



Keeping Unity in the Body of Christ

Bethel family, what a year 2020 has been so far! (we aren't rushing, but it is almost over 😊)

We don't have to look far to see that we have had opportunity for many things to divide us in our country in 2020. We should realize that opportunities for misunderstanding and division have always existed, but WOW! In some ways, it seems that in 2020 we have had a heightened sense of uncertainty and confusion, misunderstandings and frankly disagreements about so many different ideas and areas... What about the church? We must be careful, and biblically, we must pursue UNITY in Christ!

Paul writes to the Ephesian church about the glorious grace that believers have been given and the sure redemption that is ours through faith in Christ (Eph. 1:3-8). Indeed, even though believers were/are sinners we have been saved by grace, through faith (Eph. 2:1-9). Our response to the true gospel of God's grace in Christ is that we would "live a life worthy of the calling you have received." (Eph. 4:1). This is clear, because of the gospel good news of God's grace (and mercy) in Jesus Christ we are to "live a life worthy" of the gospel. Notice the first instruction of this encouragement from the Lord through the Apostle.

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every

effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:2-3)

Consider this clear call for believers (the church) to pursue keeping unity and peace in the church. Indeed, as it is translated in the '84 NIV; "Make every effort" to do so. The ESV translates v. 3 this way; believers are to be "eager to maintain the unity...of peace." This is such an important biblical call for the believer in Christ that it is included in our BCO membership vows in the 5th vow every communing member affirms. We agree to "submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church, and **promising to study its purity and PEACE.**" (BCO57-5, 5. Emphasis mine)

How? Let's remember first that this flows out of the gospel of grace! We are motivated to joyfully live in keeping with this instruction because we have been graciously loved and forgiven by God! Therefore, all believers are called to "be completely humble; be patient, bearing with one another in love." (Eph. 4:2)

By God's amazing grace to us in Christ, we are not only saved but are sanctified and living our lives in a new way. We have been loved and we are motivated and strengthened to live a life of love toward each other. This love lives itself out in our being patient, gentle and humble with each other! We are called to a growing Christlikeness in our love. Consider Paul's words in Philippians 2:2-4 as our attitudes are to be the same as that of Christ Jesus (v.5); "...be like minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing

Sermon Schedule

- 12/6 "Christmas and the humanity problem" *Matt. 2:1-18*
- 12/13 "The Son Foretold" *Luke 1:26-38*
- 12/20 "Good News of Great Joy" *Luke 2:1-14*
- 12/24 "The Gift of God" *Matthew 1:18-22*
- 12/27 "Salvation Seen & Hearts Revealed" *Luke 2:25-35*



out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should not only look after your own interests, but also the interest of others." (Phil. 2:2-4)

Precious Bethel family, graciously loved by our great God in Christ. THANK YOU for your humble, sincere love for Him, AND EACH OTHER. By His abundant grace, may He continue to work in us, and out of us, His love and grace. And may we humbly keep and pursue continued unity in Christ above all in His church here at Bethel. To Him alone be all glory!

In Christ, Marcus

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	01 Diaconate Meeting Men's Basketball	02 Caroline Payne	03 Jackie Schropp FLC-Rsv'd Men's Basketball	04 Debbie McDowell	05
06 Deacon's Fund Collection Claire Allen Paul James Robinson	07 Peggy Whitesides Men of the Covenant	08 Kenneth Whitesides FLC-Rsv'd - Circle #1 Circle #2 Men's Basketball	09 Ada Pursley Amber Lee FLC-Rsv'd Colleen Riddle Circle	10 Margaret Ann Ferguson Rachel (Meek) Wood Men's Basketball	11 Andre Burns	12 FLC Rsv'd- Bethel Fire Dept....
13 Ordination/Installation of... Westmoreland Christmas Lunch Jody Sorey Congregational Meeting Session Meeting	14 Kitchen-Rsv'd - Good Sams Corey Clinton Circle #3	15 Kitchen-Rsv'd - Good Sams Men's Basketball	16	17 Nancy Martin Men's Basketball	18 Bill Keller Tommy McCall	19 David Long
20 Micah Brummett Cameron Miller	21 Betsy Clinton	22 Men's Basketball	23 Abigail Ramsey Scott Wallace	24 Christmas Eve Candlelight... Men's Basketball	25 Christmas Day Ann Woodruff FLC Rsv'd- Love Christmas Party	26 Thomas Chidester III
27	28 Winter Ridgehaven Gary Seaford	29 Winter Ridgehaven Brenna Clinton Kirsten Allen Malize Wallace Men's Basketball	30 Winter Ridgehaven Chris Griesman Emma Culbertson	31 Winter Ridgehaven Rett Mounts Larry McCormick Men's Basketball	01	02

Diaconate Meeting: Dec.1, 7:00pm.
Men of the Covenant: Dec. 7, 6:30pm,
 FLC for a catered Christmas meal with
 wives invited.

**Ordination/Installation of Elders and
 Deacons:** Dec. 13, during worship.
Congregational Meeting: Dec. 13, fol-
 lowing worship.

Session Meeting: Dec. 13, 2:00pm, Sanc-
 tuary.
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service:
 Dec. 24, 6:00pm.

Session Minutes

The Session of Bethel Presbyterian Church met Sunday, November 8, 2020 at 2:00 PM in the Conference Room of the FLC with Moderator, Rev. J. Marcus Van Vlake, for a called meeting.

MSA Bobby Love as our Ruling Elder representative at the Fellowship Presbytery called meeting to be held at Salem Presbyterian Church November 19, 2020 at 7:00 PM.

MSA to enter into Executive Session.

The Session of Bethel Presbyterian Church, with the Deacons invited to attend, met Sunday, November 22, 2020 at 2:00 PM in the sanctuary with Moderator, Rev. J. Marcus Van Vlake, for the regular monthly meeting.

Adam Coble, Chairman of the Diaconate, gave the Deacons Report and reviewed the minutes of the November 10, 2020 Deacons meetings. Additionally, he reviewed the Financial Report dated October 31, 2020 all of which are appended to the file copy of these Session minutes. MSA the Deacons Report, Financial Report, minutes, and actions/recommendations.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to approve the Session minutes from our regularly scheduled meeting held October 11, 2020 and our called meeting held November 11, 2020 as emailed to the Session as well as our action taken via email November 11, 2020 regarding no-readers for Advent wreath this year.

Marcus postponed our shepherd leader training and asked the Session to be prepared to have mutual shepherd group update/accountability in our December meeting.

Officer nominees for the Class of 2024 were examined: All Elder and Deacon nominees were present. The officer nominees were examined in the areas of Christian experience, personal character and family management, knowledge of Scripture and of the system of doctrine as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Book of Church Order (BCO), and duties of the office of elder or deacon, respective to the office for so nominated. All officer nominees affirmed the questions required for ordination from BCO 24-6. Each nominee then affirmed his willingness, as an officer, to lead by example. MSA the examination of all officer nominees. The Session has called a congregational meeting to be held November 29, 2020, after worship, to hold the election of Bethel officers. The officer nominees were then dismissed with prayer by Steve Britt.

Marcus read and reviewed our Mission/Vision statements.

James Long and Tim Marsh lead a discussion regarding our handling of The Lord's Supper held on November 8, 2020. MSA to observe The Lord's Supper on the second Sunday of each quarter in 2021 and to use pre-packaged elements for our January 10, 2021 observance of The Lord's Supper. The use of pre-packaged

elements beyond the first quarter 2021 is to be determined.

The Session received a report from the budget committee. A lengthy discussion was held regarding the 2021 budget. MSA the 2021 budget totaling \$601,407.00. The budget will be presented to the congregation for endorsement during the November 29, 2020 congregational meeting. A copy of the 2021 budget is appended to the file copy of these Session minutes.

Neil Allen provided a brief update on the building plans. MSA Neil Allen continuing to be on the Session appointed building committee after his term on the Session expires at the end of 2020.

Bobby Love gave a brief report from the Fellowship Presbytery called meeting held November 19, 2020 at Salem Presbyterian Church. MSA Bobby's report and to commend him for his attendance and diligence.

Marcus gave a brief update from the Personnel Committee, an update on Gunther Griffin's progress and the BPC Youth Group, to include their upcoming trip to Ridgehaven for a winter retreat.

MSA to honor the request of Patrick Love to transfer his membership to 2nd Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Greenville, SC.

MSA to enter into Executive Session.

MSA to have the Family Life Center be "mask only" for morning worship services moving forward.

Marcus offered the following for information only: Andres and Ruth Garza are scheduled to arrive at Bethel (Kendrick House) on December 3, 2020. Rev. Chris Hodge is preaching on December 6, 2020 at Bethel.

Our next Session meeting is scheduled for December 13, 2020.

Pursuant to the call of the Session of Bethel Presbyterian Church, a Congregational Meeting was held Sunday, November 29, 2020, following morning worship with Moderator, Rev. J. Marcus Van Vlake.

The Moderator stated that the purpose of the meeting was to elect three Elders and three Deacons for four year terms for the class of 2024. At this time, the 2021 budget will also be presented for endorsement and we will approve the change in the pastor's call.

The Moderator stated that all the men on the ballot had been duly nominated, trained and had been examined and approved by the Session. The Communicant members of Bethel were instructed to circle three names for Elder and three names for Deacon on the ballot containing the names of the nominees as follows: Elder: Chris Griesman, Dan Love, Bobby Meek and

Hamp Stowe. Deacon: Tom Chidester, Tom Cuffman, Austin Griesman, Foster Krebs and Paul Robinson.

The ballots were then distributed to the congregation.

After the congregation voted, the Elders collected the ballots for counting.

The Deacons then distributed copies of the 2021 budget to the congregation. Adam Coble made several remarks regarding the budget, which totals \$601,407.00, and Session priorities. The congregation was encouraged to ask questions about the budget to any member of the Session or Diaconate.

MSA to endorse the 2021 budget and to approve the change in the call of the Senior Pastor.

MSA to adjourn, subject to 3 Elders, 3 Deacons being elected by a majority vote. Should a candidate not be elected by a majority vote, we will recess until next Sunday to continue the election process with a runoff election.

After the meeting, the Elders counted the votes, and the following men were elected with a majority vote: Elder: Class of 2024 – Chris Griesman, Dan Love and Hamp Stowe. Deacon: Class of 2024 – Tom Chidester, Tom Cuffman and Austin Griesman.

Rev. J. Marcus Van Vlake, Moderator
Neil D. Allen, Clerk of Session

Financial Update:

MULTIPLY Building fund

Balance Oct. 31: \$1,284,349

October: \$33,453

Tithes and Offerings

2020 Budget: \$671,274

YTD Oct. 31: \$394,260

October: \$31,586

Building Plans Update:

We are currently working on building plan options and we are making some progress. We will communicate updates with more information for congregational consideration and approval as soon as we can. Given circumstances, we do not yet know when appropriate time to begin project might be... THANK YOU for your continued patience and prayers!

International Missions Spotlight

Jay & Nancy Matsinger

Prague, Czech Republic

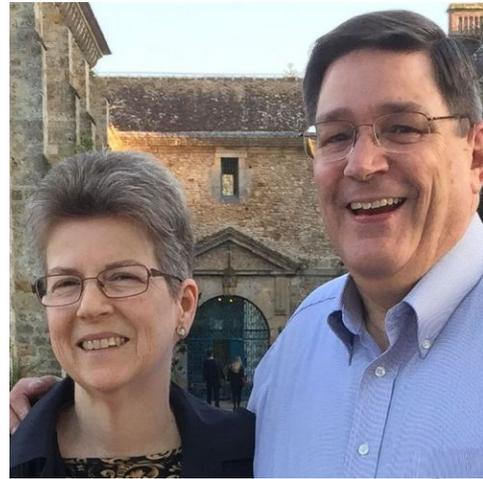
Here in Prague like many other parts of the world we are experiencing huge numbers of Covid cases daily and life is not normal. But, we've started meeting online with some new contacts despite the situation. Jay is conducting a Sunday evening Bible course. A new (to us) Dutch couple who are believers are participating in Jay's Bible course and seem enthusiastic about it (spreading the word -- trying to get another friend of theirs to "come"). They have been in Prague for 5 years and have gone from one church to another as they seek a church home. The husband works by computer from home. The wife expressed having felt isolated from other believers by the current situation. She also sometimes participates in our Saturday morning prayer meeting. Yesterday they surprised us with stopping by to leave us some fruit from their garden. Please be in prayer for their encouragement and growth in Christ.

Nancy is meeting weekly with a young Czech accountant who wants to improve her English. It's too soon to know where she is at spiritually, but she gives no hint of any belief in God. Nancy is reading articles with her about the wonders of God's creation. Please pray that God will open her eyes and her heart to the Creator.

We sometimes wonder why God has us here when we can't invite people into our apartment or visit them because of the Covid situation. But, when we see the contact we're having with certain people, that wouldn't have happened if we weren't here, we are reminded that, **God does work in mysterious ways!** Please pray that God will continue to work in the lives of the believers participating in our weekly meetings, for Discovery Bible Study, and Jay's Bible course.

We would also appreciate your continued prayers for the people with whom we meet regularly. Most of these folks have atheist backgrounds and don't know anything about God, or His Grace. Please pray that we might be their life line to salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Thank you again for your encouragement, prayers, and support.

Love, Jay & Nancy



PRAYER Requests



- The Van Vlakte family
- New Assistant Pastor search
- Intern Gunther Griffin and his wife Sam
- Elders, Deacons, WIC officers, Sunday School teachers, Bible Study leaders, Youth leaders/ teachers, giving thanks for their faithfulness and willingness to serve
- Local ministries such as God's Kitchen, Clover Area Assistance Center and Biblical Studies Released Time
- Reformed University Fellowship
- Our missionaries serving through the country and the world
- Our community and our country, especially for wisdom and safety in dealing with Covid-19
- Please pray for the lost that don't know of or believe in Jesus. Pray as well for Bethel and other bible-believing and gospel preaching churches to be blessed in our efforts to evangelize and make disciples locally and to the ends of the earth
- Our college students
- Expectant mothers and their unborn babies within the church family
- Rick Duke (cancer) and wife Judy (friends of C. Davis), Judy Ferguson (healing from surgery), Margaret Ann Ferguson, Kathy Forester (E. Moseley's sister, breast cancer), Matthew Hall, Miriam Hovis, Mrs. Rita Jackson, Jan Kombs (friend of J. LeMoyne, stroke), Herb LeMoyne (J. LeMoyne's brother, Parkinson's disease), Dana Massey (advanced brain cancer, friend of S. Burns), Annie Mae McDaniel (J. Ferguson's mother), Jim Pittman (V. Linder's brother, cancer) and Adam Stowe (leukemia).