

THE Tower

OCTOBER 2023

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TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.
EZEKIEL 36:25-27

My 8th grade year of high school, I was baptized and confirmed here at Bethel. A lot has changed since then. I was just a kid...

On September 10, Bethel hosted an Old Fashioned River Baptism and Picnic at Shenandoah Valley Campground in Verona. In spite of being planned very quickly, there were 125 people there. 17 were baptized. 16 reaffirmed.

Kudos to our "River Ushers" - Dave Schooley, Tim Turner, Terry Campbell, Rodney Harris, Mart Moore, Moose Lee, Lance Marshall, Kent Wheeler and Butch Rohrbough along with Wade Cash and Brian Lee assisting Derek with every immersion, these folks stayed in the river for nearly an hour and a half.

²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.
HEBREWS 10:22

People were literally lined up to go into the river and publicly profess their faith - in the name of the Father - and of the Son - and of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit was everywhere. There were many tears shed, you couldn't help yourself - tears just came - it was quite emotional. It was a beautiful thing.

We truly had no idea of what to expect that day. Some folks had committed to baptism. Some had committed to re-affirmation. Some came for the fellowship. The turnout was truly moving.

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.
MATTHEW 3:16-17

Back to when I was a kid. My parents were baptized in a baptist church. Married in a baptist church. Baptists baptize by immersion. Down with the old, up with the new - Out with the old, on with the new. Wash your sins away. Bury the old you, the new you is born. Washed in the blood.

— AS THIS — ELDER SEES IT

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.
ROMANS 6:4

When I was confirmed and joined Bethel, I was barely a teen. Through confirmation and baptism, I publicly professed my faith and my intent. And as most teenagers do, I went on my happy way. I grew up and made some great choices, some bad choices, some okay choices and at times I just existed and prayed I'd get through my day. There was a time when it was just me and the girls and I kept rug-burn on my knees from kneeling on carpeted steps to pray and beg and plead with God, for mercy, for grace, for forgiveness and for provisioning just for my girls. Lots of water under the proverbial bridge. God was listening. Not only did He provide for the girls, he provided for me and brought Brian into our lives. In the blink of an eye, the girls had a dad and a brother, I had a devoted husband and we had the big, messy, loud family I had dreamed of since I was a little girl watching The Waltons.

The best part of Brian is that he is a godly man. He is humble, faithful and loving. Someone to walk hand in hand with in my faith journey. I often told him I wanted to reaffirm by being “dunked in a river”.

³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. ACTS 8:38

We all travel our faith walk differently and to me, it was important to be washed in the blood in a river. It was important to me to experience that feeling of being lifted from the water and letting go. That is not to take away from

my baptism as a teen. It was more for the mature me to reaffirm my walk with God. It was another step in my walk of faith.

Opinions of methods of baptism vary greatly. We all know, everyone here has an opinion. And some of my friends cringed when I said I wanted to be baptized in a river because we Presbyterians don't do that. Scripture mentions sprinkling and immersion.

² who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance. 1 PETER 1:2

No matter what any of us think, Baptism represents so much, the cleansing work of Jesus Christ, death in Christ, life in Christ. Death, washing and renewing. No matter what any of us think, it is our profession of faith in Jesus Christ that matters.

My hope is that when the time comes that we host another River Baptism, that you will consider coming to experience the Holy Spirit in that magnitude. Words truly cannot do it justice.

Love & Peace to you all,
Penny Lee, Elder



O BROTHERS LET'S GO DOWN
LET'S GO DOWN, COME ON DOWN
COME ON BROTHERS LET'S GO DOWN
DOWN IN THE RIVER TO PRAY



WOULD YOU BE FREE FROM THE BURDEN OF SIN
THERE'S POWER IN THE BLOOD





HAVE YOU BEEN TO JESUS FOR THE CLEANSING POWER?
ARE YOU WASHED IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB?

Prayer

REQUESTS OR CHANGES

If you have any changes,
additions or updates
to the Prayer List
please contact:

Tammy Barbour
@ 540-471-0450 or
Ellen Fitzgerald
@ 540-292-2914

To keep the Prayer List
as up to date as possible,
names will be removed
from the list after eight weeks
unless Tammy, Ellen
or the Office has been
notified otherwise.



Bethel Session Meeting September 20, 2023

— Notes of Importance for the Congregation —

The Bethel Session met on Sunday, September 20th at 12:45 for a stated meeting in the Session Room, with 9 members present.

General Business:

The meeting was opened with prayer. The Session discussed several matters of business.

- Wade Cash was ordering 1 window to install asap, if all went well he would go ahead with the rest.
- Closing date with Shenandoah Presbytery should be very soon.
- A grant is being researched to have an AED.
- It was decided that we would participate in Operation Christmas Child again this year.



Respectfully,
David Schooley
Elder David Schooley
Clerk of Session





SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28
6:00 - 8:00 PM

*This is a huge community outreach,
 lots of help is needed. It takes a village!
 Last year we had 125 in attendance.*

If you would like to donate candy, please leave in the kitchen — If you can set up your car for trunk or treat, please be set up by 5:30, decorated optional — If you can help gut pumpkins, please be here at 3pm, bring buckets if you want to take the insides to your animals — If you'd like to donate snacks, please have them here by 5:00 — If you'd like to help, come on out!! Feel free to dress up!



Shoebboxes are now available in the vestibule.
 They are due November 12th

**THE CIRCLE MEETING
 IS THE 3RD THURSDAY OF
 THE MONTH AT 12:30**

October BIRTHDAYS

Bruce Lamond ————— October 1
 Jane Law ————— October 7
 Pat Quick ————— October 11
 Louise Hoy ————— October 14
 Dan Gano ————— October 21
 Sarah Frances Ralston ——— October 22
 Debbie Hughes ——— October 24
 Libby Smith ————— October 24
 Mark Wade ————— October 25
 Dinah Johnston ——— October 28
 Carol Sprouse ——— October 31

October ANNIVERSARIES

Larry & Bethany Fresh
 ————— October 5, 1991
 Kyle & Keedie Leonard
 ————— October 14, 19__
 Roscoe & Myra (Ralston) Botkin
 ————— October 31, 1998

¹⁰ Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many. ¹¹ I instruct you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths. ¹² When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble. ¹³ Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life.

PROVERBS 4:10-13 NIV

ELDERS

Class of 2023

BOB OLSON
DAVE SCHOOLEY
TIM TURNER

Class of 2024

TAMMY BARBOUR
BRIAN LEE
DALE THOMPSON
JILL WEBB

Class of 2025

CINDY ALMARODE
DEREK ALMARODE
WADE CASH
PENNY LEE

Clerk of Session

DAVE SCHOOLEY

DEACONS

Class of 2023

ELLEN FITZGERALD
CHARLIE JOHNSON

Class of 2024

MITCH LATHROP
D.W. MILLER

Class of 2025

HARLEIGH LEE
KATIE MCELVEEN

TRUSTEES

Class of 2023

BILL BRUBECK
JAMES WILLIAMS

Class of 2024

GUY D. BROOKS

Class of 2025

CHARLIE JOHNSON
BILLY WADE

CHURCH STAFF

JoAnn Pendley

PIANIST, ORGANIST
BELL CHOIR AND CHOIR

Lois Stogdale

DISBURSING TREASURER

Kay Thompson

RECEIVING TREASURER

John & Donna Bush

CUSTODIANS

Carol & Puggie Sprouse

CUSTODIANS



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

INCLUDING OUR COMMUNITY
FAMILY OF FAITH

Saturday, October 28th

HARVEST PARTY

PUMPKIN CARVING, TRUNK OR TREAT, SNACKS!
COMMUNITY INVITED

If you can't bring your vehicle but would like to
donate candy, please drop off in the kitchen.

Sunday, October 29th

WRE BREAKFAST HOSTED BY PINES CHAPEL AT 8:30AM.
BEFORE WORSHIP WITH TRUNK OR TREAT AT 4:00.

Sunday, November 5th

ALL SAINTS DAY. Don't forget to fill out the form!

Sunday, December 3rd

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT - COMMUNION.
COVERED DISH MEAL FOLLOWING WORSHIP.

Sunday, December 24th - Christmas Eve

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.
REGULAR WORSHIP AT 11:00
CANDLELIGHT SERVICE @ 8:00PM.

Every Thursday - 6:30

BIBLE STUDY AT BETHEL
NEW SERIES "NOT A FAN"



welcome
HOME

YOUTH COMMITTEE

Meets the last Sunday
of each month.

SECURITY COMMITTEE

Meets the 3rd Sunday
of each month.