

The Visitor

February 2018

The Newsletter for Bethany Lutheran Church
5303 Madison Avenue
Bethel Park, PA 15102
(412) 835-9221

To e-mail messages to the office: admin@blcbp.org



WORSHIP SERVICE EACH SUNDAY WITH HOLY COMMUNION WILL BE AT 11:15 A.M.

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER AT BETHANY

(Look inside The Visitor for more information on each event)

LENT BEGINS ON ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14th

Ash Wednesday Worship Service at 7:00 P.M.

ASH WEDNESDAY DINNER, FEBRUARY 14TH AT 5:30 P.M.

We begin the Season of Lent with our traditional **Ash Wednesday Dinner**.

Worship Service immediately following at 7:00 P.M.

MID-WEEK LENTEN WORSHIP

Worship service begins at 7:00 pm.

Join us for Lenten Mid-Week Dinners

Dinner begins at 5:30 P.M.

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, February 1st at 7:00 P.M.

MUSIC AND WORSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, February 7th at 6:00 P.M.

SHROVE TUESDAY

Pancake and Sausage Dinner February 13th beginning at 5:00 P.M.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church located in Canonsburg, PA

R.S.V.P. by Sunday, February 11th.

See information posted on bulletin board in the Narthex for further details

BLC WOMEN'S GROUP

Tuesday, February 13th at 11:00 A.M.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, February 15th at 7:00 P.M.

EDUCATIONAL MEETING

To Be Determined

COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, February 22nd at 7:00 P.M.

CARE AND SHARE MEETING

Tuesday, February 27th at 11:00 A.M.

CHOIR PRACTICE!

Every Wednesday at 7:00 P.M.

Reminder: Choir Practice will immediately follow the 7:00 PM Wednesday Worship each week during Lent beginning February 14th.

EASTER BREAKFAST AND EASTER PAGEANT

Hosted by the Sunday School

Sunday, March 18th

9:15 am to 10:15 am – Easter Breakfast

(This Breakfast includes all P.L.U.M. members, their families and friends)

10:15 am to 11:00 am – Easter Pageant

ASHES AND VALENTINES

In the middle of February this year two observances collide on the 14th: Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day. Naturally I started to think about the connection between "Ashes and Valentines." Is there one?

First I checked my sources and read about the historic (or legendary) character St. Valentine. This Christian man was a physician and priest around 270 AD in Rome. Since the Christian Church was outlawed in those days, Valentine performed many weddings in secret. He also gave assistance to martyrs who were imprisoned under Caesar Claudius II. These activities led to his arrest and, ultimately, to his death. He was stoned and clubbed but refused to renounce his faith. Therefore he was beheaded. It is said that he wrote a note to a girl whose sight Valentine miraculously restored. Valentine signed the note: "From your Valentine."

I thought Valentine's Day was invented by Hallmark or some other card company. Turns out to have a sort of religious meaning after all.

We all know that the purpose of ashes on Ash Wednesday is to strike a somber note at the beginning of the Lenten Season. The ashes remind us of the shortness of our life and of our death. It further reminds us of the great love God has for us. As John wrote: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

Ash Wednesday proclaims the deep, unconditional love God has for us and all creation. Although the imposition of ashes is not a warm, happy symbol, it does begin us on a spiritual journey that ends with the glorious resurrection of Jesus, our Savior, on a Saturday evening at the Great Vigil of Easter.

So there may be a connection between ashes and valentines. If you participate in the customs of Valentine's Day and you are signing your name on that special card, recall God's Valentine greeting to us. As you feast again on heart-shaped cookies or cake, picture God's heart, broken for us on Calvary's cross and mended with the rolling away of a gravestone and the re-appearance of Jesus.

As you move on your Lenten journey this year, give some consideration to the traditional disciplines: daily prayer, acts of charity, and fasting. Remember prayer might be as simple as reading a short meditation from a Lenten devotional booklet. Acts of charity might be as simple as giving a dollar to a beggar or bringing in a donation for the food cupboard. Fasting might mean giving up some habit that is unhealthy or something that you dearly love to do.

May your Lenten journey bring you into a closer relationship with our Lord. May you see God walking beside you. May you always be assured that God's Spirit is constantly whispering in your ear: "I love you. You are my daughter/my son."

+Pastor Paul Koch

From the Pastor's Desk:

***“First, We Give of Ourselves:
Giving in Grace”***

Dear Friends in Christ,

How do you give in grace? This is the question we have been exploring this fall at Bethany Lutheran Church. It is a question of discipleship and stewardship. It is a question that asks us to stop for a moment and consider why we give of our time, talents, spiritual gifts, and financial resources.

The Apostle Paul, in 2 Corinthians 8:5 describes the spiritual center of our giving. In describing the generosity of the Macedonian Christians, he says: “...they first gave themselves to the Lord.” Our giving, in whatever form, is the giving of ourselves as a response to God’s grace in Christ. **“Giving in Grace:”** is the joyful sharing of what has been given to us through God’s abundant generosity.

There are two foundational reasons why we give. The first reason is that our giving in grace is a response to God’s gift of grace in Christ. It is a joyful and thankful response of delight for God’s rich gift to us. The second reason for our giving is that our ministries of Bethany can continue to boldly grow in the proclamation of this gift of grace. **“Giving in Grace”** is sharing gifts in order that lives can be touched with the love and grace of God in Christ.

This fall, each member at Bethany is being asked to consider why you give and how you might grow in your giving. Each member is asked to pray about what it might mean to first give of yourself and to give in grace.

As a guide to growth in financial giving, members at Bethany are invited to consider the tithe or 10% of one’s income as a joyful response to God’s life changing gift of grace. If this is something that will need some time to grow into, an invitation is extended to grow your present giving by 10%. In other words, if you are presently giving \$50 per week, an increase of 10% would be \$55 per week. We are praying that an overall growth in our financial giving would be an increase of 7%.

Our Commitment Sunday is **March 25th**. Over these next few weeks, please enter into a time of prayer of how you can give of yourself, give in grace, and grow in sharing your gifts in response to God’s own giving in Christ, of a life transforming grace for you.

Serving Together in Christ,

The Reverend Melba Dibble

THOSE WHO SERVE THIS MONTH

Greeters:

11:15 A.M.	Jeannine Stowers
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WORSHIP SERVICE SUNDAYS – SCHEDULE

Date	Communion Asst. 11:15 AM	Reader 11:15 AM	Acolyte 11:15 AM
2/4	Michael Unger	Michael Unger	Arlo Yarroll
2/11	Cathy Irwin	Deborah Wanamaker	Alison Hanna & Megan Turske
Ash Wednesday 2/14	Jane Scheeser	Dawn Hanna	Hunter Wigand
2/18	Don McIntyre	Don McIntyre	Jeremy Blocklin
2/25	Sydney Litzenburger	Nena Kratsas	Nick Usouski

FLOWERS AND ETERNAL CANDLE

2/4	OPEN
2/11	OPEN
2/18	OPEN
2/25	OPEN
Eternal Candle	OPEN

You may either take the flowers with you after the service, or if you prefer, you may leave them on the altar. Cost of **flowers** is **\$60 (\$30/arrangement)** per Sunday. Cost of the **eternal candle** is **\$20** per month.



FLOWERS AND ETERNAL CANDLE
 The 2018 Flower Chart is posted on the bulletin board in the Narthex.
 The cost per arrangement is \$30.00.

USHERS' SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

Don McIntyre, Mark Kuehl, Dan Volpatti

OFFERING COUNTERS' SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

The Offering Counters for the month of February are Michael Unger and Leigh Brooks.



PRAYER CHAIN

Anyone wishing to be on the Bethany Prayer Chain, please contact Cathy Irwin by email at cirwin77@hotmail.com, or Terry Simony in the Bethany Church Office by phone: 412-835-9221.

THANK YOU



Dearest Friends at Bethany,

Due to missing deadlines and constant upheaval this thank you is late, but better late than never, right? Thank you for your attendance at my surprise birthday party this summer. I was so happy to see all of you that were able to make it. I enjoyed your warmth and presence to help me celebrate! Thank you also for the cards and gifts.

I also would like to thank you for the cards, thoughts, prayers, and support you provided when first Aunt Eleanor and then Mom passed on to be with our Lord and Savior in October and December. Without them the journey would have been very bleak indeed. You all have been such wonderful friends over the years and I am most grateful for each one of you. Thanks again my beloved Bethany family.

Your Sister in Christ,
Donna Johnson

2018 CONGREGATION COUNCIL

<i>President</i>	.....	<i>Nick Kratsas (412-885-1124)</i>
<i>Vice-President</i>	.....	<i>(To Be Determined)</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	.....	<i>Sydney Litzenburger (412-835-2634)</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	.....	<i>Jeannine Stowers (412-398-3919)</i>
<i>Financial Secretary</i>	.....	<i>Leigh Brooks (412-833-7790)</i>

<i>Sarah Currie (412-720-0674)</i>	<i>Joan Anthony (412) 835-8706</i>
<i>Sandra Lutz (412-999-9822)</i>	<i>Kris Volpatti (412-835-2140)</i>
<i>Deborah Wanamaker (412-835-0387)</i>	<i>Grenith Fisher (412-835-2373)</i>
<i>Alfred Hanna (412-508-7025)</i>	

Standing Committee Chairs

<i>Christian Education Committee</i>	.....	<i>Diane Usouski (412-833-6890)</i>
<i>Evangelism Committee</i>	.....	<i>Ruth Lipinski (724-941-2379)</i>
<i>Property Committee</i>	.....	<i>Auggie Burns (412-308-8820)</i>
<i>Stewardship Committee</i>	.....	<i>Leigh Brooks (412-833-7790)</i>
<i>Worship Committee</i>	.....	<i>Kelly Hartbauer (724-469-3728)</i>

IMPORTANT INFORMATION



ASH WEDNESDAY

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, FEBRUARY 14TH.

The Worship Service will begin at 7:00 p.m. immediately following our dinner.

The service will include imposition of ashes for those who wish to participate.

If you have any questions, please call the church office (412-835-9221).

ASH WEDNESDAY DINNER, FEBRUARY 14TH AT 5:30 p.m.

Please see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the Narthex.

The Ash Wednesday Worship Service will begin at 7:00 P.M. immediately following our dinner.

The Evangelism Committee invites you to join us for our traditional Fish Dinner on

Wednesday, February 14, 2018. This will be a catered meal which will include Fish, and Mac/Cheese.

Dinner will be served from 5:30 P.M. to 6:30 P.M.

A sign-up sheet will be posted in the Narthex. Reservations are required.

Look for further details in your weekly Bulletin.

Please join us in this time of fellowship as we enter the Lenten Season.



MID-WEEK LENTEN WORSHIP

During the season of Lent, we will hold our mid-week worship services on the Wednesdays of February 14, 21, 28 and March 7, 14, and 21. The worship service will begin at 7:00 pm.

Join us for Lenten Mid-Week Dinners

Dinner begins at 5:30 P.M.

Mid-week dinners will begin on Wednesday, February 21st.

Each week's dinner will be hosted by a different committee of the church.

If you are not on a committee yet feel led to help, your participation is not only welcomed, it is appreciated. The dates of the dinners and hosting committees will be posted in the Bulletin.

Bring your appetite and plan on joining your church family for a great opportunity for fellowship and worship every Wednesday. See you all in church!

Bethany Evangelism Committee



HOLY WEEK SERVICES...watch for next month's issue of the Visitor and the Bulletin for the worship schedule for Holy Week.



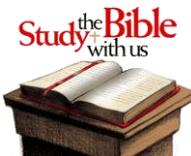
LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

Choir practice will meet each Wednesday at 7:00 P.M.

Please join us!!!

Reminder: *Choir Practice will immediately follow the 7:00 PM Wednesday Worship each week during Lent beginning February 14th.*

PARISH EDUCATION



BETHANY ADULTS: WE'VE BEEN MISSING YOU!

Sunday School isn't just for kids anymore. In fact, it never was!

This little reminder is to encourage the men and women of Bethany, regardless of age, to join the adult class which meets **every Sunday at 9:45 a.m.** in the old church sanctuary. Just follow the aroma of perking coffee. (Sometimes there's even a little something to go with it). LaMonte Yarroll leads this class, but members have always had a say in what we study.

This class has no tests, and everyone is encouraged to express opinions about our lessons.

If you're the quiet type, that's fine, too. We'd still love to have you with us.

Our Bibles are always close by during class, but this is much more than a just a Bible study group.

We're currently going through "by heart," a video and book on Luther's "Small Catechism."

Please...come join us and see what we're talking about!



NURSERY NEWS

The Children's Nursery is Available During the 11:15 A.M. Worship. The nursery will open at 11:00 A.M. each Sunday. Bethany's Nursery is not staffed but available for children ages 6 and under.

We ask that you please accompany and supervise your little ones in the nursery.

Parents can feel free to take their children to the nursery immediately following the children's sermon.

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY FEBRUARY 4TH

The youth of Bethany will be standing at the doors after Worship Service on **February 4th** with soup pots for their annual SOUPER BOWL collection which goes to SHIM on Super Bowl Sunday.

SOUTH HILLS INTERFAITH MOVEMENT (SHIM)

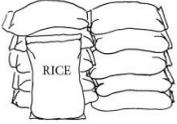
South Hills Interfaith Movement (SHIM) is a human services organization dedicated to improving the lives of people in need across the South Hills area. SHIM's mission is to empower individuals and families to achieve stability and self-sufficiency by offering short-term help with basic needs, including food, clothing and utilities. Long-term assistance to help people build and sustain promising futures includes employment, financial planning, youth programs, and family support.

Through the years, Bethany Lutheran Church and SHIM have had a long standing relationship. We have collected food, Angel Tree items, clothing, and monetary donations. Now more than ever SHIM needs our support.

Each Sunday we will be collecting a certain item to be donated to SHIM. We have found that when people are given something specific to shop for, the mission is much more successful.

The following items will be collect in the Bethany Lutheran narthex:

FEBRUARY 11: Rice



FEBRUARY 18: Cereal (Low Sugar)



FEBRUARY 25: Pasta Sauce



IMPORTANT INFORMATION



SNOW IS COMING. SNOW IS COMING!!!

And, when it does, the front sidewalk will need shoveled. This would need to be done Sunday morning, and as needed at other times. If you would like to be added to the list of those willing to help, contact Auggie Burns at 412-308-8820.

CELEBRATIONS WITHIN OUR CONGREGATION IN FEBRUARY



Happy Birthday to the following individuals:

2-February	Barry Bruni	11-February	Gina Monte	18-February	Kory Hartbauer
4-February	William Yanyo	13-February	Ronald Lipinski	19-February	Iona Klein
7-February	Alison Hanna	13-February	Marilyn Roberts	19-February	Suse Marsh
9-February	Madeleine Yarroll	14-February	Matt McKee	19-February	Jennifer Plesniak
10-February	Camryn Perrucci	17-February	Emily Brooks		



Happy Anniversary to the following couple:

14-February	Diane & Dan Usouski	
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NEWSLETTER

If you have information that you would like to appear in the newsletter, **please** either e-mail the information to Terry Simony at admin@blcbp.org, or drop it off at the church **NO LATER THAN MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH BY 10:00 A.M.**, for the **MARCH NEWSLETTER**.