

JANUARY 2021

Bethel Presbyterian Review

The Pastor's Corner

Little Benjamin's Mother was with child, and he sat down at the desk to write God to ask for a little baby sister. He started the letter with this: Dear God, I've been a very good boy. He stopped, thinking. "No, God won't believe that." He wadded up the piece of paper, threw it away and got a new one. He began again: Dear God, most of the time I've been a good boy. He stopped in the middle of the line. He thought, "God won't be moved by this either." So, he wadded up the letter and into the trash it went.

Benjamin then went into the bathroom and grabbed a big terry cloth towel off the towel rack. He carried it into the living room and carefully laid it out on the couch. He smoothed out all the wrinkles. Then he went over to the fireplace mantle, reached up, and very carefully lifted down a statue of Mary, the mother of Jesus. He had often seen his mother carefully dust the statue, and he had eyed it many times. On several occasions, his parents had told him that he could look but was not to touch the statue. Now, with all the care he could muster, he had it in his possession.

Benjamin gently placed the statue in the middle of the towel, carefully folding over the edges. He then placed a rubber band around the whole thing. He brought it to the desk, took out another piece of paper, and began to write his third letter to God. It went like this: Dear God, if you ever want to see your mother again...

I know that many of you have heard this illustration before, but I thought as the new year is upon us and in the midst of difficult times, it might be time to talk a little bit about grace. Benjamin's plight is not uncommon: it is sometimes hard for us to accept the radical grace and love God offers us in the person of Jesus Christ. We, like Benjamin, cannot fathom that it is given freely with no strings attached; as a result, sharing this grace can be a most arduous task. (continued on p. 2)

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HAPPY
new year

2021



(continued from p. 1)

Such perfect graciousness in this life is unattainable, but that does not excuse us from seeking to not only receive but to exhibit the wondrous radical grace of God. Here are some grace-filled responses to difficult daily experiences:

- I don't understand why that person hurt me: but I want to find out and repair our relationship.
- I know that the work that I do is good quality work: even though it's not fair that I didn't get the recognition I deserve, I am happy for the person that did.
- My co-worker didn't treat me fairly: but life is not fair and if I can't resolve this issue, I will choose to forgive and continue to work hard.
- That driver shouldn't have cut me off and it was dangerous: but maybe there is a reason for their hurry, so I'll just let it go.

These are just a few examples of everyday experiences. The reality is that in today's society, these situations pale in comparison to the social, political, and cultural issues causing heated interactions between people in our communities today.

The challenge to show grace to others can be harder now than ever; however, it is our calling. It is a call to empathy, a call to sympathy, a call to kindness and a call to mercy. It is who we are as the people of God. Who are we? The redeemed in Christ, in whom dwells the Spirit of God.

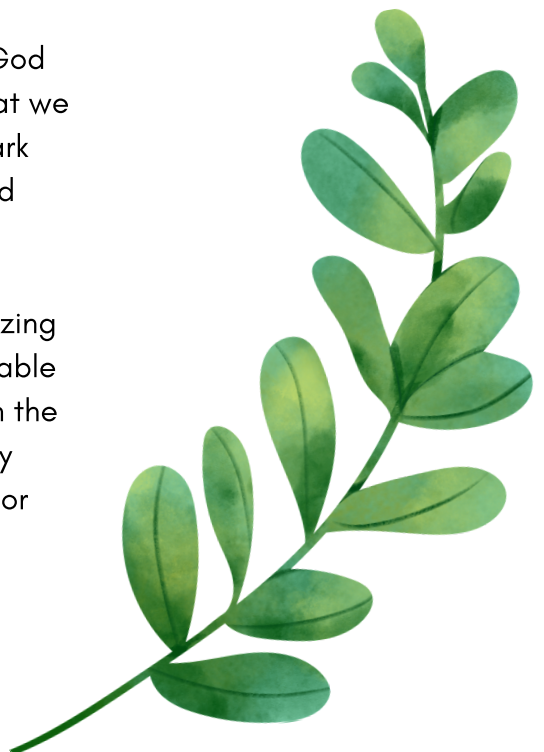
Through the redeeming grace of Jesus Christ, an eternity of peace, love and joy is our promise. Why? Because, "Christ did not come into the world to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through him." Ours is the same call. We are not to condemn or judge but to be the people of the resurrection -- a resurrection that brought salvation to us. Our calling? To share the promise of salvation to all people.

When worldly conditions drive us, showing the radical grace of God is, more often than not, extremely challenging; however, it is what we are called to do. We are called to be the beacon of light in a dark world. We are called to seize the opportunity to both receive and share God's grace -- period.

One of the ultimate mysteries of the Kingdom of God is the amazing grace of God. "For God so loved the world"! The most unimaginable gift of God is the grace and love brought down into this world in the person of Jesus Christ. The most unfathomable sacrifice made by God is the redemptive death of that love and grace on a cross for our sake and for our salvation. Deserve it or not.

Thank God for God's grace.....Food for thought.

Pastor Todd





HAPPY BIRTHDAY

1/1 Barbara Shaul
1/6 Eric Edie
1/6 Bettie Clark
1/7 Elizabeth Henderson
1/8 James Boyd
1/10 Ruth Calary
1/10 Rachel Mitchell
1/13 Hope Smithson
1/22 Jack Rogers
1/24 John Saneman



Happy Anniversary!

1/27 Samuel & Margie
Fielder

Congratulations!

Chris and Sara
Ward welcomed a
beautiful baby girl to
their family on
Thanksgiving Day! Meet
David and Gail Thomas'
newest grandbaby...

Lyla Ann Ward

November 26,
2020
6 lbs. 15 oz.
19.69" long





Deacon's Update

We uphold the following members, relatives and friends in our prayers and pray God's healing upon them:

- Liz Brooks, sister of Polly Winskowski
- Family of Danny Garey (John & Sandy Louderback)
- Henry Kraft, grandson of Gail & David Thomas
- Blair Mattheis
- Janet Henderson
- Sam Fielder, Jr., Father of Sam Fielder III & Father-in-law of Margie Fielder
- Frank Clement, friend of Sam & Marsha Brooks
- Becky Hoffman, niece of Sam & Marsha Brooks
- John Dorn, friend of John and Rita Cairnes
- Beverly Schmidt
- Joe Bradford
- George Cowman
- Betty Rogers
- Nancy Thompson (friend of the Swifts)
- Lenny Downs (niece of the Swifts)
- Jean Mattheiss (sister of Bruce)



Member Notes:

Dear Church family,

Thank you so much for all the calls, cards, and notes that I received.

It was a real treat. I miss seeing everybody. I hope that we can all be back together soon.

Love, Betty Rogers



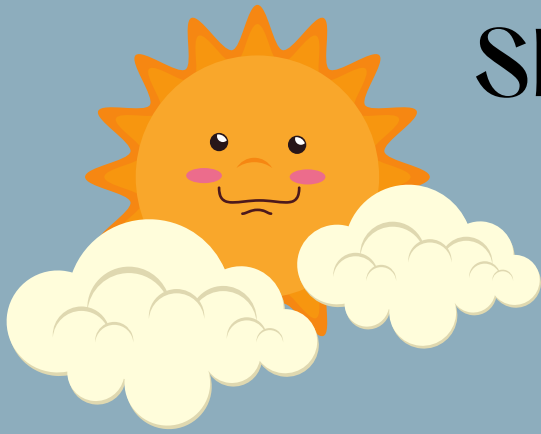
Bethel Members:

I miss going to church. "Hi" to all. I will be 80 years old on January 6th! Stay safe and healthy. Happy Holidays!

I closed my 35-year-old business in the middle of March, right before Covid really hit. God gave me good advice! Hope to see my friends soon....



Love, Bettie Clark



Shower of Cards

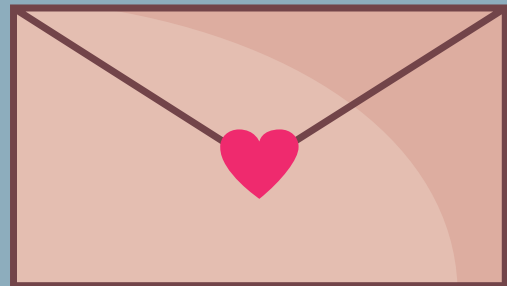
Our featured Bethel
Members for January are:

Lillian Skidmore
3519 N. Furnace Road
Jarrettsville, MD 21084

and

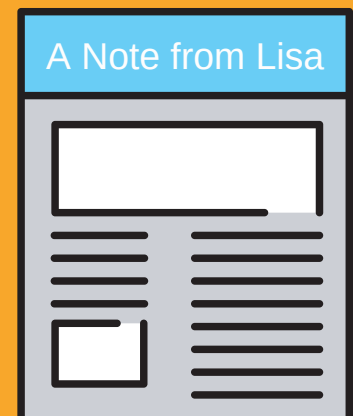
Maurice and Ruth Howard
1310 Sheridan Place
Unit #210
Bel Air, Maryland 21015

**Send a little
Sunshine! Each
month we select
a member (or
members) to
shower with
cards or notes of
love, support,
encouragement
and good cheer!**



New Year, New Look!

January is a great time for fresh starts! On that note, you may have noticed a new look for Bethel's newsletter! I had so much fun putting it together and hope you enjoy it. I am open to any feedback or suggestions for future features. I know lots of things have changed due to Covid, so we don't have as many events or announcements these days, but I'm hoping we'll gradually be able to start adding them back sometime in 2021.



In Memory of Jane Turner



As many of you know, the Schooner Club is no longer in existence. However, the club had some funding that was left in their account, so they decided to donate that money towards the new oil-burning Advent Candles. This donation was made in memory of Jane Turner, who was an active member of the club for many years. Thank you so much to the Schooner Club for this special and thoughtful gift! The congregation will be sure to enjoy it for many Advents to come in Jane's memory.


Thank you

Member Highlight

Ruth Walker



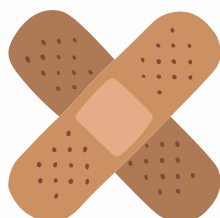
Each month, Bethel Deacons have been honoring a member of the church to help us get to know one another better. This month, we recognize Ruth Walker. Ruth has been a member of Bethel since December, 1995. Being a United Methodist prior to that time helped her realize the importance of worshipping with a church family. In searching for that church home, Norma Kirkwood helped Ruth find her way to Bethel, and she remains to this day.

Growing up in farm country in southern Pennsylvania with 6 brothers and 4 sisters, Ruth soon learned how to “get along” with others and to trust God to watch over her and those she loved. By 1965 she found her help mate while square dancing, and in 1966 they married. Richard Walker and Ruth have raised three children, Ronda (Physician Assistant at Patient First), Leigh (Logistics Manager of The Mill of Bel Air) and his wife Valerie (owner of Val & Co, Hair Salon), and Jane (LAN Administrator at JHU School of Medicine Dept. of Pathology). Families grow, and soon this couple had grandchildren and then great grandchildren who have brought added sunshine to their lives: Michaela, Dakota, Patrick and Allison, and children Lincoln and Genevieve, Derrick and Dana and baby Brayden.

At the age of 39, Ruth went back to school (Harford Community College) to become a registered nurse and she retired in 2011, after 25 years of practicing nursing at Saint Joseph Medical Center. She would tell people that it was the best thing she had ever accomplished for herself, but she knows it was God who saw her through it all: the struggles of study, the juggling of schedules, and her family that pitched in to help as only teenagers can. She gives thanks to all of them! Her Associate Degree in Nursing was a joint effort by God, herself and family.

Ruth has served 18 years as a Deacon, 3 years as Elder, and 9 years as elementary Sunday School teacher. She remembers the fun of ringing hand bells for 15 years, learning Biblical truths in the Adult Sunday School led by Scott Knopp, studying and praying with the Mary Circle, working with Chrissie and Pastor Todd and children in VBS, searching diligently with the task force of the Pastor Nominating Committee of 2014-2015, and serving on the 2019 Sesquibicentennial planning committee, where Dennis taught her and others about Bethel’s rich history.

In 2019, we celebrated 250 years of worship and service at Bethel, and Ruth wants to continue to be a part of Bethel as we pray, serve, and worship our Lord.



Bethel Family Life

December 2020 brought plenty of Christmas Cheer!

Lights were strung and stockings were hung!

Kids (and pets) of all ages celebrated this special season. Thanks to all who shared their festive photos!



Douglas and Sophia Smith visiting Santa at a
"Black Friday at the Farm" event



A beautiful Christmas hearth at the Rogers'



Delightful Christmas lights at Pastor Todd's



Wendy enjoying her favorite spot under the Mory's Christmas tree





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