

The Visitor

February 2024

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

To email messages to the office: bethanylutheranbp@gmail.com
(Please note that the Church office email address has changed)

DONATIONS

DONATIONS TO BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

If you wish to make a donation to Bethany Lutheran Church, please go to our website or Facebook page and click on the "Donation" tab. Or, if you wish, you could have "Auto Deduction" from your banking account, or pay by check by using your envelope and mailing it directly to the Church.



SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

Friends and Members of Bethany Lutheran Church:
Masks are optional.

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday Worship Service is at 10:30 A.M.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School begins at 9:30 A.M. each week

Please call me with any questions or concerns at 412-212-8794.

God's Blessings,
Pastor Melba

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER AT BETHANY

NOISY OFFERING SUNDAY

Sunday, February 4th is "Noisy Offering Sunday". Don't forget your change!



INSTALLATION OF COUNCIL

The Church Council will be installed February 4th during the 10:30 A.M. Worship Service.



RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Welcoming new members to the Bethany Family on February 4th during the 10:30 A.M. Worship Service.



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held Sunday, February 11th immediately following Worship Services.

Luncheon will be served following meeting.

We are asking for the congregation to please bring the side dishes to share.

There is a sign up form on the table in the Narthex.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting is Scheduled for Tuesday, February 13th at 7:00 P.M.

LENT BEGINS ON ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH

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

ASH WEDNESDAY DINNER, FEBRUARY 14TH FROM 5:45 P.M. TO 6:45 P.M.

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

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

COUNCIL MEETING

Meeting is Scheduled for Tuesday, February 20th at 7:00 P.M.

MID-WEEK LENTEN WORSHIP

Worship service begins at 7:00 pm.



From the desk of the Pastor

Newsletter for February 2024

I have learned quite a bit over my 12 years of ordained ministry. And among those many things are three basic principles which define the life together of healthy congregations.

First – **the church is about mission, not maintenance.** This principle applies to congregations that have not walled themselves off from the surrounding community, but rather, they are a part of it – not with the intention of putting more people in the pews, but to make God’s love in Jesus Christ known to everyone both inside and outside the walls. The congregation is a part of something greater than itself—as part of the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, who are brought together by his death on the cross and bound together in love. While we have a way to go, we have worked to make our mission a reality not just for us but for others.

Second – **the church is not the building, it’s the people.** There are two Greek words that can be translated as church in English. One is ekklesia, meaning “a calling out.” Ekklesia never refers to a building or meeting place, but always to people, the ones “called out” of the world’s society by God calling them into faithful service. The other word for “church” comes from the Greek word kyriakos, meaning “belonging to the Lord.”

Far too many congregations are obsessed with the building and focused on finances. We tend to base our identity in physical structures knowing full well that they will someday be torn down. [See Matthew 24:1-2] The things we humans build, no matter how grand, will perish; the things God builds, no matter how small, will endure, even to the end of the age. If we base our identity in Christ, we’ll know that God’s love for us will never end, nor can it be physically destroyed. It is helpful to ask ourselves continually, “To what is God calling us?”

Third – **the church is a vision of peace and wholeness.** Though this is an aim that is somewhat elusive, it can be achieved in a variety of ways. It is achieved when we see each other as fellow members of the body of Christ. The liturgy is filled with one reference after another of unity in Christ. “As grains of wheat are gathered to become one bread, so too we are gathered together to form one body.” As we see our common calling and act out of that calling, we do so as fellow members of the body of Christ. No one more important than another. No one. Remembering this may cause less contention and more cooperation. Caring for one another is an obvious expression of wholeness. It is not exclusively a ministry of staff members to do so. It is a ministry of the baptized. Caring is perhaps the deepest expression of wholeness and the hope we have for our congregation. The church of Jesus Christ is a lofty ideal. Sadly, we sometimes see its failures rather than successes. But I believe God blesses the church which keeps before it these principles. How good it is to be gathered in this place and be granted a vision of faith and life that transcends anything else!

This was the Pastor’s message from 2017 from Emanuel Lutheran Church. I’m not sure where it is located. However, when I read this, it fit Bethany so well. I may not have written this, but I agree with it whole heartedly. Enjoy.

God’s blessings to all of you – Pastor Melba



Valentine's Day/Ash Wednesday Mashup

Because Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday fall on the same day this year, February 14 gives us a real clash of messages!

As stewards of both our personal lives and our greater world, what can we make of a day that, on the one hand says sweetly, "I love you," and on the other hand says sternly, "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return"? How should we observe a day with such disjointed messages?

Putting them together, we can come up with some interesting responses.

Ash Wednesday tells us that our lives are finite and fleeting, a truth woven throughout the Bible. Psalm 103:15 says our lives are like the grass that flourishes and then is gone. Ash Wednesday also reminds us that we are in the hands of the creator God who decreed that our earthly lives begin and end in dust.

And although our culture revels in romantic love, the Bible gives us a wider vision of love that we can aspire to: love through care and concern for the world, for creation and those around us.

Putting the two messages together, we know there is no delaying our call to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31) and to provide for the least among us (Matthew 25:31-46).

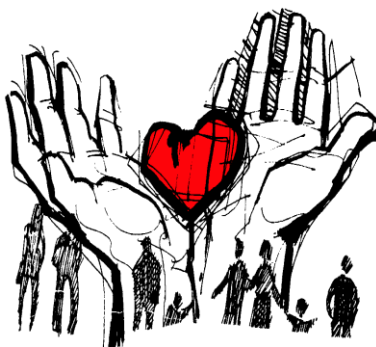
With wars raging in Ukraine and Gaza, refugee crises across the globe and Covid on the rise (to name just a few problems), perhaps this can be the year you can send a "Valentine" someone who needs not only love, but food, medicine, shelter and clothes. Many reputable church charities would gladly use your contribution to help the neediest.

Who are the people in your church and community who need your love and your care? How can you, both individually and congregationally, love and assist them?

The diverse messages of Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day give us a prime opportunity to grow in faith, love and discipleship –while there's time.

-Rob Blezard

Copyright © 2024, Rev. Robert Blezard. Pastor Blezard serves as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, MD, and works as content editor for www.stewardshipoflife.org. He blogs at www.thestewardshipguy.com.



THOSE WHO SERVE THIS MONTH

WORSHIP SERVICE SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Date	Communion Asst. 10:30 AM	Reader 10:30 AM	Acolyte 10:30 AM
KIDS SUNDAY 2/5	Andrew Parker	Aiysha Dibble	Katie Hartos
2/11	Nancy Shonsky	RaeAnn McFall	Drew Benigni
2/18	Jeannine Stowers	Ruth Lipinski	Kobe Morris
2/25	Jane Scheeser	Karen Housam	Aiysha Dibble

THOSE WHO SERVE THIS MONTH

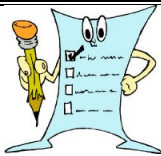
USHER SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

Chuck Conn will serve as Usher for the month of February.
Colt Wigand will assist Chuck Conn on February 4th.

OFFERING COUNTERS' SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

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

IMPORTANT INFORMATION



SIGN-UP SHEETS

Signup sheets for the Annual Congregational Meeting, taking place on Sunday February 11, and Ash Wednesday Dinner, taking place on Wednesday, February 14, are in the Narthex.

The last day we are able to accept reservations for the Ash Wednesday Dinner is **Sunday, February 4**. The cost this year for the meal will be \$20.00 for adults, \$6.00 for children ages 6 to 10 and no charge for children 5 and under. Service for the Ash Wednesday meal will begin at 5:45 PM until 6:45 PM. The Worship Service will begin at 7:00 PM.



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Bethany Lutheran Church Annual Meeting will be immediately following worship on **Sunday, February 11th**.

Join us as we take time to review our past year's ministry and plans for the coming year. Bethany continues to seek ways to be the hands of Christ in our community and in the world. The Council is sponsoring the hot ham and cheese luncheon to follow the meeting. We are asking for the congregation to please bring the side dishes to share.

There will be a sign up form in the Narthex.
Please indicate which sides you are will and able to bring.

Thank you!
Bethany Lutheran Evangelism Committee



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).



COME JOIN US

Please join us for ASH WEDNESDAY DINNER February 14, 2024

What better way to celebrate God's Love and the Love we have for our family and friends this Valentine's Day.

Dinner service will begin at 5:45 PM and conclude at 6:45 PM

Dinner includes your choice of a Broiled Fish Filet or Stuffed Fish Filet, Pierogies, Parisienne Carrots, Fresh fruit, rolls/butter, dessert and beverage

Adults \$20.00 per person

Children 6-10 \$ 6.00/person

Children 5 and under \$ 0.00/person

Ash Wednesday Worship Service will begin at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary.



MID-WEEK LENTEN WORSHIP

During the season of Lent, we will hold our mid-week worship services on the Wednesdays of February 21, & 28 and March 6, 13 & 20.

The worship service will begin at 7:00 p.m.

MORE IMPORTANT INFORMATION



GROCERY COLLECTION

We are collecting groceries for those in need.

We will be collecting the following items for the month of February:

Diapers & Baby Wipes

Hand Sanitizers & Paper Towels

Pasta Sauce & Pasta

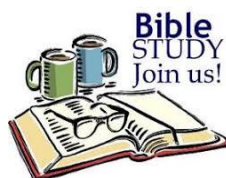
Please leave the items in the Narthex. Together we can make a difference in the lives of many of our South Hills neighbors in need.

If you have any questions, please call Pastor Melba at 412-212-8794.



Choir practice every Thursday at 7:00 P.M.

Come join us!!!



ADULT BIBLE STUDY

We meet every Thursday beginning at 11:00 a.m.



LET IT SNOW – LET IT SNOW – LET IT SNOW!!!

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, or if you have any questions, please**

contact Craig Conn at 412-841-6343 (cell)

Your help is greatly appreciated.



PRAYER CHAIN

Anyone wishing to be on the Bethany Prayer Chain, please contact Terry Simony by email at bethanylutheranbp@gmail.com,
or call the Bethany Church Office at: 412-835-9221.

“I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” (Mark 11:24)

CELEBRATIONS WITHIN OUR CONGREGATION IN FEBRUARY



Happy Birthday to the following individuals:

2-February	Barry Bruni	11-February	Gina Monte	18-February	Kory Hartbauer
5-February	Danielle Boncella	13-February	Ronald Lipinski	19-February	Jennifer Plesniak
9-February	Madeleine Yarroll	17-February	Emily Brooks	20-February	Diamond Dibble



Bethany Lutheran Church



February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 11:00am: Adult Bible Study  7:00pm: Choir Practice 	2	3
4 (NOISY OFFERING) INSTALL COUNCIL RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS 9:30am: Sunday School 10:30am: Worship  12:30pm: BPTV/YouTube Worship	5	6	7 7:00pm: Shamrock Manor Women's Club  1:30pm: BPTV/YouTube Worship	8 11:00am: Adult Bible Study  7:00pm: Choir Practice 	9	10 Council- Set-Up Luncheon 
11 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING 9:30am: Sunday School 10:30am: Worship 12:30pm: BPTV/YouTube Worship	12	13 7:00pm: Stewardship Meeting 	14 Ash Wednesday 5:45pm: Dinner 7:00pm: Worship  1:30pm: BPTV/YouTube Worship	15 11:00am: Adult Bible Study  7:00pm: Choir Practice 	16	17 8:00am -1:30pm: SHIM RETREAT
18 9:30am: Sunday School 10:30am: Worship –  12:30pm: BPTV/YouTube Worship	19	20 7:00pm: Council Meeting 	21 7:00pm: Mid-Week Worship  1:30pm: BPTV/YouTube Worship	22 11:00am: Adult Bible Study  7:00pm: Choir Practice 	23	24
25 9:30am: Sunday School 10:30am: Worship –  12:30pm: BPTV/YouTube Worship	26	27	28 7:00pm: Mid-Week Worship  1:30pm: BPTV/YouTube Worship	29 11:00am: Adult Bible Study  7:00pm: Choir Practice 		