

Bethel Focus

Bethel Presbyterian Church, Organized 1764

Living in Light of Reality

Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay Your hand upon me. (Psalm 139:4-5)

Hey Bethel family,

As you know, Bekah and I unfortunately have to say goodbye to you because of her health. She has already gone to New Hampshire to be with her family, and I will join her later this month after finishing as your Assistant Pastor on Sept. 15. And as you might imagine, this has been SO difficult for us. We are facing painful realities--the reality of where her health is, the reality of delaying a family of our own, the reality of leaving Bethel, and the reality of stepping away from vocational ministry, at least for a time. And I know this is and will be difficult for y'all as well. As I have sought the Lord through this process, He has led me again and again to Psalm 139. It has been a balm to my soul and a great encouragement to Bekah and me, and I want to share it with you too. I see three astounding things about God in this Psalm.

Verses 1-4 show that God *knows* us; "O Lord, you have searched me and known me!" Nothing is hidden from His sight



(Heb. 4:13); that includes us. He sees us as we truly *are* in every aspect; in fact, *only* He sees us as we are. He knows our frame and remembers that we are but dust (Ps. 103:14). And seeing us so clearly, He responds with *compassion* (Ps 103:13). Jesus displays this so magnificently in the Gospels. Over and over He *sees* people in need and His first response is compassion (Matt 9:36, 14:14, 15:32; Mark 6:34, 8:2; Luke 7:13; 10:33). He sympathizes with us (Heb 4:15), He sees us, He knows us, and He cares for us. What a great encouragement this is! Friends, whatever you are going through, know that God *sees* you and *knows* you, and He cares.

Verses 7-12 show that God is *with* us. He will never leave us or forsake us, no matter what (Matt 28:19-20). There is no place that we can go where He is not already. God's knowledge of us is not from afar. He is not distant. He is right here

with us, beside us, through every moment of our lives. The clearest demonstration of this is Jesus' incarnation. God is so committed to being with us that Jesus became a man--one of us--and He will remain a man forever! Friends, God does not leave us to our own devices. Wherever we may go, whatever happens to us, He is there. We are not alone.

Finally, verses 5-6 & 16 show that God *guides* us; "You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me;" "in your book were written, every one of them, the days that we formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." And we know that He works all those days for our good (Rom. 8:28), whether those days are easy & full of light...or they are the hardest, darkest, most difficult days. Moreover, He actively guides us through our lives, hemming us in; that is, preventing us from going ways we would otherwise go. As Tim Kel-

September 2020

Sermon Schedule

- 9/6 "The Lord is My Shepherd"
Psalm 23
- 9/13 "Christian Relationship to...within the Church"
1 Peter 5:1-7
- 9/20 "Christian Relationship to...within the Workplace"
1 Peter 2:18-25
- 9/27 "Christian Relationship to...within the Home"
1 Peter 3:1-7

Inside this issue:

September Calendar	2
August Session Minutes	3
Prayer Requests	4

ler puts it, "if we knew what God knows, we would ask exactly for what He gives." Friends, whatever you face in your life, God promises to guide and help you!

Bekah and I say that reality is always our friend. And it is true that life is sometimes painful, confusing, and hard. But y'all, though those things are true, there are things that are *more* true. A *deeper* reality. That God knows us, and cares for us, and is with us, and guides us. I am finding that makes all the difference.

- Peter

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31	01 Circle #1 Diaconate Meeting	02	03	04	05
06 Deacon's Fund Collection Roger Brown	07 Labor Day Peter Schedit	08 Hailey Jackson Circle #2	09 Harper Love Carter Jackson Colleen Riddle Circle	10	11 Meredith Clinton	12 Beth Jackson Samuel Wynkoop Abby Chidester Nic Bourque
13 Beth Stowe Session Meeting	14 Travis Quinn Circle #3	15 Tom Ed Glenn John Richard VanVlake	16	17 Jessica Culbertson Kristen Meek	18 Benjamin McCall	19
20 New Member/Inquirer Class Wedding Shower-Lawson...	21 Isabel Johnson	22 Matthew Deegan	23 Paul Joyner	24 Fellowship Presbytery FLC-Rsv'd - Rehearsal... Mason Stowe	25 FLC and Sanctuary Rsv'd-set... Mary Jane Dulin Kyle Mounts	26 FLC and Sanctuary... Teresa Spangler
27 New Member/Inquirer Class	28 Jenni Quinn Catherine Bourque	29	30 John Adams	01	02	03

Elder/Deacon nominations: Sept. 1-30. Nomination forms will be available in the vestibule and/or the office.
Diaconate Meeting: Sept. 1, 7:00pm, Conf. room.
Men of the Covenant: Will not meet in September due to concerns with the coronavirus. Hopefully we will be able to meet in October.

Mentors and Moms: Will not start in September this year. We will continue to monitor conditions over the coming months and reassess a possible future start date.
New Members/Inquirers Class: Sept. 20, 27 and Oct. 4, 10:00-10:45 am in FLC conference room. Please call or email Lara in the office if you plan to attend.

SEC: Will be postponed until further notice.
Session Meeting: Sept. 13, 2:00pm.
Senior Citizens Luncheon: Will not meet in September or October. We are hopeful to begin meeting again in January 2021.



Session Minutes

The Session of Bethel Presbyterian Church met Sunday, August 9, 2020 at 2:00 PM in the sanctuary with Moderator, Rev. J. Marcus Van Vlake, for the regular monthly meeting.

MSA to elect Bobby Love to serve as acting clerk for the meeting.

Adam Coble gave the Deacons Report and reviewed the minutes of the August 4, 2020 Deacons meeting. Additionally, he reviewed the Financial Report dated July 31, 2020 all of which are appended to the file copy of these Session minutes. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to approve the Deacons Report, Financial Report, minutes, and actions/recommendations. Adam was then dismissed from the meeting with prayer by Joe LeMoyné.

MSA the Session minutes from the regularly scheduled meeting held July 12, 2020, as written, revised and emailed to the Session.

Marcus, in keeping with the plan to devote 20 minutes of each monthly meeting to an “Equipping” discussion, reviewed chapter 9 of the book “The Shepherd Leader”, by Timothy Z. Witmer. The Session will consider a process of accountability among elders as we move forward, to help ensure that we are actively acting in a relational manner within our shepherd groups. This will likely be accomplished by quarterly devoting the first segment of a Session meeting to a small group accountability process among those elders present.

Marcus read and reviewed our Mission/Vision statements.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding our current worship and activity procedures and our plans as we move into the Fall. The Session was encouraged to discern what a step forward in “opening up” might look like, with an emphasis to communicate within our shepherd groups the Biblical importance of safe, physical corporate worship. MSA to consider a restart to Sunday School in some form, with

further discussion at the September Session meeting to decide on details. Additionally, MSA to delay the resumption of Sunday Evening Celebration, until a future date to be determined by the Session.

Ross Love provided an update on recent Bethel Youth Group activity, and upcoming planned events. He also discussed the desire for a Fall weekend retreat event.

Bobby Love provided a brief update on the building plans.

Marcus will convene the personnel subcommittee to consider Bethel’s vacant Intern position, particularly in view of the importance of this program to the MDiv candidates.

The Clover School District has asked local churches to consider partnering in a service opportunity – Bethel will consider specific needs regarding use of our facilities as long as oversight management and labor are provided externally.

MSA to schedule a new members class for the Fall.

MSA to proceed with Officer nominations, training, election, and installation, beginning in September.

MSA vacation for Marcus for September 6, 2020.

Marcus asked the Session to continue to pray for Chris and Karen Hodge and King’s Cross PCA.

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

MSA to adjourn.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Steve Britt.

Robert C. Love, Jr., Acting Clerk of Session
The Session of Bethel Presbyterian Church met Sunday August 23, 2020 at 2:00 PM in the sanctuary with Moderator, Rev. J. Marcus Van Vlake, for

a called Session meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Bethel Church personnel.

MSA to accept, with regret, Rev. Peter Scheidt’s letter of resignation as Assistant Pastor of Bethel Presbyterian Church dated August 23, 2020 with an effective date of September 15, 2020. Bethel will continue to pay Peter’s current monthly total remuneration through November 30, 2020. A file copy of Peter’s letter to Bethel is appended to the file copy of these Session minutes.

MSA to adjourn.

The meeting was closed with prayer by James Long.

Neil D. Allen, Clerk of Session

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!

Financial Update:

MULTIPLY Building Fund
Balance July 31: \$1,228,810
July: \$20,163
Tithes and Offerings
2020 Budget: \$671,274
YTD July 31: \$279,643
July: \$36,858

International Missions Spotlight

Eduardo and Stephanie Escobar-Mexico City, MX



Church Planting in Pandemic Times

The dream of planting a church in Mexico City began several years ago. The planning, economic funding and prayers started a couple years ago. Organizing, and assembling a committed core group began about a year ago. We began meeting and reaching out to our community in one of the neighborhoods on the southern side of this great city several months ago. But, nobody could have known about the pandemic we would soon be facing. As we were praying for Encuentro (Encounter) church planting project, God was listening, and gracefully in control. We hadn't planned to plant a church during a time of

quarantine, anxiety, and yes even fear for one's health, not to mention the economic impacts on a quarantined society, but through prayer and seeking wisdom and the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit come to understand that this pandemic is not out of God's plan! We realized that we must modify some of our previous strategies and learn to reach out to people of the community through more online media outlets: webinars, online prayer meetings, and online evangelistic worship services. We give thanks for the wisdom and support of our mother church, Cordero de Dios Presbyterian Church, and its pastor Marco Escalante, as well as our US partner church, Bethel Presbyterian, in Clover, S.C. We ask that you be in prayer for us in these specific areas: 1) We ask for the Lord to give us strength of resolve, hope, and faith to continue to build our congregation. 2) We ask that the Holy Spirit will continue to give us wisdom and guidance in reaching out to lost souls here in Mexico City. 3) We ask that you will be in prayer for us and our group that together we may mature in wisdom and our faith in the Lord, and that we might be effective in reaching out to lost souls. 4) Finally, we ask that you, our prayer partners, be in prayer for us as we learn to trust and rely on God for our every need.

Eduardo and Stephanie Escobar

Prayer Requests:

- The Van Vlake family.
- Assistant Pastor Peter Scheidt and his wife Bekah.
- New Assistant Pastor search.
- 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, 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, 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).