

BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018

Hours: Mon, Tues and Thurs. 9:30-1:30

Church Office: 610-868-4441

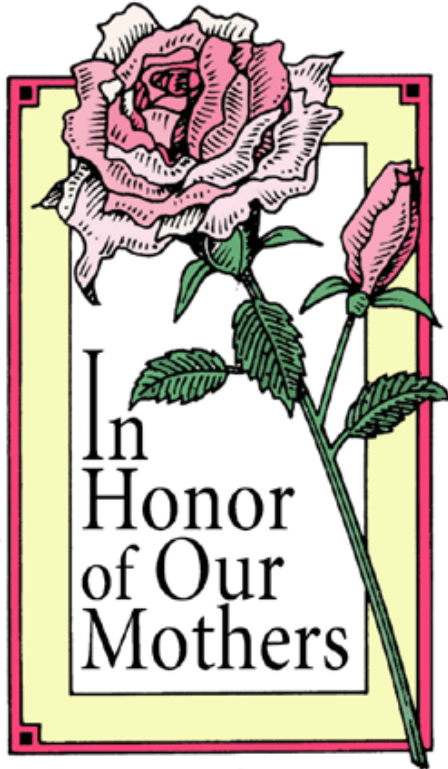
E-Mail: bethanyunitedchurch@rcn.com

Web address: www.uccbethany.org

Pastor Todd Fennell

Matt Miller, Consistory President

Susan Wright, Director of Music



May 14, 2023

Sixth Sunday of Easter

"Moving Forward United in Faith"

"Committed to Christ, United by Love. We are about God, Christ, the Word, and the Future. No matter who you are or where you are on Life's journey, you are welcome here. We are Bethany United Church of Christ."

BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

May 14, 2023

10:45 AM

If you are looking for a church home, we invite you to become part of the community of faith and mission here at Bethany. As per the Consistory decision, masks are optional here at Bethany.

**(*) PLEASE STAND AS YOU ARE ABLE
(Bold Text is said or sung by everyone)**

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE: "In The Garden" C. Austin Miles

*Dedicated to my Mother, DaMaris Stanley, and
all Mothers who loved the Lord and meet Him
"In The Garden"*

*"He speaks and the sound of His voice is so sweet
the birds hush their singing, and the melody that
He gave to me within my heart is ringing. And
He walks with me, and He talks with me and He
tells me I am His own, and the joy we share, as we
tarry there, none other has ever known."*

CALL TO WORSHIP

M: Grace and peace to you and your family this day.

C: And upon the whole household of God as well.

M: May God speak to us as we worship.

C: May God lead us all, as His people. Amen

*HYMN: #607 Happy the Home When God Is There

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

Lord God of grace and love, we thank you for the homes in which we were nurtured and for the love that our mothers and fathers had for us. Strengthen all of us through Your word that guides and leads our family life. Bless this hour of worship, we pray. Amen

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also, with you.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (unison): #652 This Is the Day

This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made, that the Lord has made; we will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it, and be glad in it. This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day; this is the day that the Lord has made.

READING OF SCRIPTURES

Psalm 66: 8 - 20

I Peter 3: 13 - 22

*John 15: 1 - 8

Leader: This is the Good News

People: Thanks be to God

SERMON: "Bearing Fruit Day by Day"

OFFERING INVITATION

OFFERING OF OUR TITHES and GIFTS

OFFERTORY: "Pray Together and We'll Stay Together" ...
arr. W. Stickles in honor and memory of our Mothers and the
Festival of the Christian Home

Chancel Choir

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE: #44 Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise him all creatures here below; praise him above, you heavenly host, praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

God of love, we offer our gifts of time, spiritual gifts and financial gifts as a sign of our love for You and the world. We ask Your blessing on the gifts where You meet us in our suffering, and raise us up, so that all may come to know of Your abiding love. In Jesus name. Amen.

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

CALL TO PRAYER – PASTORAL PRAYER- THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

*HYMN: #435 Like A River Glorious

*BENEDICTION

*CHORAL BENEDICTION: Bind Us Together

Bind us together, Lord; Bind us together with cords that cannot be broken. Bind us together, Lord; Bind us together, Lord, Bind us together with love.

POSTLUDE

Our worship ends, our service begins!



FLOWERS: The flowers today are given in loving memory of Wayne & Lois Shelly, by their daughter, Nedra.

BULLETINS: are sponsored by Barbara Backensto in memory of Gertrude Peiffer and Evelyn Fink and in memory and honor of all Bethany Mothers.

GREETERS: Barbara Backensto, Lisa Williams

USHERS: Lisa Williams, Barbara Backensto

LAY READER: Len Kesselring

Scriptures

Psalm 66: 8 – 20 NRSV

- ⁸ Bless our God, O peoples;
let the sound of his praise be heard,
⁹ who has kept us among the living
and has not let our feet slip.
¹⁰ For you, O God, have tested us;
you have tried us as silver is tried.
¹¹ You brought us into the net;
you laid burdens on our backs;
¹² you let people ride over our heads;
we went through fire and through water;
yet you have brought us out to a spacious place.^[a]
¹³ I will come into your house with burnt offerings;
I will pay you my vows,
¹⁴ those that my lips uttered
and my mouth promised when I was in trouble.
¹⁵ I will offer to you burnt offerings of fatted calves,

with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams;
I will make an offering of bulls and goats. *Selah*
¹⁶ Come and hear, all you who fear God,
and I will tell what he has done for me.
¹⁷ I cried aloud to him,
and he was extolled with my tongue.
¹⁸ If I had cherished iniquity in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened.
¹⁹ But truly God has listened;
he has heard the words of my prayer.
²⁰ Blessed be God,
who has not rejected my prayer
or removed his steadfast love from me.

I Peter 3: 13 - 22 NRSV

¹³ Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, ¹⁵ but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you, ¹⁶ yet do it with gentleness and respect. Maintain a good conscience so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹ in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight lives, were saved through water. ²¹ And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal

to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

John 15: 1 - 8 NRSV

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. ² He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³ You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

FUNDRAISERS -



GET YOUR PEANUTS, CASHEWS, AND ALMONDS HERE!

We will be selling nuts in June watch the bulletin for dates! We sell Almonds, Cashews, and Peanuts. Call Debbie Brown at 484-358-3735. Everyone is invited to help on nut preparation days. Saturdays from 9 AM-Noon (Attention Youth – this can be Community Service time) and Mondays from 8 AM until finished. It’s a time of fun and fellowship. Lunch is served on peanut prep Mondays. Peanuts, Cashews & Almonds are \$5

Strengthen the Church

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. **By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.** Bethany will receive this special offering on Pentecost Sunday, May 28. Envelopes will be provided.

Bethany United Church of Christ

Financial Report

January through April 25, 2023

	Income	Expense	Over/Under
January 2023*	\$5,749.43	\$6,880.22	-1,130.79
February 2023*	\$6,090.99	\$9,647.14	-3,556.15
March 2023*	\$5,647.96	\$11,456.72	-5,808.76
April 25, 2023	\$6,715.55	\$7,593.76	-878.21
Total*	\$24,203.93	\$35,577.84	-11,373.91

*Note: Total Parsonage Fund Transfer not included in Income above Total \$11,000.00

April 30 th	\$1381.00
May 7 th	\$1024.00

Recap of discussion on future of Bethany UCC

As promised by the consistory we will keep all the congregation informed of the discussions surrounding the future of Bethany UCC First I want to thank Dave Deremer from the PNEC for providing guidance and facilitation at last night's discussion. Second, thank those folks that took the time to be part of that discussion that are not part of the consistory (Phil and Sharon Haines and Len and Rebecca Kesselring). The process that Dave facilitated gave voice to all the folks who attended. As a UCC church this is not only vital but part of our structure as a church. There was a lot of passion and historical context voiced as part of the discussion. There is no question that, given a better set of financial circumstances, the consensus would be to continue to fight the good fight for many years to come. However, that not only ignores the reality but also risks giving up a chance for us to leave a legacy as a church with a 131-year history of contribution to west Bethlehem and the PNEC. We must move forward and look at the other options and opportunities. The process will begin with some initial conversations with churches that align well both liturgically and activity. More importantly churches that represent the best opportunity to thrive into the near future as Christians wanting to impact our communities. The first step will be a meeting of the consistory president, Dave and the pastor with the pastor and consistory of those churches to try and determine if there is a synergy there (a one plus one equals three-kind of result). That will happen over the next 3-4 weeks. At the next consistory meeting on June 8th, we will hash out and summarize the results of those conversations. Like this letter I will provide a recap in the bulletin. With that letter in tow, we will convene with the congregation after our June 25th service to answer any questions and listen to any thoughts moving forward. We all agreed that we will strive to over-communicate which is foundational to the UCC approach. At the same time, we will be as honest and

straightforward on our options moving forward. There are no easy answers, but we will succeed to the best of our abilities, and with guidance from God, ensure that we continue our faith mission as Christians.

Your brother in Christ Matthew Miller

Bach Spring Festival

The Bach Choir is presenting it's 115th Festival Weekend Concerts on May 19th & 20th at Packer Chapel on the Lehigh University Campus. Visit the Bach Choir of Bethlehem @ bach.org to order tickets or go to Packer Chapel.

607 Happy the Home When God Is There

1 Hap - py the home when God is there, and love fills ev - ery - one,
2 Hap - py the home where God's strong love is start - ing to ap - pear,
3 Hap - py the home where prayer is heard, and praise is ev - ery - where,
4 Lord, let us in our homes a - gree this bless - ed peace to gain;

607

when with u - ni - ted work and prayer the Mas - ter's will is done.
where all the chil - dren hear his fame and par - ents hold him dear.
where par - ents love the sa - cred Word, and its true wis - dom share.
u - nite our hearts in love to thee, and love to all will reign.

Like a River Glorious

435

1 Like a riv - er glo - rious is God's per - fect peace, o - ver all vic -
 2 Hid - den in the hol - low of his bless - ed hand, nev - er foe can
 3 Ev - ery joy or tri - al fall - eth from a - bove, traced up - on our

to - rious in its bright in - crease: per - fect, yet it flow - eth full - er
 fol - low, nev - er trai - tor stand; not a surge of wor - ry, not a
 di - al by the Sun of Love; we may trust him ful - ly all for

ev - ery day, per - fect, yet it grow - eth deep - er all the way.
 shade of care, not a blast of hur - ry touch the spir - it there.
 us to do; they who trust him whol - ly find him whol - ly true.

Refrain

Stayed up - on Je - ho - vah, hearts are ful - ly blest,

find - ing, as he prom - ised, per - fect peace and rest.

THIS WEEK AT BETHANY

SUNDAY, MAY 14 Happy Mother's Day

10:45AM Worship in the Sanctuary.

MONDAY, MAY 15

9:30AM 1:30PM Office Hours

TUESDAY, MAY 16 Election Day

9:30AM 1:30PM Office Hours

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17

5:30PM Handbell Rehearsal

7PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal

THURSDAY, MAY 18 Ascension Day

9:30AM 1:30PM Office Hours

SUNDAY, MAY 21

10:45AM Worship in the Sanctuary.

MONDAY, MAY 22

Beeline Articles due

