



BETHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Pastors

Rev. Brenda Henry, Rev. Sue Devine,

Rev. Alexander Sumo and Rev. John Gropp

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER 2023

¹³ When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. (Matthew 14: 13-14)

The vocation of being a pastor comes with many opportunities for growth and beautiful moments of joy and witnessing the Holy Spirit at work. In this journey of being your pastor for almost 4 years (can you believe that?) I have certainly experienced those growth, joy, and Holy Spirit moments. However, over time, there is one thing I have encountered that I must admit makes me sad. It is the phrase "Pastor, I know you have a lot on your plate, or I know you are really busy" as the opening to a conversation. As your pastor, I want to be there with you and for you; especially in those moments when you are at a crossroads, experiencing a difficult time, as well as to share in your celebrations and joys. However, what makes me even sadder is to learn afterwards that someone chose not to reach out because of concern for "bothering" me. There is an old saying "what you don't know can't hurt you." I have come to realize that is not a true statement. Lack of information only prevents one from extending care and support at best and serves to create division and harm at worst.

As your pastoral team we recognize and acknowledge that caring for 10 congregations carries with it a lot of responsibility, the need to prioritize our tasks, and to have flexibility in our schedule to adjust to the unexpected. We are constantly learning the importance of balancing the care for our congregations, with care for our families and for ourselves. However, what we have learned and what remains true is we cannot be present for you if we are unaware there is a need or want.

In the gospel of Matthew chapter 14 we read the story of the beheading of John the Baptist, cousin of Jesus. Upon learning of the death of his cousin, Jesus naturally wanted to take a moment to grieve. However, the crowd followed Jesus. What was Jesus' response to the crowd? He had compassion on them. He stopped and he cared for them.

Being present to care for the crowd was an important part of the interaction between Jesus and the crowd. The crowd making known their concerns was also necessary. We as your pastors fully acknowledge that for us to be *better together* we must rely on each other...our shared partnership. Caring for our community is not an exact science. It is relational. And relationships are messy. Even the best efforts to care for one another will result in missing cues, misreading signs. The most helpful way to maintain healthy relationships is by transparent conversations. Sometimes those conversations are not easy and may not provide the desired outcome for everyone; however, we cannot learn what is needed without open dialog. This dialog helps us to faithfully respond to what we are commanded to do – love our neighbor.

The grace filled portion of the story however does not end at the compassion and caring. As we look further in the narrative of Matthew chapter 14, we see that this was the beginning. This narrative also

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

9/1: RON GRZELKA
9/12: DEREK GARDNER
9/17: ROSE BOYLE
9/23: AUNNIKA BAKER
9/24: ARLEEN GIRTY

**CONGRATULATIONS
EVERYONE!**



LET US REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS



OUR MILITARY: Matt, Josh, Lee, Chase, Cameron, Michael and Bryan.
THOSE THAT PROTECT & SERVE: Craig and Jaco, Sean, Michael, Zach, Tom and John
OUR SHUT INS: Roberta, Mary, Linda, Carol, Jan, and Jean.
THOSE WHO ARE ILL: Carol, Jeanne, Roberta, Karen, Arion, Sharon, Tom, Carol, Ann, Colleen, Alan, Rose, Ryan, Mary, Bud, Joanne, Patty, David, Liz, Vince, Linda, Jim, Ed, Bill, Eric, Paul, Naziario, Ardith, Debbie, Gerri, Joe, Heather, Logan, Pastor John, Jessica, Harvey, Ashley, Beth, Kpannah, Charlie & Kelsey.

THE CHURCHES OF PLUM

THE DORMONT COMMUNITY



BETHANY'S COMMUNITY CUPBOARD

Our Community Cupboard is quite busy. We have received many new and gently used items to share with our community. The need for community assistance is real. So, as you find gently used, unwanted items or any non-perishable food items in your home, please consider donating to Bethany's Community Cupboard. Thank you.



*Grandparents Day is Sunday, September 10th!
Wishing all Grandparents everywhere a
wonderful day!*



DORMONT DASH

The Borough of Dormont is having their Dormont Dash race/walk on **Sunday, September 10th**. This will be taking place at the same time as our worship. Please be aware that there will be street and parking restrictions. Be safe that day!!



PLUM NEWS

PLUM WORSHIP COMMITTEE: Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday, September 13, 2023 at 7pm** via ZOOM. Join us then, as we discuss and plan our ZOOM worship services.



AT HOME TAIZÉ PRAYER SERVICE: Please join us in Taizé Prayer from the safety of your homes on **Wednesday, September 6, 2023, 7pm, via ZOOM**. We hope you will join us.



ST. ANDREW FLEA MARKET: St. Andrew's 3rd annual Flea Market will be held on the church grounds (218 Alter St. Carnegie 15106) on **Saturday, September 16th from 11am to 3pm**.





PLUM WORSHIP AND MEETINGS VIA ZOOM: How wonderful is it that not only can we gather for in-person worship each Sunday, we can also gather for Worship, meetings, bible studies and fellowship by connecting on the ZOOM format. Just use the information below and you can be a part of all we are currently doing.

Zoom online: <https://zoom.us/j/401596541>

Zoom by phone: (646) 876-9923

Meeting ID: 401 596 541



PLUM FALL BIBLE STUDY: SEEKING JUSTICE: Join us for the Fall Bible series: Seeking Justice. The study will be held via ZOOM <https://zoom.us/j/401596541> on Thursdays at 7PM, September 14th through November 16th. The schedule is as follows:

SEPTEMBER 14 AND 21: JUSTICE FOR CREATION

SEPTEMBER 28 AND OCTOBER 5: RACIAL JUSTICE

OCTOBER 12 AND 19: GENDER JUSTICE

OCTOBER 26 AND NOVEMBER 2: LGBTQIA+ JUSTICE

NOVEMBER 9 AND 16: JUSTICE FOR IMMIGRANTS

“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.

Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.” Isaiah 1:17



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25TH, PLUM BOARD MEETING: The next PLUM Board meeting will be held on **Monday, September 25th**, at 7pm via Zoom.



WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20th: WHAT'S NEXT? PLANNING MEETING: The next meeting of the What's Next? Committee will be on **Wednesday, September 20th** at 7PM, via ZOOM.



PLUM JOINT REFORMATION SERVICE: The **PLUM Joint Reformation Service** will be held on **Sunday, October 29** at 3:00PM - in Person at Lutheran Church of Our Saviour (Irwin) and via Zoom.



AUGUST 10, 2023 MESSAGE FROM PASTOR PAUL KOCH

Warm greetings to all the PLUM churches and their members: Many of you know of my recent falls and hospitalization. I want you all to know that I am at home now - still recuperating. My wife Sharon has been a very faithful caregiver. Thank you all for your cards, your good wishes and, especially, your prayers. They all mean a lot to me and give me encouragement to carry on.

I also want to take this opportunity to make a recommendation to you. While I have been home, I have spent some time watching the TV series "The Chosen" on PRIME Network. Some of you undoubtedly have heard of it or seen it already. Generally, I think it provides a realistic presentation of Jesus' life and ministry. It excludes the exaggerations of films that are produced in Hollywood. And even though the script is not entirely Biblical, I think the added material is fair and helpful. Take a look at it if you haven't already.

And God bless you all, your families, and the PLUM churches.

+Pastor Paul





JOIN PLUM'S MISSION PROJECT OF "GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS" AT

CHRIST LUTHERAN: We will be gathering at 405 Kennedy Avenue, Duquesne, PA 15110 on **Saturday, September 9, 2023, from 10am to 12:30pm**. For the **sixth** year in a row, PLUM (Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries) will be working with the faith-based organization "**RISE AGAINST HUNGER**" to host a **meal packaging event reinforcing "Gods Work, Our Hands."** We will coordinate an assembly-line packaging of highly nutritious dehydrated meals comprised of rice, soy, vegetables and 23 essential vitamins and minerals. Together we will package 13,000 meals that will be sent to school feeding programs around the world, medical clinics, child growth and development centers, elder care and crisis and disaster centers.

Please make the commitment to help on Saturday, September 9th. Please call, text, or email Mary Anne Novak (coordinator) at 412-979-8574 or novakbbb@aol.com by August 31st with your commitment to participate.

If you would like to **make a personal donation**, please make your check out to your congregation. Each PLUM congregation is asked to donate at least \$480 (This may be done through a special collection, a fundraiser, or whatever means your congregation chooses.) Congregations will then send a check to PLUM, indicating "Rise Against Hunger" on the memo line of the check.

*Together the churches within PLUM can make a difference in combatting world hunger as our hands and mission unite to do God's work.
Come join us for this spiritually inspiring event!*



STEWARDSHIP FROM SCRATCH: Whether you're reimagining your congregation's funding or tuning up an existing plan, this training event will bring you back to basics and celebrate the gifts with which God has blessed your congregation. **Join us on Saturday, September 9, 2023 from 9:30AM to 2:00 PM at Hope Lutheran Church, 8070 Rowan Road, Cranberry Township, PA, 16066.**

RSVP by August 28 to Pastor Sue (412-496-4889, Rev.Sue.Devine@plumofpa.com) who will register PLUM participants as a GROUP) \$15 registration fee (paid by PLUM) includes lunch



Bethany Ev. Lutheran Church September 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 	2 
3 WORSHIP 9:15AM ZOOM WORSHIP 3PM	4 OFFICE CLOSED LABOR DAY 	5 	6 TAIZE WORSHIP SERVICE 7PM	7	8 BROTHERHOOD 6:30PM	9 STEWARDSHIP IN CRANBERRY 
10 WORSHIP 9:15AM GRANDPARENTS DAY	11 	12	13  WORSHIP MEETING 7PM ZOOM	14 BIBLE STUDY 7PM ON ZOOM	15  ROSH HASHANAH	16 SAL FLEA MARKET AND BAKE SALE 11AM - 3PM
17 RETURN TO THE SANCTUARY 9:15AM ZOOM WORSHIP 3PM	18 KANE GROUP 10AM BELC COUNCIL 7PM ON ZOOM 	19 	20 WHAT'S NEXT MEETING 7PM ON ZOOM	21 BIBLE STUDY 7PM ON ZOOM	22 	23 AUTUMN BEGINS
24 WORSHIP 9:15AM ZOOM WORSHIP 3PM YOM KIPPUR	25 PLUM BOARD 7PM ZOOM 	26 	27	28 BIBLE STUDY 7PM ON ZOOM	29 	30

