

#### BETHANY CHURCH OF BERWICK 116 Summerhill Avenue Berwick, Pennsylvania 18603

## BETHANY BEACON

Mission Statement: We are a Beacon for God— Helping people to see, to accept and to grow in the light of Jesus Christ

VOLUME SIXTY FEBRUARY 2024 ISSUE—ONE



Lenten Services will be on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm. February 14, Ash Wednesday service will be at Bethany Church of Berwick.

The host church will be announced at a later time for the following dates: February 21, February 28, March 6, March 13, March 20

Holy Thursday March 28 at Bethany Church of Berwick

#### **BETHANY STAFF**

Pastor John W. Leek

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Paul Miller, Custodian Home: 570-759-1456

George Miller, Church Access: 570-218-2533

Beverly Collins, Pianist Ronald Sult, Treasurer Website: www.bethanyberwick.org

Church Van Ministry: 272-250-9862

"Like" us on Facebook!

#### New Address!

https://www.facebook.com/ bethanychurchofberwick/

#### **Worship Schedule**

In Celebration of Bethany Church and to **Welcome Pastor John Leek and Family** 

February 11, 2024

Sunday School @ 10:00 am Combined Worship @ 11:00 am for a Service of Consecration Luncheon to Follow



We will be having a soup/stew/chili luncheon after the Combined Worship service on February 11 at 11:00 am. We ask you to sign up so we can plan on how many will be in attendance. You are asked to provide a favorite soup, stew, chili or dessert. We encourage you to invite your family members and neighbors to join in worship and celebration.



#### **Short Term Prayer Concerns**

Dee, Kenzie, John Zeart, Deb Springman, Becky, Harold Ackerman, Family in Turmoil, Matt Glasgow, Paul Miller, Deb Leffler, Jack and Mary Carver, Olga, JoAnne Heacock, Barb Fenstermacher, Pat, Jack Peters, Barry, Karen Dobernack, Joshua, Charlene Dailey, Kellie Eyer, Pastor John's Family, Pat Leach, Lisa, Dean Bowman

Please note: If you would like someone to be moved to the long-term list, please contact the church office.

#### **Long-Term Prayer Concerns**

Wendy McClintock, Donna Stubbs, Sam Miller, Shirley Hornberger, Kim Varner, Marlene Eckrote, Jim & Carol Zeart, Kim Kishbaugh, Warren Wolfe, Edna Mae Belles, Kent Williams, Rosemary Martz, Joe Phillips, Sr., Betty Morgan, Karen Hunsinger, Bill Mausteller, Billy Robbins, Samantha Scoblink, Nick Pritchyk, Renee Ptashinski, Mike Mattern, Esther Bower, John Ptashinski, Joan Harmon, Dick and Bethann Savage, Carmella Picarello, Judy Harvey, Edna McClintock, Gloria Varner, Eric Black, Tod Locher, Lisa Hubley, Gary Fisher, Pastor Ed Cope, Jackie Fisher, Tammy Smith, Frances Houseknecht, Pam Price



#### A prayer for Lent

Dear Christ, hasten to me. Release me from my sins. Free my arms from the chains of evil, that I may embrace you. Lift the scales of ignorance from my eyes that I may see you. Why do you delay? What are you waiting for? You are my God and my Lord, you are my refuge and strength, you are my glory and my hope. In you I put my trust. Dear Christ, hasten to me.

—Aelred of Rievaulx (12<sup>th</sup> century)



- 2/02 Lonnie Brady
- 2/03 Deanna Schuckers
- 2/04 Gina Talanca
- 2/05 Savannah Terry, Carter Townsend
- 2/07 Kimberly Morris
- 2/08 Carole Unseth
- 2/09 Donald Davis, Whitney Holloway, Benjamin Stroup
- 2/10 Nolan Eyer, Shane Scandle, Ruby Sherman
- 2/12 Julia Rauch
- 2/13 Jarrett Samsel
- 2/14 Paityn Brown
- 2/15 Cassidy Boston, Cindy Sweppenheiser
- 2/17 Douglas Stroup
- 2/18 Kenton Karns
- 2/19 Jane Ruhmel, Hope Samsel
- 2/21 Mary Remley
- 2/23 Christy Kehl-Hess
- 2/24 Susan Forsythe, Norman Peters
- 2/25 Dena Klingerman
- 2/26 Melanie Grasley-Mordan, Adam Molick
- 2/27 Harvey Eckart
- 2/28 Harold Ackerman, Chris Nowakoski

#### Winter has arrived!

We are all ok. Brenda surprised us with a weeks visit from California, the week before Christmas. We had a great time.

Love & God Bless,

June A. Sitler

P.S. Thanks for the Christmas card.

# Bethany Church of Berwick Peacemakers Prayer Support Ministry

Matthew 5:9

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.

General Prayer for Departments:

Borough of Berwick Police Department
Briar Creek Township Police Department
Salem Township Police Department
Nescopeck Borough Police Department
Columbia County Sheriff's Office
South Centre Township Police Department
PA State Police Shickshinny Station

Specific Daily Prayer for Officers: February 2024

- 1. Deputy Michael Tkach
- 2. Officer Kyle Trenholm
- 3. Deputy James Dalton
- 4. Officer Joseph Gainley
- 5. Deputy Kevin Bradley
- 6. Officer Michael Klinetob
- 7. Vincent Figureido, Patrolman
- 8. Officer Raymond Thonkinson, III
- 9. Detective Gregory Martin
- 10. Sgt. Thomas Hegland
- 11. Officer Joshua Switzer
- 12. Chief Deputy Michael Beyer
- 13. Officer Joshua Lowery
- 14. Tyler Soboleski, Patrolman
- 15. Officer Brandon Shultz
- 16. Deputy James Arter
- 17. Officer Steven Torres
- 18. Officer Scott Sienkiewicz
- 19. William Lefevre, Patrolman
- 20. Officer Victor Guevara
- 21. Detective Reagan Rafferty
- 22. Deputy Kevin Katch
- 23. Officer Phil Mainiero
- 24. Officer Michael Quaranta
- 25. Officer Riley Robinette
- 26. ColeSchaffer, Patrolman
- 27. Lee Pitonyak, Patrolman
- 28. Deputy Anthony Kopitski
- 29. Officer Randy Gaugler

#### **BEACON ARTICLE - FEBRUARY 2024**

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#### **Reflecting and Looking Ahead**

Bethany Church begins 2024 full of hope and optimism! Stepping out in faith, the congregation in 2022 made the difficult decision to leave the United Methodist denomination and then join the fledgling Global Methodist Church. That links us with fellow believers from around the world who are committed to "make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly."

This month we welcome Pastor John Wesley Leek, who also transitioned from the UMC to GMC.
We're excited to work with him to discern God's plan for Bethany's next chapter in ministry. Our name may have changed, but our commitment to serve as a beacon of God helping others to see, accept and grow in the light of Jesus Christ burns as bright as ever!

#### 2023 Highlights

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A lot took place at Bethany Church last year:

The UMC approved Bethany's disaffiliation.

The congregation officially incorporated as Bethany Church of Berwick.

Bethany Church of Berwick took ownership of church property.

Bethany joined the Global Methodist denomination.

Signage, logo and other communications were updated to reflect our new status.

John Leek was invited to serve as pastor.

PB&J care pack and pantry box give-aways took place each month.

Bethany hosted two clothing give-aways.

We collected food for Harvest Home.

Giving Tree Ministry provided warm clothing to Berwick residents downtown.

Ladies fellowship met regularly throughout the year.

The Peacemakers offered encouragement and prayer for local law enforcement officers.

Post Overdose Response Team connected with community members in recovery from substance abuse.

We welcomed eight new members into the church family!

In the last seven months, we were blessed to hear from numerous guest speakers. Special thanks to those from our own congregation who led services and shared messages: Gary Bowman, Jeff Girton, Rev. Ralph Hartenbach, Sarah Hazlett, Angel Kishbaugh, and Ron Sult.

Attendance remained consistent throughout the year, a testament to the congregation's commitment and the relevant lessons and sermons shared.

#### **Financial Update**

Bethany Church enters 2024 financially stable but in need of support. The costly disaffiliation process drained reserves, and some major capital expenses loom large on the horizon.

We ask that you prayerfully consider your weekly stewardship. Offerings continue to lag behind expenses. While income from the T-Mobile contract, savings on pastor expenses, and other revenue have helped offset the shortfall, this is not sustainable.

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#### **BEACON ARTICLE - FEBRUARY 2024**

#### Financial Update—Continued

Our 2023 year-end balance totaled \$173,257, which includes all funds. That may sound like a hefty sum, but it costs about \$236,000 annually to operate the church.

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Council is currently planning a campaign to replenish funds and prepare for anticipated facility repairs. Look for announcements and your invitation to participate in the coming months.

That said, God continues to provide! Despite 2023's tremendous expenses, Bethany's generous heart shone through in continued support for numerous ministries. The congregation contributed about \$20,000 to missions, including Extra Mile Giving.

#### A Fresh Start

We're grateful to the many church members who have helped prepare the parsonage for the arrival of Pastor John, wife Abby and their three sons. Pastor John begins his official duties Sunday, Feb. 4, though he has been planning for the Lenten season since January.

We will join in a combined service of consecration at 11 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 11, to reaffirm our collective commitment to joyfully sharing the light of Christ. With Lent beginning Wednesday, Feb. 14, this is an excellent time to reflect, reconnect, and rekindle our faith.

We look forward to celebrating and serving with you!

In His service,

Bethany Church Council



The Bell Choir is being formed here at Bethany. If you are interested, please contact Sally (Sara) Miller by phone call or text at (570) 759-8892. Everyone is welcome to join. We would like to start practicing soon so please let Sally know you want to be a part of the Bell Choir.



Welcome Pastor John Leek and his family to Bethany Church of Berwick. We are so happy to welcome Pastor John and his wife, Abby, and their 3 sons to our Church Family.

#### Have You Named Bethany in Your Will?

A reminder to anyone who has included a bequest to Bethany in your will: Please update your documents with the name **Bethany Church of Berwick** to ensure that your gift is distributed according to your wishes. Thank you!

### Missions & Evangelism

## Extra Mile Giving for February will be in support Krista Hartenbach's Mission Work

Our Extra Mile Giving for February will be in support of Krista Hartenbach's mission work with RESOURCING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL. R.C.E. serves international Christian schools and education ministries in their mission of providing exceptional educational opportunities with a biblical foundation and Christian worldview. You may use the envelopes that are available at the Information Desk in the Main Entrance hallway and on the Angel Card Table.

Your Loving Choices, Inc. 904 Market Street Bloomsburg, PA 17815 (570) 784-6124

Donation Statement \$200.00 for 2023

Bethany Church Berwick 116 Summerhill Avenue Berwick, PA 18603

"His eye is on the Sparrow; I know He watches me". Matthew 10:29-31

With such confidence we wish you and your loved ones a blessed new year in the Lord. His faithfulness will endure in your life throughout the new year. We thank God for you. May His name be praised!

At YLC, we continue to have confidence and believe in his promises. We are blessed to close the year with you alongside of us to continue serving this community that we love and cherish. Thank you for your prayers and for your financial contributions to this kingdom-ministry. May God bless you!

Again, we wish you a great new year and remember, "He watches you".

Bonne Année 2024! In HIS Infinite Love, Marthe Poteau-Beauvais



Bethany Church of Berwick hosted a Ladies Fun Afternoon event on December 3. The ladies enjoyed making a snowman craft and a hot cocoa bar.

Ladies from the community were also invited to the fellowship.

Seated: Karen Stroup, Susan Forsythe, Linda Hughes, Shirley Welliver, Judy Harvey

Middle Row: Margie Monroe, Paige Brown, Paityn Brown, Diane Shymansky, Elizabeth Stout, Allison Heintz

Back Row: Angel Kishbaugh, Michelle Seigfried, Sarah Schenkel, Sheilia Williams, Samantha Scoblink, Sarah Hazlett

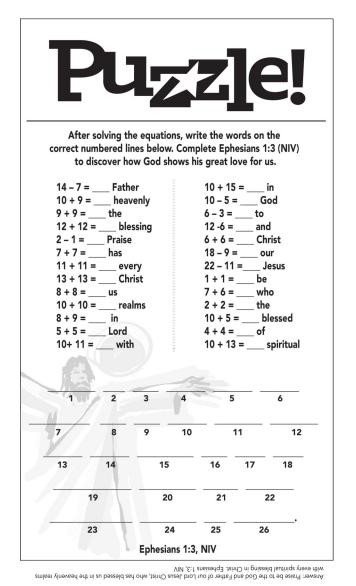
The next Ladies Fun Event is scheduled for February 24.

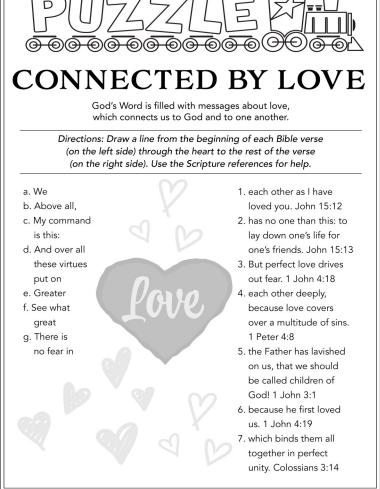
#### Fun with color!

The inaugural 2024 Ladies' gathering will be a watercolor painting tutorial led by Barbara Erb & Sarah Hazlett.

Join us Saturday, February 24, 1-3 pm as we learn about how watercolors work! You'll leave with your own one-of-a-kind artwork, and enjoy an afternoon of fun & fellowship at the same time. No fee, though donations are welcomed! Open to the ladies of Bethany Church and of the community, membership not required.

Be sure to register soon so we can have plenty of supplies on hand!



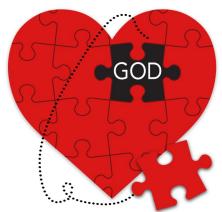


Answers: a 6, b 4, c 1, d 7, e 2, f 5, g 3

#### Spring training for Christians

The word Lent comes from Middle English and German words for springtime. In light of the start of baseball season, some people call the pre-Easter season "spring training for Christians." This fresh perspective moves away from the flawed understanding that Lent must be somber, or that giving something up for Lent is punishment for sin or a way to earn God's favor.

As people of faith, we should never take a season off. But every so often — at least once a year! — we do well to examine where we need to get back in shape spiritually. Perhaps we will indeed opt to give something up: that swearing habit, sleeping in on Sundays, or the cost of a weekly treat so we can donate the money instead. Or maybe we'll take on something new for Lent: a Bible study, prayer routine or service project.



#### God-shaped hole

Have you ever neared the completion of a jigsaw puzzle, only to discover that a piece or two is missing? That's an apt visual for what it's like to live without God. Blaise Pascal, a 17<sup>th</sup>-century philosopher, observed: "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ."

Centuries earlier, St. Augustine proclaimed "Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee." And in the Old Testament, the writer of Ecclesiastes expounded on the

meaninglessness of earthly striving and material pursuits. Only God's Spirit can fill our emptiness and satisfy our eternal longings.

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full," says Jesus in John 10:10 (NIV). He alone provides the solution for emptiness. What comfort to be filled with — and to find our fulfillment in — our Savior!