

Bethel Focus

Bethel Presbyterian Church, Organized 1764

The Most Important Resolution

Ecclesiastes 3:1- For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven (ESV).

The turn of a year is often filled with new things. We find places for the gifts we received over Christmas. We begin new semesters and classes in school. We develop new resolutions and goals for the year ahead. It's a time of reflection, a time of thinking, a time of planning, a time of anticipation for what the next 366 days will hold (2020 is a leap year!).

It's common, and in fact healthy, to do the same thing with our spiritual lives. It's a good thing to pause and reflect on what God has done in, with, and through us this past year. Done properly this can be a source of great encouragement as we remember and tell of God's wonderful works (see Psalm 105). It's also good to look forward so that we might press further into our relationship with the Lord this next year...for just like any relationship, our relationship with God requires intentionality.

But sometimes as Christians we can overemphasize the "new" in our spiritual lives. Maybe we want a new plan so that we will finally read through the Bible this year. Maybe it's a new book or devotional or podcast to give us new insight. Or possibly some other new strategy to help us grow in our faith.



We can sometimes look for all sorts of new things---all in the hopes of finding that one key, that one thing, we haven't yet tried that will finally help us grow. And while new insights and fresh resources can often be of great benefit to us, we don't fundamentally need a new approach. We need to rediscover an old one.

Paul writes to the Corinthians, "But their [the Israelites'] minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away....But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed....And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor. 3:14, 16, 18). Paul shows us here that it is through Christ the veil is taken from our eyes, and it is *as we behold Him* that we are transformed. John agrees when he speaks of our future state, "Beloved, we are God's

children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). Again, it is *as we see Jesus* that we are changed.

As we look forward to 2020 it is imperative that we remember the most critical thing, the most central thing, is simply this: do we see Jesus? Is He altogether lovely to us? Do our hearts stir and burn within us as we contemplate Him (Luke 24:32)? Because it is entirely possible for us to read the Scriptures diligently and serve Jesus and yet miss Him entirely (see Matt. 7:21, John 5:39-40, 2 Cor 3:14-15). Oh may that not be us! Rather, let us be people who cry with the Psalmist, "As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God" (Ps. 42:1), and "My soul longs, yes faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God" (Ps. 84:1).

January 2020

Sermon Schedule

- 1/5 "The Church: A Gospel Outpost" Philippians 2:12-18
- 1/12 "Biblical Stewardship" Psalm 24
- 1/19 "Biblical Stewardship and the Heart" Matthew 6:19-21
- 1/26 "Biblical Stewardship and Giving" Malachi 3:6-10

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The good news is that this is not burdensome; we already have everything we need--Christ Himself! All we need to do is look to Him and behold His glory and majesty and holiness and love and He *will* become lovely to us, and we *will* be changed. So this next year, cease your restless search for the next new thing. Rest in what, in Whom, God has already given. And make it your goal to live in such a way that your eyes are ever more drawn to Christ, so that you may see His face and love Him more.

In Christ,
-Peter

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	01 Joe LeMoyné Sherri Mizell	02 Basketball	03 FLC reserved- Set up for... Colin Clinton	04 FLC reserved- Set up for...
05 FLC rsv'd- International... Observance of the Lord's... Choir Practice Deacon's Fund Collection Ken Long Larry Falls Sunday Evening Celebration!	06 Susan Joyner Men of the Covenant Basketball	07 BSRT Circle #1 Diaconate Meeting Basketball	08 Cheri Jackson Cindy Love Nathalee Cuffman Jack Bean Roddy Beard BSRT Colleen Riddle Circle (FLC)	09 Cathy Britt Ginger Johnson Stewart McCall Mentors & Moms Bible Study - BSRT Basketball	10 Jacob Howland BSRT	11
12 Choir Practice LaVerne Beard Installation of WIC Officers Session Meeting WIC Annual Meeting Sunday Evening Celebration!	13 Andrew Long Tommy McCall Jr. BSRT Circle #3 Basketball	14 BSRT Circle #2 Basketball	15 Jim Black BSRT	16 Mentors & Moms Bible Study - BSRT Basketball	17 BSRT	18 Susan Flanagan Bob Richards Sheridan Miller
19 Choir Practice Sunday Evening Celebration!	20 Basketball	21 Christina Deal BSRT Basketball	22 Walker Love BSRT	23 Evey Coble Paul Byars Ruth McCormick Juliet Sorey Mentors & Moms Bible Study - BSRT Basketball	24 Ruben Trevino Scott Harrell Suzanne McCall BSRT	25
26 Choir Practice Sunday Evening Celebration!	27 BSRT Basketball	28 BSRT Basketball	29 Carol Davis Bill Boyd Brenda Seaford BSRT Senior Citizens Luncheon	30 Debbie Meek Mentors & Moms Bible Study - BSRT Basketball	31 Brandi Icard BSRT	01

Int'l Missions Sunday: Jan. 5.
Observance of the Lord's Supper: Jan. 5, followed by a covered dish lunch and fellowship in the FLC.
Men of the Covenant: Jan. 6, 6:30pm, FLC for a meal, program and fellowship.

Diaconate Meeting: Jan. 7, 7:00pm, Conf. room.
Installation of WIC officers: Jan. 12, during worship.
Session Meeting: Jan. 12, 2:00pm, Conf. room.

WIC Annual Meeting: Jan. 12, 2:30pm, Covenant SS room.
Senior Citizens Luncheon: Jan 29, 12:00pm, FLC.



Session Minutes

Pursuant to the call of the Session of Bethel Presbyterian Church, a Congregational Meeting was held Sunday, December 8, 2019, following morning worship with Moderator, Rev. J. Marcus Van Vlake. The meeting was called to order and opened with prayer by the Moderator.

MSA to appoint Neil Allen, Clerk of Session, as Clerk of the meeting. The Clerk stated that a quorum was present.

The Moderator stated that the purpose of the meeting was to elect four Elders and three Deacons for four year terms for the class of 2023, with one elected Elder to serve a two year term in the Class of 2021. At this time, the 2020 budget will also be presented 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 four names for Elder and three names for Deacon on the ballot containing the names of the nominees as follows--Elder: Paul Boger, Steve Britt, Joe LeMoynne, James Long, Tim Marsh and Norm West. Deacon: David Long, Larry McCormick and Chris Wynkoop. 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 2020 budget to the congregation. Bobby Love made several remarks regarding the budget, which totals \$671,274.00, and Session priorities for spending. The congregation was encouraged to ask questions about the budget to any member of the Session or Diaconate.

MSA to endorse the 2020 budget and to approve the change in the call of the Senior Pastor.

MSA to adjourn, subject to 4 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 2021 - Steve Britt; Class of 2023 - Joe LeMoynne, James Long and Tim Marsh. Deacon: Class of 2023 - David Long, Larry McCormick and Chris Wynkoop.

The Session of Bethel Presbyterian Church met Sunday, December 15, 2019, at 9:30am with Moderator, Rev. J. Marcus Van Vlake.

The purpose of the meeting was to ordain and/or install the new officers. The Moderator then explained and reviewed the procedures for the ordination and/or installation of the following officers, to take place during the morning worship service: Elders to be installed – James Long and Tim Marsh. Elder to be ordained and installed – Steve Britt and Joe LeMoynne. Deacon to be installed – David Long. Deacons to be ordained and installed – Larry McCormick and Chris Wynkoop.

MSA to adjourn the meeting with the Benediction following morning worship, and the Session and officers-elect were dismissed to Sunday school with prayer by the Moderator.

During morning worship, James Long and Tim Marsh were installed as Elders to the Class of 2023, David Long was installed as Deacon to the Class of 2023, Steve Britt was ordained and installed as Elder to the Class of 2021, Joe LeMoynne was ordained and installed as Elder to the Class of 2023, Larry McCormick and Chris Wynkoop were ordained and installed as Deacons to the Class of 2023. After prayer by the TE Michael Lee and the Moderator, the Session extended the right hand of fellowship to the newly ordained and/or installed officers.

Rev. J. Marcus Van Vlake then pronounced and declared the men had been regularly elected, ordained and installed as Rulings Elders and Deacons in this church, agreeable to the Word of God, and according to the Constitution of the PCA; and as such that they are entitled to all encouragement, honor, and obedience in the Lord: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The meeting was closed with the Benediction at the conclusion of the morning worship service by Rev. Van Vlake.

The Session of Bethel Presbyterian Church met Sunday, December 15, 2019 at 2:00pm with Moderator, Rev. J. Marcus Van Vlake, for the regularly scheduled meeting.

The Session examined the following persons for communing membership: David McFalls and Lena McFalls. Each gave a profession of faith, and answered in the affirmative the questions for membership from the Book of Church Order, Chapter 57-5. MSA the examination and to receive as communing members David McFalls and Lena McFalls on transfer of letter from Hickory Grove Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Hickory Grove, SC. The Session extended the right hand of fellowship to the new members, and they were dismissed with prayer by Calvin Reese.

Steve Britt, Chairman of the Diaconate, provided the Deacons report to include a review of both the November 12, 2019 and the December 10, 2019 Deacons meeting minutes. Steve also provided the financial report to include a review of the General fund, Deacons fund and Building fund. A lengthy discussion was held regarding the Deacons request to fill the vacancy on the Diaconate for the Class of 2021. MSA the Deacons Report, Financial Report, Deacons meeting minutes, and actions/recommendations.

MSA to appoint a nominating committee of three Elders to seek a goal of three male members to be candidates for election to the vacant position in the Deacon Class of 2021, and to have the committee report their results at the January 12, 2020 Session meeting. The committee will be made up of Elders Cary Grant, Tim Marsh and Neil Allen.

MSA Session meeting minutes dated November

10, 2019 and Congregational Meeting minutes dated December 8, 2019.

Marcus gave an update from the Long Range Planning Committee. A lengthy discussion was held regarding the status of the construction document approvals, the re-bidding process and the timing of the construction in relation to Session directed priorities and timing. A communication will be made to the congregation in January regarding these issues.

Marcus gave an update on Peter and Becca Scheidt saying they were settled in the Kendrick house and Peter in his office. They are looking forward to getting into rhythm with the youth group and Sunday school after the holidays.

James Heard provided the Session with an update on the youth group exploring alternative plans for summer camp. More details will follow once he has had an opportunity to discuss with the youth group leadership and parents.

MSA both Marcus and James taking vacation days December 29, 2019. Peter will be here to lead worship and preach.

MSA to commend D. Larry Falls, Cary E. Grant and H. Dean McCarter for their service in the outgoing Class of 2019.

MSA to honor Nicholas Whitesides request to transfer his membership to Cathedral Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

Marcus provided the following as information for the Session: We will observe the Sacrament of the Lords Supper on January 5, 2020. International Mission Sunday is scheduled for January 5, 2020 with Michael and Tricia Lee. We will install the new WIC Council on January 12, 2020. The next Fellowship Presbytery meeting is January 25, 2020 at Olivet PCA. Andres and Ruth Garza are planning a sabbatical summer in 2020 in Clover, SC.

The next Session meeting is scheduled for January 12, 2020.

MSA to adjourn.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Cary Grant.

Neil D. Allen, Clerk of Session

Financial Update:
MULTIPLY Building Fund
Balance Nov. 30: \$906,380
November: \$11,833
Tithes and Offerings
2019 Budget: \$671,275
YTD Nov. 30: \$523,830
November: \$36,104

International Missions Spotlight

Eduardo and Stephanie Escobar-Mexico City, MX

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ at Bethel, let me introduce you to our newest international church planting partners, Eduardo and Stephanie Escobar. After assessment, Eduardo and Stephanie have undertaken the work of planting a new gospel centered/ bible believing church in the southern part of Mexico City. Eduardo and Stephanie are being mentored through this process by Victor Cruz and “our guy” Marco Escalante both of which work with City to City Latin America (Andres Garza-director). Marco’s church, Cordero de Dios, is the mother church for this work and will provide oversight for this work as well as being our partner in supporting this work financially.

Eduardo and Stephanie were married in 2013, They answered a call to serve in 2014 as church planters in the north of Mexico, collaborating to plant the first Presbyterian church in Durango, Mexico. During this time, Eduardo received training as a church planter through City to City Latin America and the Church Planting Institute in Monterrey. Eduardo is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church of Mexico. As a couple, they have faced trials, received counseling, and, by God's grace, overcome them and share their testimony to glorify God and help other Christians.

In March 2019, Eduardo and Stephanie moved to Mexico City, invited by Pastor Marco Escalante and Cordero de Dios Presbyterian Church to plant a new church in the south of the city. Since then, Eduardo and Stephanie have become parents of a baby girl – Emilia, and are getting to know the

city, its culture and the spiritual condition of its people. Currently, they are finishing the process of recruiting a core group to launch Encuentro (Encounter) Presbyterian Church in the Coapa/Acoxa area of Mexico City. Their vision is that this new church will have three main focus areas of ministry: evangelistic worship, community renewal, and a crisis pregnancy ministry. They are planning, praying, and preparing to see a church opening its doors in 2020.

Specially, they ask that we partner with them in prayer for the following: 1) Thank God for the generosity and prayers of Cordero de Dios in Mexico City and Bethel Presbyterian Church in the USA that makes it possible for a new church to be born in a great city like Mexico, that has such a great need for the gospel. 2) Thank and praise God for his faithfulness through the process of moving to the city, the birth of their daughter Emilia, and the calling of families and young adults to be a part of the core group of Encuentro Presbyterian Church. 3) Please ask for God’s grace, for wisdom and courage to preach the gospel in a big and complicated city like Mexico. We are excited about God's work among us.



Prayer Requests:

- The Van Vlake family.
- Assistant Pastor Peter Scheidt and his wife Bekah.
- Pastoral Intern James Heard and his wife Jillian.
- Elders and 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 throughout the country and throughout the world.
- Our community and our country.
- 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.
- Anna Bennett (breast cancer) and family, (friends of the Falls 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, Martha Kendrick, Jan Kombs (friend of J. LeMoyne, stroke), Herb LeMoyne (J. LeMoyne’s brother, Parkinson’s disease), David Long (esophageal cancer), Dana Massey (advanced brain cancer, friend of S. Burns), Annie Mae McDaniel (J. Ferguson’s mother), Johnny Mac McDowell (esophageal cancer), Jim Pittman (V. Linder’s brother, cancer) and Adam Stowe (leukemia).