

Bethel Presbyterian Church

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Be perfect,
as your heavenly
Father is perfect.
Matthew 5:48, ESV

The Open Door

Volume 14, No. 2 / February 2017

Dear Friends,

I am just back from two weeks at Columbia Theological Seminary where I took a class on the Gospel of Matthew for my Doctor of Ministry program. It was a great time of learning and renewal for me. I am grateful to you all for your support of my educational efforts. Spending two weeks immersed in the Gospel of Matthew reminded me of our call as Christians and children of God. In these days of national and international division and enmity, we are called to live differently.

Jesus preaches his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew (chapters 5-7) in which he describes what life looks like for the community of his followers. He describes what life is currently like then offers a distinct alternative. That alternative is grounded in forgiveness, reconciliation, humility, mercy and justice – God's justice, where everyone has what they need for a full and healthy

life. Jesus calls us to go to extreme lengths to keep community, to reconcile to one another. He calls us to offer forgiveness over and over and over again, knowing that forgiveness transforms individuals and communities

Jesus calls us to go beyond societal norms and love even our enemies with sacrificial, unconditional love. He calls us and models for us making space for another to thrive. And underneath all that Jesus illustrates for us as a faithful way of life is right relationship with God and one another. When we seek right relationship, then we don't worry that someone is getting something that is ours, or something more than we have. We don't talk about who's in and who's out; we create inclusive, not exclusive communities. We put all of our trust in the God who created, redeemed and sustains us in transforming love. In the

community of Jesus' followers, in the Kingdom of God, there are no fences, no walls, no boundaries. Everyone is welcome, everyone is valued, everyone is loved, especially the vulnerable, the marginal, the poor, the least among us.

That is a tall order to be sure. But if that is who we are called to be – those who live into the Kingdom of God here and now – then our witness to that Kingdom is vitally important now. Regardless of the rhetoric on the national and local stage; regardless of the chaos that seems to swirl all around us, we know who we are and what we are called to do. Supporting, encouraging and loving one another, let us then commit ourselves to living into the Kingdom of God here and now for the sake Jesus Christ and the world he loves so much.

Grace and Peace.
Wendy

Fellowship Events: Children's Fellowship:

The Children will meet after worship on Feb. 12 for lunch. After lunch they will go over to Brookdale (Wellington Place) and deliver valentines to the residents then play Bingo. They will return by 1:30 pm. Please let Wendy Neff or Jan Rybka know that your child will attend so we have enough cars. Parents are encouraged to enjoy lunch on their own as there will be plenty of adults to chaperone.

Youth Fellowship:

Youth will meet on Feb. 12 (time to be announced) to see the movie, *Rogue One*. After the movie, we will have dinner and conversation about what it means to give your life for something. Watch bulletin announcements for time and let Wendy know if you (or your youth) will attend so we have enough drivers.

Women's Bible Study

Women's Bible Study continues to meet the second and fourth Thursday of the month from 10:30 am to 12 pm. For the next few months we will study the Gospel of Matthew with the particular focus on Empire: A tale of Two Empires, The Gospel of Matthew as Jesus' invitation to live into the Empire of Heaven. Newcomers are always welcome!

Groundhog Day Book Extravaganza:

We are bound to have some more bad weather and it would be bad to get caught without a good supply of books. We will have a book swap like we have had in other years to celebrate Groundhog Day. The way it works is that folks bring in books that they are tired of or don't want to read again. Then, they pick out books other people have brought and take them home. If you don't have books to get rid of or don't have time to sort through them, come ahead and get some anyway. We always have more books than we have takers. Books left over at the end of the swap will be given to Kingston Library or another charity. We will start about 1:30 Saturday February 4 and box up what is left about 3:30 or 4:00. We will put on a pot of coffee and talk books. What could be better for a Saturday in February!

Handbells

Bells are ringing again! There is room for one more person and we can always use folks who are willing to sub when one of us needs to miss a rehearsal. Try it....You might like it. We do have fun together. Look for us on the third Sunday of each month.



Hands of Mercy Food Collection



Thank you to everyone who contributed food for our Jan. HOME collection. Our Feb. focus food will be **Boxed Macaroni & Cheese**. Thank you for supporting our local food pantry and helping feed hungry folks in our community.



On Sunday, Feb. 5 as we leave worship, the youth will be collecting money in large soup pots for Souper Bowl Sunday. All of the money raised will go to the Roane County Cooperative Ministries Garden Grant Program. This program provides grants to low-income families for seed, fertilizer and gardening tools which are used to grow a vegetable garden.

We Get Letters...

Thank you so much to everyone who sent cards after my mother's passing, or who stopped me in the hallways to offer their support. Such comforting words - but then Bethel has always been a very special place with LOTS of VERY special people. We will have a memorial on April 22nd, after the winter weather and Easter season have passed. Your thoughts and prayers are much appreciated.

Joni, Susannah and Frederick Morgan

We recently received word from the family of former member, Willie Mae Mears, informing us of her recent passing. In Kansas City, MO. A Celebration of Life Service will be held at a later date.

The Bethel Rug Hooking group would appreciate some wool for our rug hooking stash. We are looking for 100% wool garments, especially ladies skirts and slacks. Many men's suit fabrics are serged and are not good for hooking. We will also accept woolen yard goods. We will go through any donations and will use the clothes we can and donate unusable ones to be taken to the mission or the Methodist Clothes Closet. Thanks for helping out our group.

Thanks, Mary B. Hines

RIP: Amphitheater behind Bethel

January 2017 update - Cathy McDowell

In February of 2015, the Three Rivers Amphitheater (3RA) project team agreed to come under the management authority of the City of Kingston so that the tax-exempt status of all donations to the project could be guaranteed. Part of that agreement was that the project team would have until December 31, 2016 to raise the funding needed to complete the construction phase of the project.

It is with regret that the 3RA Team could not raise the funds needed to complete the project within the required time frame established by the City. Therefore, on January 3, 2017 the team mailed contribution refund checks to all identified donors and have voided all pledges. We especially regret not being able to build a brick walkway behind the amphitheater that garnered so much support. The walkway was to have memorialized/honored friends and families and to have recognized businesses.

The 3RA Team wanted to let everyone know that the City is pursuing an opportunity for a State of Tennessee Grant to build a larger amphitheater at Southwest Point. The 3RA Team fully supports that effort if it comes to fruition, but at this point we do not know any more details. The Southwest Point location offers the space for a larger multi-function facility. However, such grants are always uncertain, until delivered.

Thanks to all those who have shown interest in and have supported the amphitheater project!

Important Notice:

To ensure the deductibility of your church contributions, do not file your 2016 income tax return until you have received a written acknowledgement of your contributions from the church. You may lose a deduction for some contributions if you file your tax return before receiving a written acknowledgement of your contribution from the church.

Your statements will be available in the Gathering Area, Sunday, Jan. 29.

The collection basket is in the Gathering Area (on the table next to the Quiet Room).

200 Years!!!!

That's right! On June 6th, 1818 Bethel Presbyterian Church was organized. This June as we're celebrating our beloved church's 199th anniversary, we'll be kicking off what we hope to be a yearlong celebration of Bethel's bicentennial existence. On February 12th, immediately after worship, a congregational meeting will be held in the fellowship hall to gather ideas for ways to celebrate and serve throughout this special bicentennial year leading up to that faithful day. So, put on your thinking caps and roll up your sleeves and let's make this a year to remember as we kick off the next 100 years of worship and service. Chili, chips, cheese, sour cream, and crackers will be served for lunch. If you are unable to make the meeting you can call or email your ideas or comments to any Session member or the church office. Look for more information to come soon!

New Course Offering...

The course "The Power of Self Esteem" is being offered again starting March 2nd. The course was originally based on a recurring theme in Paul's letter to the Romans. It is designed to give the student the opportunity to come to a similar conclusion on their own.

The course will be taught from 6:30 to 9:30 for six consecutive Thursdays ending on April 6th at Bethel. A free preview of the course is offered on February 23rd at 6:30 in the church library. The cost for the course is \$125 which includes the materials.

For those who can't make a Thursday night class, "The Power of Self Esteem" is also being offered on Tuesday nights at the Kingston Community Center. The preview is on February 28th and the course starts on March 7th and ends on April 11th. The time for these sessions is 6:00 PM.

"The Power of Self Esteem" is taught under license from a non-profit educational foundation for the "More to Life" program. This course is ANSI/IACET accredited for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) education units (CEU). For more information contact Jim Condon at 376-4420 or go to the web site ClearCognition.org.



- 2 Rebecca Shelby
- 4 Bonnie Anderson
Mark Banker
- 5 Jon Rybka
- 8 Brenda Strickling
- 11 Esther Parish
- 14 Pedro Crocker
- 15 Callahan King
- 17 Mary B. Hines
- 18 Sarah Dungan
Liz Singley
- 19 Melanie Sherrod
- 23 Phil Walsh
- 24 Karen Schall
- 27 Jennifer Choate
Deb Hyder

Looking Ahead...

Shrove Tuesday



Plan to join us for our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on Tuesday, February 28th at 6:30.

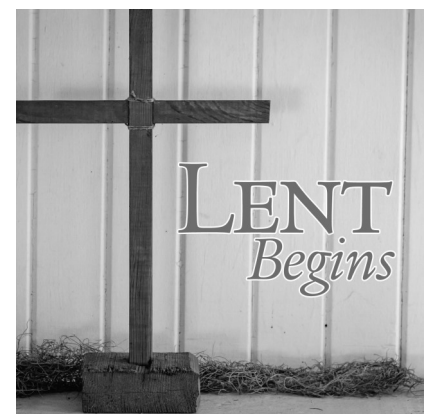


In Assisted Living and Nursing Homes:

Brookdale (Wellington Place) Chris Badger Room 107	1098 Bradford Way, Kingston 37763
Cornerstone Village-North Tauno Maki	2-1 Oak St., Johnson City 37601

Prayer Requests:

Nikki Robbins
Jeff & Sherry Paris



March 1st is Ash Wednesday, Please join us in worship that evening as we begin the season of Lent.

February 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Weekly Happenings: Bethel Arts Ministry: Art Club—Adults: Mon. 10-Noon & Mon 6:30-8:30 PM Rug Hooking: Mondays, 12:30 Taoist Tai Chi: Tues. 6-7:30 PM, Fri. 10-11:30 AM, Sat. 9-10:30 AM / Yoga: Thursdays 5:30 Bell Choir Practice: Wednesdays 6:00 PM / Choir Practice: Wednesdays 7:00 PM						
			1	2 Ten 10 Book Club 10:00	3	4 Groundhog Day Book Swap 1:30
5 Souper Bowl Sunday Faith Team 12:15	6	7	8	9 Women's Bible Study 10:30	10	11
12 Congregational Dinner 12:15 Children's Fellowship Event 12:15 Youth Fellowship (TBA)	13 Finance Team 6:00	14	15 Fellowship Team 5:30 Property Team 5:30 Fellowship Supper 6:30	16	17	18
19 Session 12:15	20 Presidents' Day	21	22	23 Women's Bible Study 10:30	24	25
26 Annual Congregational Meeting 12:00 Study Team 12:15 Serve Team 12:15	27 Generosity Team 7:00	28 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 6:30				