Thursday, December 10th.

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 Ws: 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 17th due to the Christmas holiday. Thank you!

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 Sunday, December 6th 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 & Fellowship Meal - December 13th, 2015



The Joy Gift program will be held on Sunday, December 13th 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 20th! 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

Presbyterian Women

December 2015

*The Afternoon Circle will meet on Tuesday, December 8th, at 11:00 am (note the time change!). The meeting will be at the home of Libby Smith (180 Howardsville Road; Staunton) and there will be a light lunch served. Please contact Libby at 540/337-2058 if you have any questions.

*The Evening Circle will have a Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 8th, at 6:30 pm at the church. We will eat dinner together and exchange gifts. Please bring a dish to share and a small gift. Please contact Yvonne Goodson at 540/712-0678 if you have any questions.

December 6th - PWCT Meeting





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 20th 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 14th at 3 pm.**

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 14th 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: _____

Financial Stewardship



Offerings 2015: It is requested that offerings for 2015 be made no later than Sunday, December 27th. Thank you for your continued support.

Pledges 2016: 22 pledges for a total of \$60,912 have been received. Thanks to those who pledged. If you have not already pledged, please prayerfully consider pledging now for 2016 - 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 2016: ATTENTION OFFERING ENVELOPE USERS – **some users will have their envelope number changed due to a reduction in the total offering envelope packs available.** Beginning Sunday December 13th, numbered offering envelopes will be available in the vestibule for those who used offering envelopes in 2015. If you do not currently use envelopes but would like to or have been using them but no longer want them, 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 week month other _____

(This commitment may be increased due to changing circumstances)

I (we) wish to receive information about giving through Estate Planning

Keep this portion as a record of your financial stewardship commitment for the year 20_____.

My (our) financial stewardship commitment

\$ _____ per week month other _____

(This commitment may be increased due to changing circumstances)

Pictorial Directory

The Pictorial Directory Committee has been working this summer and fall on compiling photographs for publication in our congregational directory. If there are still those who would like to have their photo included please call, text or in some way contact a member of the committee to let us know of your intention. We will begin work on layout of the directory the first of the year and will close the photo opportunities the end of December. We have tried to communicate with everyone in the congregation, but if we have missed someone who wants to be in the directory please let us know. The members of the committee are Barb Gough, 255-6521, Marty Simmers, 476-1944, Jackie Law, 886-0455, Judy Olson, 337-4327, Bonnie Shearer, 490-2259, and Penny Lee, 416-8996. Call, text, leave a message. We will get back to you!



Important Notice

Adrienne Barker will be out of the Church Office from Monday, November 30th through Thursday, December 3rd. The Church Office will be closed on Monday, November 30th. Pastor David will be in the Church Office from Tuesday through Thursday from 10:00 am until 1:00 pm if you have a need. Penny Lee will be in the Church Office on Thursday, December 3rd, from 8:30 am until 5:30 pm to prepare the bulletin for Sunday, December 6th. If you need to put an announcement in the bulletin please email the information to bethelpc@gmail.com by Thursday morning, December 3rd, at 9:00 am. Thank you!

Church Office Closed

The Church Office will be closed for the Christmas holiday season Thursday, December 24th through Monday, December 28th and on New Year's Eve, Thursday, December 31st. Thank you!



Salvation Army Red Kettle Ringing!

Calling all ringers, calling all ringers! Yes it is time to reserve your time, date and location for this season of Red Kettle Ringing for the Salvation Army. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Teresa Harris at (540) 885-8157 to schedule an appropriate time and date. Ask a friend to join you and have some fun ringing for a worthy cause!

Welcome Bethel's newest member Bonnie Shearer!

Bonnie who just recently transferred her membership is Pastor David's wife.

Bonnie Shearer

522 Bethel Green Road Staunton, VA 24401

540/490-2259

bonnie.s.shearer@gmail.com



Session News and Notes

The Session met on November 9th, 2015 for a stated meeting with seven Elders and the Moderator, Pastor Shearer, present.



- Officer Training for Elders, Deacons and Trustees will be held on Saturday, January 9th, 2016 beginning at 9:00 am, with a joint meeting to follow. The installation of new officers will occur during worship on January 10th. Joint meetings will now be held twice yearly, preferably in January and September.
- Committee chairs will be asked to prepare a monthly report of their committees' activities and email them to Adrienne. Pastor David will prepare and distribute a template for this report.
- The Pastoral Relations Committee, which consists of Joyce Miller, James Williams, Irene Elliott, Jill Webb, Jug Smith, Tammy Barbour and Derek Almarode, has been meeting regularly with Pastor David to aid him in his work as our pastor. If you have any suggestions, compliments or concerns, you may speak to Pastor David or any member of the committee.
- Pastor David has prepared a new set of theological guidelines for couples desiring to be married at Bethel.
- The Christian Education Committee announced that the Joy Gift Program will be held on December 13th and Christmas Caroling will take place on December 20th, 2015.
- The Witness/Mission Committee will have a Salvation Army Christmas tree with gift tags for three families this year.

Sympathies and condolences to the family and friends of Mary "Jimmie" L. Thomas who passed away on October 31st, 2015.



Our sympathies and condolences to the family and friends of Pearle Rowe who passed away on November 14th, 2015.



Our sympathies and condolences to the family and friends of Gaynell Cash who passed away on November 15th, 2015.



General Fund Monthly Report

Estimated Budget through October 27th: \$154,327.00

Actual Budget Expenses: \$129,464.00

Actual Budget Receipts: \$128,959.00

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Flower Schedule

December 2015

December 6th - Bettie Swisher

December 13th - Bettie Swisher

**December 20th - December 27th -
Christmas Poinsettias**



**Deacon's Offering
Schedule**

December 2015

Tom Heizer

Bob Olson

Chris Schooley

Joe F. Williams



Nursery Schedule December 2015

December 6th - Chris & Therese Schooley

**December 13th - Keedie Leonard;
Isabelle Leonard**

December 20th - Jackie Law; Libby Smith

**December 27th - Mary Ann Anderson;
Maggie Rivers**

**December Greeters:
Joe & Tabby Moore**



**Celebrate the Christmas Season at
Massanetta Springs**



Massanetta Springs
CAMP AND CONFERENCE CENTER



**Christmas Dinner and "Sounds of the Season"
featuring Bill Vance and Joyce Grove at the piano**

**Friday, December 4th, 2015 at 6:00 pm
Massanetta Springs - Harrisonburg, VA**

**\$20.00 per person
(888) 627-6118**

**Reservations Required
info@massanettasprings.org**



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

THANK YOU!!!!

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 as the children visited nine decorated vehicles. It was a fun filled evening for all! A big THANKS to everyone who helped make it a success!



Thanks to all the people listed below who made my job a million times easier throughout 2015! I could never get everything done without the help of my faithful volunteers!

- Adrienne Barker, Bethel Office Manager

Thanks to all the people who have helped me fold the Tower during 2015: Jackie Law, Evelyn LaPorte, Joyce Miller, 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.

Thanks to Ken and Joyce Miller for adding photographs to the email version of the Tower every month and for the thousand other little tasks they help me with.

Thanks to everyone on the Communications Committee - especially Tim Turner and Jill Webb for all their work on the Bethel website. Special thanks to Tom Whitaker for setting up the Power Point presentations on Sunday mornings. 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 and Irene Elliott for all the help you have both given me with a thousand different tasks including helping with folding bulletins, folding bulletin inserts, getting mailings ready, and getting supplies ordered.

Bethel Prayer List

Lou Allen (melanoma), Bentley Almarode (4 year old recovering from brain surgery), Catherine Bryan (friend of Stephanie Rivers), Barbara Burroughs (friend of Laura Barmore), Lorine Caldwell (Dean Caldwell's mother), Debbie Callison & her sister-in-law Patricia Stiles & great-niece Reese Burdette, Friends & Family of Gaynell Cash, Murphy Cash (Penny Cash's brother - has pancreatic cancer), Ann Christian, Jim & Betty Crosby, Jarod Davis (please send cards to home address), Friends & Family of Mary (Williams) Dransfield, Meredith Furr (9 year old with malignant liver tumor), Doug Goodson, Daniel & Becky Grimm (passing of Becky's father William Hanger), Danielle Hanger, Sawyer Hull (Brent & Wendy Hull's daughter), Frances Humphries (friend of Margaret Wade), Chris Jarvis (recovering from West Nile Virus), Tom Jeffrey (friend of Laura Barmore), Bill Klitzman (nephew of Louise Hoy), Sara Ann Lamb, Don Latta (sepsis), David Law, Margaret Liptrap, Meade Loomis (sister of Anne Jones), Michelle Murphy (friend of Kymberlee Schneider), Bobbie Phillips (David Shearer's aunt), Friends & Family of Melva Piland, Christy Glover Pilson (John Pilson's niece), Phyllis Pilson (John Pilson's sister-in-law), Carly Pond (14 year old great niece of John Pilson), Ridge & Family (Ridge is a 2 year old who has a brain tumor), Friends & Family of Pearle Rowe, Nickie Rutledge (cousin of Louise Hoy), Irene Sarnelle (lung cancer), Charlotte Swortzel, Friends & Family of Mary "Jimmie" L. Thomas, Jerry Utz (Cynthia Williams brother), Bruce Webb (friend of Corbett Smith), Katie Williams & Family, Sarah Williams & Family, Isaac Wolfe, MISSIONARY: Michael and Rachel Weller and Ethiopian friends



December 22nd - 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!



Members of "The Bells of Bethel" Handbell Choir