



# BETHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

3104 W LIBERTY AVENUE

PITTSBURGH, PA 15216-2404

412-531-9363

[bethany-dormont@verizon.net](mailto:bethany-dormont@verizon.net)

[www.bethany-dormont.com](http://www.bethany-dormont.com)

## Pastors

Rev. John Gropp, Rev. Brenda Henry, Rev. Susan Devine

Rev. Paul Koch and Vicar Malinda Gilberti

## SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER 2020

Dear Partners in Ministry,

It might be hard to believe but since July 26th we have walked through most of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. There are four known letters from Paul to the people of Corinth, called the Corinthians. Some of the content of these letters has been lost to us and the remainder of what is left was used to create what we know as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians. 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians was written less than a year after the documents used to create 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians. It was during Paul's second ministry journey that he visited the city of Corinth.

Corinth was a big sea port; it was a busy place full of trade and business was successful. The city itself was a Roman colony that was immersed in Greek tradition. Part of the Greek tradition was the ongoing pagan worship of the goddess Athena; another part was the sexual immorality that went on openly in worship spaces. Early Christians found it very difficult to communicate the love of Christ within the city because of these popular practices. There were divisions in families and friendships could not endure the tension that tugged between the old practices and the potential of the new way of Jesus. Paul openly speaks that suffering for Christ will be their "new normal".

The lectionary focused on Consolation, Forgiveness, Treasure in Clay Jars, Walk by Faith not Sight, Reconciliation, and Generosity. My attempt is to provide a "cliff-notes" version of what we have covered in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians. First is Consolation. God does console us, but sometimes we don't experience it in the way that we believe it should happen. We want everything to be just so; we want all of our problems to just go away. But we really shouldn't sit still and let God do all of the heavy lifting for us. We need to realize that in getting consolation from God provides us with strength, encouragement and hope. We are never alone in our suffering. Christ suffers along with us. We cannot depend solely on ourselves to live our lives, we have to yoke up with God. Second was Forgiveness. We are not just supposed to extend forgiveness to others three times, or even seven times. We are supposed to forgive each other in an ongoing way. The best posture to have is when we are authentic about who we are and accountable for all we do. It sounds much easier on paper than it really is. God is totally aware of this and walks with us as we try to forgive others as often as we can. Third was Treasure in Clay Jars. We are the clay jars; we are ordinary on the outside but extraordinary on the inside. We are fragile jars of clay; therefore, we need to be careful to make sure that we affect everyone else in a positive way. We are to be mindful of the attention we give to earthly money, possessions, and power. Our focus should be more on God. Fourth was Walk by Faith, not by Sight. We are reminded again that we are human beings with body and soul. Our bodies waste away in front of the mirror, but our soul never wastes away. The soul is nourished by the Word of God as we read scripture, as we worship together, and when we kneel in prayer. Our daily relationship with God is important and should take priority in our lives. Fifth was Reconciliation. We are brand new people on the inside when we have been forgiven; the relationship with God is stronger, that old sin is done and forgotten. We can think of God as the "quicker picker upper", our sins are blotted out and thrown away in the garbage. Finally, Generosity. As I think of the year plus that I have spent with you here at PLUM, I recognize you as generous people. Before the days of Covid's limitations, when I

walked into all of your worship spaces, I knew that if I needed anything you would rush to provide it for me. You are generous within your communities by providing food, diapers and clothes to those in need. You are generous with your time, talents, and treasures. I have witnessed some wonderful music, ideas, and a willingness to stay in a meeting even though it was running late.

Those six weeks have seemed to fly by, and here we are still wearing masks and keeping our distance. As bad as all of this can sometimes feel, there are truly times where life seems to be going along in a positive way. Our worship spaces are beginning to reopen. We can greet each other once again—even if it is from six feet away. We are once again communing with wine AND bread. The ZOOM service is still well attended and I have heard that people enjoy seeing familiar folks and meeting new folks. The daily 3pm meet up on ZOOM has turned out to be not only a place to hang out, but a place of love and support for the other! As we begin our walk toward the end of summer, let's just pause and take a moment to take in all that we have experienced through the past few months. A deep breath is always a good way to refresh our body and soul!

God's continued blessings on each and every one of you!

Vicar Mandy



### **Being Grateful in a time of Pandemic**

On February 15<sup>th</sup> of this year, I stood before God, our Bishop, numerous clergy and many people from the congregations of Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries (PLUM) and said my Ordination vows. I was grateful for the completions of my Master of Divinity degree from Luther Seminary and the Candidacy process of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. I was grateful for a wonderful reception that followed the Ordination; for time with family and friends, for my mentors who guided me, for the support that I received from my family, friends and members of PLUM, and for the beautiful, thoughtful gifts that were given to me. I was grateful. And I was ready - ready to serve as a pastor. I looked forward to leading worship in the congregations of PLUM, to sharing communion with all who gathered, to visiting home-bound members, and yes, even to attending all the meetings that are necessary for the work of the church to get done. And then, a pandemic happened. Somehow, I missed that class in Seminary! And now, these words come to mind:

**“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”**

1 Thessalonians 5:18

It does not seem to be coincidental that, in the midst of the pandemic, our synod's Stewardship Committee offered a book study. The book that was used was Diana Butler Bass' "Grateful: The Subversive Practice of Giving Thanks." Giving thanks in the midst of a pandemic—is it possible? Is it possible to “give thanks in all circumstances?”

Bass wrote:

“If we practice gratefulness, it becomes a natural and normal way of engaging the world. With gratitude, our hearts open toward one another. It can make us different and helps us prosper” (p. 62).

For gratefulness to become natural and “normal,” it takes practice. And what is “normal?” As every aspect of our lives have changed, some questions come to mind. What does it mean to be church? What does it mean to worship? How can we celebrate communion? And a very important question – What are you feeling? I think that I can say that this has been a time of an emotional roller coaster. Bass wrote: “Our emotional lives are like gardens” (p. 40). And like gardens, Bass points out, they need attentiveness, care, and tending. How are you tending your emotional life?

Your pastors, and I think many of you, have been wrestling with those questions for months now. And another question, one that we must think about is – What have we learned? How has our awareness of our church community, the Church in the world, our local communities and our nation increased? Bass wrote:



*Grandparents Day is Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>! Wishing all Grandparents everywhere a wonderful day!*



**LET US REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS:**



**OUR MILITARY:** Matt, Josh, Jimmy, Mike, Pat, Chad, Liz, Shawn, Bethany, Girard, Kelly, Robert, Ben, Scott, Tony, Megan, Michael, Brent and Joseph.

**THOSE THAT PROTECT & SERVE:** Craig and Jaco, Sean, Tom and John

**OUR SHUT INS:** Dolly, Roberta, Mary, Nancy, Arlene, Carol, Ruth, Lorraine, Erna, Jan, Patricia, Frank and Nancy.

**THOSE WHO ARE ILL:** Roberta, Lou, Tom, Carol, Ann, Colleen, Joie, Alan, Rose, Ryan, Mary, Bud, Joanne, Patty, David, Fred, Liz, Herb, Vince, Linda, Jim, Ed, Bill, Eric, Paul, Naziario, Ardith, Debbie, Gerri, Jessica, Harvey, Ashley, Beth, Charlie & Kelsey.

**THE CHURCHES OF PLUM**

**ABIDING MINISTRIES**

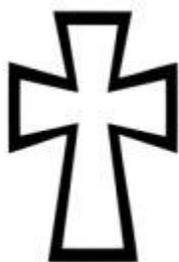


**PLEASE REMEMBER TO GIVE**

**Thank you to all who have continued to send in your weekly Church donations!** This has allowed Bethany to continue to operate in a positive fashion. Please prayerfully consider continuing to submit your weekly donation envelopes into the Church. In doing so, you are helping to ensure that our finances will not dip too drastically. Thank you for your continued support during this difficult time. We encourage you to take every precaution to stay healthy. You are important to us! May our Lord continue to watch over you and keep you safe.



**PLUM NEWS**



In the midst of the Coronavirus global pandemic, the 10 small congregations of PLUM remain committed to our ministries of providing care and support for our families, our churches and our communities. We have moved to a virtual ministry format that includes Sunday worship at 3:00 p.m., daily prayer at 2:00 p.m. and on-line Bible studies. You may find the details for each of these ministry opportunities at our **What's New** page. Our phone line and our website will serve as sources to keep you updated to our rapidly-changing "new normal", as we faithfully respond to governmental guidelines of caring for each other, in the midst of the Covid-19 virus. This will help us to stay connected to the needs of our members, community, and congregations. Remember "God's Work /Our Hands" is more than a cute slogan. It is a many-faceted opportunity for us to truly be the BODY of Christ in the world. Thank you for partnering with us in this new journey.

**Let us remember that GOD is with us ALWAYS!**



**PLUM WORSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> AT 7:00PM:** The PLUM Worship Committee has been organized for the purpose of **sustaining the weekly zoom worship**. Join us on September 9<sup>th</sup> (via ZOOM), as we plan and discuss upcoming ZOOM worship Sundays. At least one member from each PLUM Congregation is encouraged to attend. **FYI: BETHANY is coordinating the September 13<sup>th</sup> ZOOM Worship. We hope you will attend!**



**Lutheran Church of Our Saviour's Blessed Bundles program is the 2020 "Designated Outreach" for the SWPA synod Women of the ELCA (WELCA)**



**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5: ADDICTION SUPPORT GROUP - VIA ONLINE "ZOOM" MEETING**

The "Zoom" (internet video conferencing) meeting for the upcoming **Support Group meeting** is on **Saturday, September 5, 2020 @ 10 AM.**

For a **COMPUTER**: If you do NOT have the Zoom program on your computer, then click this link to [Download and install Zoom desktop program \(Windows or Mac\)](#). After the file has downloaded, go to where the file was downloaded to (probably in your "Downloads" folder) and click on the "ZoomInstaller.exe" file to start the installation process.

For a **"SMART" CELL PHONE**: If you do NOT have the Zoom app installed on your cell phone, then go to Google Play (for Android phones) or to the Apple Store (for Apple phones). Search for the "Zoom" app. Download and install the file.

**AFTER** you have installed the program or app:

To join this Zoom meeting (with a **computer, laptop** or "**smart**" cell phone),

click: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75815818682?pwd=bWRqeC83MnB4NHkzNGl0cEtFaEoxZz09>

The Zoom "Meeting ID" is **758 1581 8682**

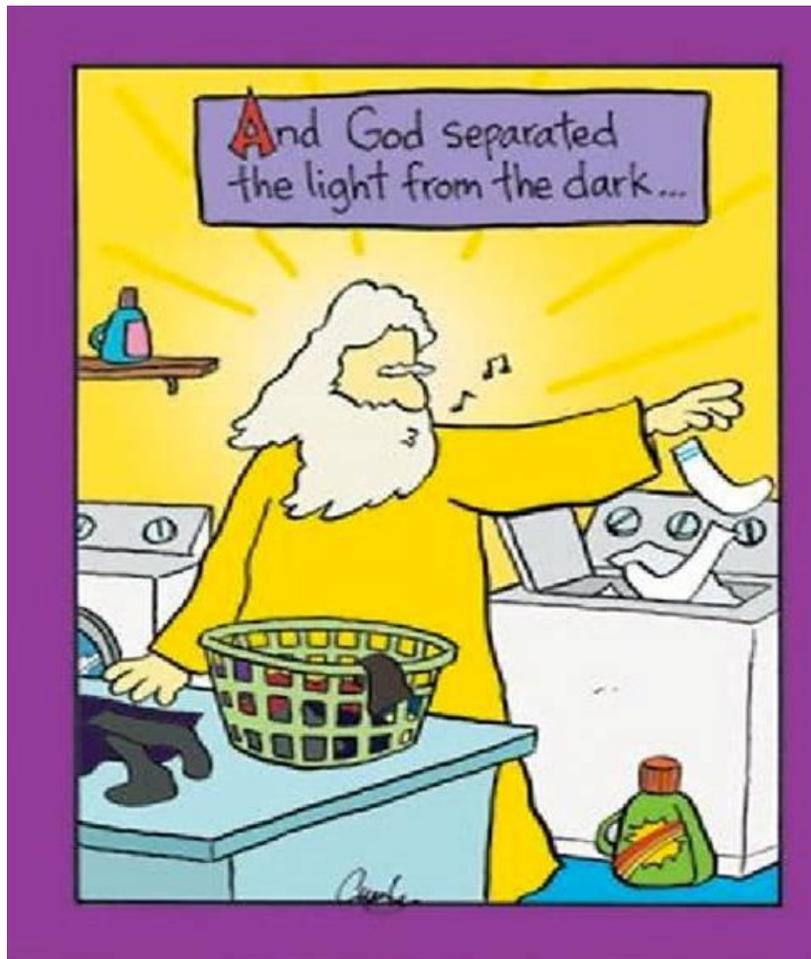
Password: **2WGH52**

Please call my cell (412) 853-3189 if you experience any technical difficulties.

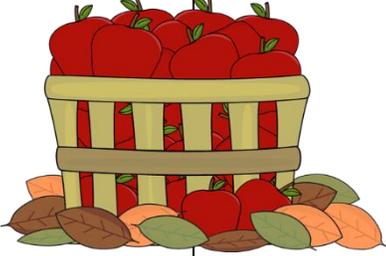
Kathleen



**AT HOME TAIZÉ PRAYER SERVICE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2020, 7:00 PM:** During this time of the Coronavirus and Social Distancing, Prayer is a source of Comfort. Please join us in Taize Prayer from the safety of your homes. To participate in the Taize Prayer service, go to PLUM's [Zoom page](#). Call Pastor Sue (412-496-4889) or Pastor Brenda (412-390-8005) if you have questions or concerns.



# Bethany Ev. Lutheran Church      September 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 	3	4	5 	
6 ✝ WORSHIP 3PM on ZOOM	7  Labor Day OFFICE CLOSED	8	9	10 	11 	12
13 ✝ WORSHIP 3PM on ZOOM  Grandparents Day	14 	15  BIBLE STUDY 1PM ZOOM	16 	17  PLUM STUDY 7PM ZOOM	18  Rosh Hashanah	19 
20 ✝ WORSHIP 3PM on ZOOM	21  Bethany Council 7pm on ZOOM	22  Autumn Begins BIBLE STUDY 1PM ZOOM	23 	24  PLUM STUDY 7PM ZOOM	25 	26
27 ✝ WORSHIP 3PM on ZOOM  Yom Kippur	28 	29  BIBLE STUDY 1PM ZOOM	30 			

