



# The Little Harbinger Bethany Memorial Church

February 2020

CHILDREN ARE A GIFT FROM THE LORD....PSALM 127:3A

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!

## The Pastor's Pen

by Rev. Sharon Watkins

Next time I write for this newsletter, we will already be in Lent. I plan to join a group of friends and former colleagues in prayer and fasting on Wednesdays throughout the six weeks of the season. This group calls itself “the Elders” and is inspired by Jim Wallis of Sojourners and Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. Divisiveness in the nation and world has led the Elders to call ourselves to a season of repentance, discernment and potentially action as the Holy Spirit may eventually lead.

Fasting will be a new discipline for me. I’m hoping it will lead me to a deeper dive into God’s presence and guidance. I’ll be

praying intensely for our congregation, that we will grow in our faithfulness and in our understanding of what faithfulness means in this time. I’ll be praying for our Bethany community – college and town as well as church – that we together, people of all faith traditions, will meet the challenges of 2020 and beyond with creativity and insight.

Lent is a great time to go deeper into the Spirit. The winter is ending, and the first signs of spring will be showing up in a world ready to be done with the stark winter landscape. Our souls, likewise, may be ready for spring-like showers of blessings and winds of change. Those weeks

between Ash Wednesday (February 26) and Easter (April 12) will take us from winter to spring. The biblical stories in that time will lead us from Jesus’ temptation in the desert to his glorious defeat over death.

Will you join me on this Lenten journey? You may or may not want to try fasting, but perhaps you will join me in finding a way to be extra attentive to the Holy Spirit’s presence and guiding during Lent this year. I can’t wait to see where our Lenten journey will lead!

# Men of BMC to Host Shrove Tuesday Event

The tradition continues! The men of Bethany Memorial Church will host a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner on February 25 from 5:00 pm until 7:00 pm.

All you can eat pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs, juice and coffee will be available. The event is free, but donations will be accepted to benefit Week of Compassion, the relief, refugee, development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

The men of BMC hope you will come out and support this event. Take out will be available.



For there is hope for a tree,  
if it is cut down,  
that it will sprout again,  
and that its shoots will not cease.

Though its root grows old in the earth,  
and its stump dies in the ground,  
yet at the scent of water  
it will bud and put forth branches  
like a young plant.

Job 14:7-9

After several years of discussion and disagreement on its fate, the decision has been made to remove the tree that stands at the corner of Main and College Streets. Its roots are partially above ground and the dead branches threaten both electric wires and the church building. One can't help but wonder how many birds and chipmunks and squirrels it has housed or for how many its once full branches provided temporary respite from the hot sun or a sudden rain.



# Lots of Love

by Herb Weaver

I have a friend who always ends her email correspondence with the phrase, “Lots of Love.” The warmth received in that particular “signing off” serves to soothe my soul like butter melting over succotash at a Thanksgiving dinner. The concept of a slow-melting-buttery-love seems to provide opportunity to permeate deeper and offer a more long-lasting impression than the norm, especially when you need sustenance.

Although at times a case could be made for the opposite, the Bethany community has a history of showering love on those who least expect it, in the “Random Acts Of Kindness” manner, and it helps to explain why so many students joyously return. Recently during my travels to Florida, I literally bumped-into a couple who had graduated nearly fifty years ago from Bethany College. Needless to say, this couple had similar feelings about the college, the church, and the community. They spoke affectionately of Charlotte and Bob Chambers and how they allowed for an “account” at the store, recalled many fond exchanges with the Gresham’s, and couldn’t stop celebrating the relationships they formed with fellow students and teachers.

But it was their recount of Bethany Memorial Church that most caught my attention. Our church became their family, offered unconditional love, and eventually threw a wedding for them! When friends and family did arrive for the ceremony, the college opened up dorm rooms for lodging, the



church ladies prepared a reception dinner, and John Cole baked their wedding cake!

Perhaps this narration doesn’t sound too unusual except for one fact. The bride-to-be was pregnant. At that most vulnerable time, with huge decisions looming over them, when a young couple needed to feel accepted and loved, our church, our college, and our community stepped up to the occasion and offered that slow-melting-buttery-love... a feeling that still remains with them today.

That kind of love brings renewed meaning to the church mission of being “open and affirming” as we consider how far-reaching our church’s affirmation and acceptance can go. In so many instances, and in so many directions, true acts of kindness and love will ooze through to the core, and never be forgotten. We need more love like that... lots of love.

“And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”

1 Corinthians 13:13



## HEADING 4



Student Rachel Owens and John Hull participating in the Martin Luther King Jr service.



Jan Forsty and Karen McFadden greet at the special service for MLK day.



Elder John Rodenberg and Rev. Watkins at the communion table.



Gerard NeCastro as liturgist



Holly Hillgardner, BMC faculty, Brogan Dunlap, Nye Glover, and Rachel Owens. Rachel was instrumental in planning and implementing the MLK service at BMC.

## February Worship at BMC

by Rev. Sharon Watkins

During February, the observance of Black History Month continues at BMC. We will make available each Sunday, along with your bulletin, a pamphlet highlighting African American Disciples who have helped shape and lead our church through the generations. Each week in worship, we will sing hymns that are written or handed down by African-descended people.

In sermons, I'll also continue the focus on Disciples identity and heritage, including some of the more familiar stories from the Campbell/Scots-Irish stream of our history as well as stories from African American forebears and other communities who have always been an integral part of shaping Disciples life and culture. (For more stories on diverse communities of Disciples who are part of our common heritage and life, please go to [chalice.org](http://chalice.org) and order *Room At the Table* by Sandhya Jha.)

The themes for each Sunday in February will be drawn from our Disciples identity statement:

***We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.***

***As part of the one Body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.***

The themes are:

February 2 – Movement;  
February 9 – Wholeness;  
February 16 – Welcome;  
February 23 – Table.

In addition, during February we will observe our annual special emphasis on Week of Compassion, the relief and development ministry of Disciples. The offering will be collected on February 16 and 23. On February 23, we will hear from John Rodenberg about his recent trip to Myanmar with Week of Compassion Executive Director, the Rev. Vy Nguyen.

I look forward to worshipping with you this month!

# BMC's Got Talent!

Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 21, 2010! You won't want to miss this one.

Beech Bottom Community Christian Church has invited Bethany Memorial Church to co-host a talent show to be held at BBCCC.

We need your talent! Do you dance? Sing? Juggle? Can you twirl plates on a stick? Yo-yo? Perform a skit? Did you always wonder how you would fare as a stand up comedian?

Any type of talent is welcome. Beech Bottom has already lined up a number of individuals, and we have some catching up to do. If you are interested in participating, please call the church office at 304-829-7138. Get together with your friends and start planning now.



## Coming Home to BMC

Since the arrival of Rev. Sharon Watkins, attendance at BMC worship services has increased. We are grateful for her service to the Church, the College, and the community.

Recently, Larry and Carol Grimes visited from their retirement home in Colorado. Millie Ferry returned for another Sunday worship. New regulars include Marcus Cimini, Brenda Hart, and Kim Stevenson.

We lovingly invite each and every one of you to stop in if you are in town. For those of you who live nearby, we would love to see you at Sunday worship.





# BMC “Adopts” Four!

by Deb Hull, Outreach Chair

Thanks to your generous Outreach donations, BMC has been able to adopt four people, elders Mrs. Muniyammal Ganesan and Mr. Topgay, and children, four-year-old Moulika D., and 18-month old Chinna Appu. R. These individuals were selected for us by our Global Mission partners and we support them through Global Ministries.

Because Mrs. Ganesan was no longer able to work as a helper in a nursing home and because she has no living relatives to care for her, she became a resident of the Family Village Farm in Kasam-Katpadi, Vellore, India. Mr. Topgay fled Tibet in 1960, becoming a refugee at the Tibetan Refugee Self Help Centre in Darjeeling, India. Disabled due to a stroke, he and his wife live together in a house on the premises.

Moulika D. is studying English at the King's Matriculation School on the Family Village Farm. Her father works for day wages and her mother is a homemaker. Moulika has a two-year-old sister and is doing very well in school. Chinna Appu was found with his sister and two brothers roaming the streets, sleeping under a tree, and asking for food from villagers in the Vellore region of India. Members of a small ethnic group in the hills of Vellore, Chinna and one brother are being cared for at

the Family Village Farm and the older children are elsewhere. As there are no birth records for the children, their ages are approximate.

We have sent funds to support all four people for the year. Here is what else we can do. You may write to any of our sponsored elders or children or send them gifts. If you wish to send additional monetary gifts, those go through the sponsorship office. The church office has addresses for letters, gifts, and monetary contributions.



## BMC ADOPTEES



From top to bottom: Mrs. Ganesan, Mr. Topgay, Moulika D. and Chinna Appu (left)

## Prayer List

*Beloved, pray for us.*  
1 Thessalonians 5:25

- Gary Larson
- Steve Mitchell
- Barb Stevenson (mother of Kim Stevenson)
- Linda Jacobs (sister of Jan Forsty)
- Suzanne Webb (DOC minister and friend of Sharon Watkins)
- Rick Lowery
- Pam and Alan Clifford (Connie McVicar's sister and brother-in-law)
- Sharon Poyneer (sister of Vonnie Larson)
- Mary Sutherland (sister of Pat Sutherland)
- Della & Ed Rodgers (Parents of Vicki NeCastro)
- Mike Cunningham (Sydma's Dad) and Dottie Hanners
- Shana Hatzopoulos
- Joanne Sykes
- Ellen Sanford
- Caden Knisley
- Nancy Sandercox
- Mary Jane Jackson
- Ruth Tye
- Holly, Frank, and Sharley Hillgardner
- Elizabeth DeJong
- Donna Norman (Becky Ayers' sister)
- Nancy Pietrangelo (sister of Penny Tittle)
- Dottie Smith
- Robert Andrews
- Linda Owens Walters
- Paul Gardner
- Kerry Kerr
- Dara Cobb Lewis and family

Christian love and sympathy are extended to:

- The family of Stuart Kaminsky (beloved brother of Karen McFadden) who passed away February 12, 2020.
- Family and friends of Ashley Keith Lester, who passed away January 14, 2019

THE BETHANY MEMORIAL CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL BOARD WILL HOLD ITS MONTHLY MEETINGS ON THE SECOND MONDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 6:00 PM IN THE PARLOR. ALL MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND.

THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH WILL MEET AT 9:30 AM THE SUNDAY BEFORE A SCHEDULED BOARD MEETING. JAN FORSTY IS SERVING AS CHAIR OF THE ELDERS.



Bethany Memorial Church (Disciples of Christ) will be collecting for Week of Compassion on Sunday, February 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

As the relief, refugee, and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Week of Compassion works with partners to alleviate suffering throughout the world.

The  
Little  
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Memorial  
Church

PO BOX 149  
BETHANY, WV 26032