



BETHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Pastors

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OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 2020

God's promise to his people during times of uncertainty



Then Joshua said to the people,

***“Sanctify yourselves;
for tomorrow the LORD
will do wonders among you.”***

Joshua 3:5

It has been six months since that alarming declaration in March that we need to quarantine due to COVID-19, a virus that would come to change our daily way of interacting with each other. Our worship has changed due to physical distancing, use of masks and no singing. Times have certainly changed. Often, we hear lamented

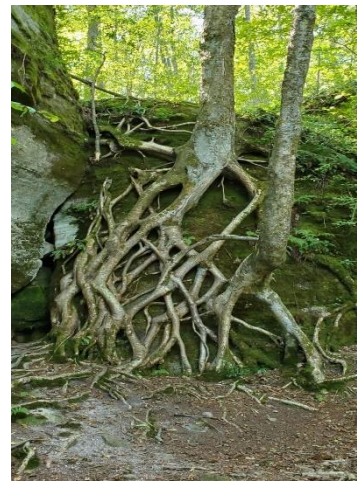
“we have not been through this before.” The circumstances of the Israelites described in Joshua 3 were different than our present situation. However, they, like us, found themselves at a crossroad of change. They were at the Jordan river and they needed to cross. They had been wandering in the dessert for 40 years, Moses their beloved leader was dead and now they were entering into new territory. What were they to do?

Over the last six months we have been asking the same question. The Corona Virus pandemic, the upheaval in our society as we are confronted with the divisiveness of racism, protests, looting, rioting and capturing of police officers and others mistreating black and brown bodies on the news and social media have certainly influenced how we have been experiencing this time. Our journey through this wilderness of chaos, though only six months, feels more like the 40 years that the Israelites wandered in search of the promise land. But the Israelites had hope. God had seen them through their journey and God was preparing them for this moment. Joshua told the Israelites on the eve before that crossing ***“Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.”*** (Joshua 3:5)

Amid our changes, we too have experienced hope. Our hope has been in the tenacity of you, these beautiful congregations that compromise this partnership of servants committed to being God's hands for the work that God has invited us into. We continue to do our ministries of providing diapers; feeding those in need via supporting foodbanks, handing out prepacked meals and offering pizza parties to those we cannot fellowship with in person. We extended or began new ministries such as our Zoom 3pm services, on-line bible studies, 3pm fellowship hour, and on-line Taizé service. We have cared for each other through phone calls, weekly meetings with our awesome administrative staff who continue to be our frontline face to the community, as well as monthly meetings with the president of councils and the PLUM board. Joshua's message from God to the Israelites those many years ago, also remains God's message to us today. Embedded in that message is a command and a promise. The command is to sanctify ourselves. In other words, we should prepare ourselves, engage in acts of worship, prayer

and sacrifice for others. Those acts of sacrifice may come through a desire to do more as we learn of the social injustices and inequities that our brothers and sisters are facing.

These past six months have felt like our time of sanctifying ourselves. I for one do not know what God is up to. I, like you, have been sitting in this space of wondering, discerning and listening. To be clear, there is no specific step by step process of what the right way is to sanctify ourselves, but the Israelites understood that meant entering into a posture of openness, readiness and thankfulness for what God was doing and about to do. That takes us to the second part of the message, the promise: *for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.*



Oh, to experience that wonder. This past month I had the opportunity to go on a hike in the Allegheny Forest. The trail was called Minister Valley (the significance of that is another story 😊). I came across this spectacular sight – trees growing on top of boulders. I paused in awe, breathless, what a majestic sight. Both unexpected and unusual to me. After all shouldn't trees be rooted in the ground? But before me God was doing a new thing. A wondrous thing. As I looked closer, I noticed that the symbiotic relationship between trees and rock shifted. They started out with the rock supporting the trees. But as the trees grew and their roots branched out and became anchored in the soil beneath the rocks, then the branches of the roots began to secure the rocks in place so they would not move due to erosion. They had established a new way of co-existing. All throughout our hike we found this amazing demonstration of God. No, I do not know what God is up to during this season we find ourselves in. But I know whatever it is, the same God who created a new pattern of co-existing between trees and rocks also in engaged in a transformative experience for us. So, let us continue to sanctify ourselves, with eyes, ears and hearts open to the wonder God is doing and will do among us.

Pastor Brenda
On behalf of the PLUM Pastoral Team

BETHANY NEWS

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

10/1: SAMANTHA WILLIAMS
10/2: KATE FLECKENSTEIN
10/3: SEAN PINDEL
10/7: BOB AVERELL
10/11: JACOB OHLIGER
10/12: LINDA FRANZ
10/15: MIKE MILLER
10/20: DREW HUNTLEY

10/22: MAE MCDADE
10/26: KLAIR GULDEN
10/28: PAUL BAKER

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

10/15/16: CAITLIN & BRANDIN HUTCHISON
10/19/57: MR & MRS LOU SPERBER



CONGRATULATION EVERYONE!!!

SAL COUNCIL MEETING

Bethany's next Church Council Meeting will be on Monday, September 19TH at 7:00pm via the ZOOM format. All Council members are encouraged to attend. Thank you, Council for all you do!

REFORMATION DAY IS SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2020!



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.



COMMUNION FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT GET OUT

The Pastors would like all to know that they have formulated a Covid-safe plan for providing communion to our shut-ins and those who are not yet leaving their homes. If you or anyone you know would like to be included in a home communion visit, please contact the Church office (412-531-9363) so that plans can be made. Thank you.



2020 SOUTHWESTERN PA SYNOD ASSEMBLY

The 2020 Synod Assembly of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be held on Saturday, November 14, 2020 via ZOOM Meetings. This is a new format for the Assembly, and since they will be facilitating this assembly in an online format, it is important that EVERY voting member has access to an internet ready device (i.e. smart phone or tablet) for the purposes of voting as well as the ability to be either on a computer with an individual ZOOM account or the ability to be in a small group of people sharing one computer with a ZOOM account. Members are encouraged to prayerfully consider serving as lay voting members or to otherwise participate in the assembly. Each congregation may elect three voting members.

REGISTRATION OPENS: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25.

A Conference 6 caucus will be held via ZOOM on Sunday, October 25 at 7pm.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Attendance Device

A computer or tablet with both a camera and microphone. (Most laptops and tablets come equipped. Desktop users may need to add a webcam with microphone.)

Voting Device

A separate smartphone or tablet to download the app. (This cannot be a computer or web browser, it must be app-enabled..)



BACK TO ONSITE WORSHIP

We have been busy preparing the church building for worship according to the guidelines set down by the CDC and the state of Pennsylvania. **WE WILL HAVE ONSITE WORSHIP ON THE SECOND AND FOURTH SUNDAYS OF THE MONTH, BEGINNING AT 9:15 AM ON OCTOBER 11, 2020!**

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION THOROUGHLY AND CAREFULLY SO THAT YOU CAN MAKE THE BEST DECISION FOR YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES.

The worship service will be held in the Sanctuary. **Maximum attendance in the Sanctuary will be held at 25 people.** Should you decide to attend the October 11th service at Bethany, please contact the church office so that we have an idea of who will be attending. If needed, we will consider having any overflow utilize the Social Hall.

All those in attendance will be required to **wear a mask**. Since we have not seen each other in a long while and you may want to “catch up,” you are encouraged to do so before entering the building and at a safe distance on the walk. Once inside the building **we will be maintaining social distancing**. Upon entry, deacons will document who is in attendance to provide information for contact tracing if necessary, at a later time. Deacons may ask for your name and phone number at this time.

Once you are in the Sanctuary, there will be **hand sanitizer** available and the **bulletins** will be on the pews. **The entire service will be printed in the bulletin.** Family units and worshipers traveling in the same vehicle do not have to socially distance from each other during the service, but will be asked to socially distance from other family and traveling groups.

Sharing of the Peace will be done distantly. People can say something or merely wave to everyone else. Family and traveling units can share the peace how they choose within the unit. **Once you are seated please do not get up and move around.**

Two collection plates or envelopes will be positioned in the rear of the Sanctuary. Worshipers can place their offering in the plates before or after the worship service.

There will be **modified communion**. Details will be given before the service and again before communion takes place.

There will be music but no singing. Worshipers may hum along with the music but are asked to refrain from singing because singing has been known to spread the virus into a large area.

If necessary, the small restroom in the Pastor's office will be made available. Disinfecting wipes will be provided to wipe down the space after use.

If an outbreak has occurred in our congregation, on-site worship service will be suspended again.

When we dismiss, **please clear all personal items and bulletins from your seat.** You are encouraged to take your bulletins home but if you do not want to, please use the trash can by the door.

Please avoid areas of the church other than the Sanctuary.

We have done our best to make the worship spaces as safe as possible for all of us. Now only you can decide if you are comfortable with what we are able to do. Please take time to reread this letter and do what you feel is best for you and your loved ones. Do **not** feel bad if you are not able or ready to worship in the church building. The **Zoom services at 3 PM on Sundays will continue** and you can continue to utilize this ministry. Remember that your health and the health of others is of vital importance. **Should you be running a temperature or not feel well on a particular Sunday – please stay home that week. If you have attended worship and develop symptoms of the virus please notify the office immediately.** The decision to attend worship services is a personal one and may be very difficult for some of us. If you need help in discerning what is a right and faithful decision please contact one of our PLUM pastors for support and guidance.

Bethany Ev. Lutheran Church October 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 DISCUSSION SERIES 7PM ZOOM	2 	3 
4 ✝ 3PM ZOOM WORSHIP	5	6 BIBLE STUDY 1PM ZOOM <i>Bible Study</i> 	7 	8 DISCUSSION SERIES 7PM ZOOM	9 	10
11 ✝ WORSHIP 9:15 3PM ZOOM WORSHIP	12  COLUMBUS DAY	13 BIBLE STUDY 1PM ZOOM <i>Bible Study</i> 	14	15 DISCUSSION SERIES 7PM ZOOM	16	17 
18 ✝ 3PM ZOOM WORSHIP	19  BELC Council 5pm ZOOM	20 BIBLE STUDY 1PM ZOOM <i>Bible Study</i> 	21 	22 DISCUSSION SERIES 7PM ZOOM	23 	24
25 ✝ WORSHIP 9:15 3PM ZOOM WORSHIP	26 	27 BIBLE STUDY 1PM ZOOM <i>Bible Study</i> 	28	29 DISCUSSION SERIES 7PM ZOOM	30	31 HALLOWEEN

