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# THE BETHANY BANNER

January, 2008

## Organizing for Effective Ministry



The program ministries of Bethany United Methodist Church have a brand-new look for 2008. Previously, all of our ministries, e.g. evangelism, missions, worship, Stephen Ministry, etc., were related around a single big hub: the Council on Ministries. But our church has been growing, and the ministries of Bethany Church have been expanding, too. And when all of our program coordinators and chairpersons were present for a Council on Ministries meeting, it made for a whole lot of people sitting around one table. And when everyone around that big table shared, it made for a long, long meeting.

Now in 2008 instead of one big hub we're going to have five smaller hubs to help streamline our program ministries. (We're learning from the airlines—it doesn't make sense to try to route all flights through Atlanta or Chicago.) We're calling those smaller hubs "ministry teams". And each of those ministry teams will represent an important focus and priority for our church. The **Discipleship Ministry Team** will focus upon the church's goal of making disciples for Jesus Christ. It will look at what we are doing and how we can improve in helping non-believers to find faith in Jesus Christ and baby Christians to grow in their knowledge and love of God and to progress toward Christian maturity. The **Worship Ministry Team** will focus upon the church's responsibility to provide uplifting and meaningful corporate worship experiences for our congregation. The **Membership Care Ministry Team** sets as its priority the loving care of our congregation, particularly those who are going through rough times, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual. The **Outreach Ministry Team** focuses upon the church as the Body of Christ, serving as the hands and feet of Christ out in the world in ministries of charity, service, social justice, and peacemaking. The **Communications Ministry Team** has as its priority the effective sharing of information within the church and between the church and the surrounding community. The chairperson of each ministry team has a seat on the Administrative Board, where effective reporting keeps the church leadership informed and on schedule. The leaders of our 2008 Ministry Teams are: Marsha Miller (Discipleship), Janet Chapin (Worship), Sandra Harvey (Membership Care), Laura Polk (Outreach), and Mark Goetz (Communications). Please keep these organizational pioneers in your prayers.

The concept of ministry teams was introduced by the pastor to the Administrative Board in the spring of 2007, and, after some discussion and fine-tuning over the summer, the new organizational structure was officially approved by our Church Conference in October.

Now may God bless us with focus, enthusiasm, and commitment as we move into the New Year and be what he has called us to be and do what he has called us to do, as his church!

## Sermon Topics for January

**Jan. 6** "The Bright and Morning Star"  
based on Revelation 22:16-17

**Jan. 13** "The Life of a Servant" based on Isaiah 42:1-9

**Jan. 20** "A Part of Something Big"  
based on I Corinthians 1:1-3

**Jan. 27** "Broken, But Not Divided"  
based on I Corinthians 1:10-18

## Leadership Training Event



Religious  
Education

The Academy of Servant Leadership will be held at Blackstone at two different sessions. February 29-March 2, or March 2 – March 4<sup>th</sup>. This program is sponsored by the Virginia Conference Board of Laity. A Servant Leader is someone who patterns his or her own life after Jesus' own teachings during his life on earth. A Servant Leader serves first, then leads. Servant Leadership is learning and living *The Beatitudes...The Gospel in Miniature*. Space is limited to 50 people per session and the cost is \$182. For more information go to [www.vaumc.org](http://www.vaumc.org) or call Dolores Hart at 642-0933.

## Lay Speakers Academy at Blackstone

The conference is celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Virginia Conference Lay Speaker training at the Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center (VAUMC) in Blackstone, Feb. 22-24, 2008. A wide variety of classes will be offered that may not be offered on the district level. Opportunities to serve within your home church are many and can be enhanced by taking a class that might assist in building a new ministry or strengthening an existing one. Registration deadline is February 15<sup>th</sup>. The cost of this week is \$140.00. For more information go to [www.vaumc.org](http://www.vaumc.org) or call Dolores Hart at 642-0933

## Emmaus Reunion Group

Have you been on a walk to Emmaus, Chrysalis Flight or Cursillo? Join us on Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m. for our Bethany Reunion Group. We are brothers and sisters in Christ who meet weekly to talk about our week and see how our spiritual journey is going.

## Notes of Appreciation

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to my Bethany family for the prayers, calls, cards, visits and food during my recent surgery. A special thank you to Steve and Susan for their many visits and concern. -Sam Steel

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I would like to thank all of the supportive Bethany members who have been so kind to me during the last few months. I have received food, flowers, the use of a recliner chair, phone calls, and so many prayers! I had hoped to wait until my pelvis had healed to write this, but since it continues to be a problem, I thought I should give an update. I keep hoping I will receive good news, but the healing is taking much longer than I expected, so I wanted to let you know how much I appreciate your kindness, attention and support. I received a lovely cheer-up basket from the Joy Circle when Kevin and Patrick were out of town in Gulfport, MS. Pastor Steve and Susan have been by several times to pray with me and I know things would not be this good without all of your expressions of love and affection. The Women's Bible Study has kept me close to their hearts and I miss the stimulation and comfort of the meetings. Thanks for all you do to help my healing. Fondly, Kris Kiley

## BOOK CORNER

Good books for cold winter nights!

The Angels of Morgan Hill by Donna VanLiere

The Angels of Morgan Hill is filled with unforgettable characters who show us the ways and means of the heart and prove that even in the darkest hours, we are never truly alone.

Unshaken by Francine Rivers

Rivers portrays how Ruth's unshaken commitment to God had a profound impact on biblical history. Her poignant account of Ruth's life will give modern readers a benchmark by which to measure their own levels of faith and obedience.

God Has a Dream for Your Life by Shelia Walsh

Follow the yellow brick road with Shelia as she takes us on a journey through Oz. Along the way you'll meet some familiar characters and look at them in unfamiliar ways. By the time you get to the Emerald City and back home again, you might just learn to dream again.

Thunder of Heaven by Ted Dekker

A story about the true power found in the face of all our fears. The power of love.

## Family Movies

"The Christmas Shoes" starring Rob Lowe and Kimberly Williams

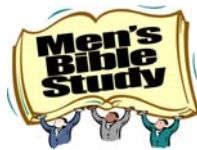
Based on the holiday hit from New Song. The Christmas Shoes tells the story about a workaholic attorney who crosses paths with a young boy on Christmas Eve and rediscovers the true meaning of the season.

"The Perfect Stranger"

Despite her successful career as an attorney, Nikki Cominsky's life is far from perfect. When she receives a mysterious invitation to "Dinner with Jesus of Nazareth," she accepts, thinking it's an intriguing prank. What ensues is a whirlwind evening of debate and revelation – with a most unforgettable man! Will her life be changed forever?

## Bible Study Groups

Women's Bible Study meets Mondays from 7-8:30 p.m. We are a group of women seeking to know God's word for our lives. We invite you to join us for study and fellowship. We meet in the Faith Classroom.



Men's evening Bible Study meets on Monday evenings from 7-8:30 p.m. in the Journey Classroom. We are currently studying Faith: Nine Bible studies on people who struggled with faith to encourage you in your journey to deeper trust. For more information call David Chapin at 642-6822

## Our Mission

To know the love of God personally through Jesus Christ,  
To share the love of God through fellowship as a congregation,  
To spread the love of God throughout our community and the world.



### \*\*\*IMPORTANT MEETING FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOLERS THROUGH FIFTH GRADE!!\*\*\*

There will be a Children's Ministries Committee Planning Meeting on Saturday, January 12, 2008 at 1:00 pm at

#### SALSA's Mexican Restaurant

4329 George Washington Mem. Hwy, Hayes  
Refreshments will be provided.

All Parents, Grandparents and lovers of Bethany's children are invited!

Please contact Kris Kent regarding reservations and additional information.

[642-6438/kentcrew@cox.net](mailto:642-6438/kentcrew@cox.net)

### January's CCF is going to be a sunny one!

All you surfer Dudes and Bettys that are in preschool through fifth grade need to get on your shorts and flip flops, grab your boogie boards and buckets and join in on the fun at the

### BETHANY BEACH PARTY

Saturday, January 19, 2007

11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

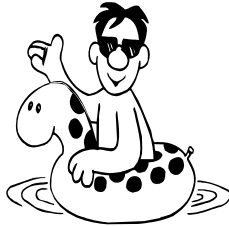
in the Warren Belvin Fellowship Hall

~Lunch will be provided~

Till then...hang ten!!

Kris Kent

642-6438/kentcrew@cox.net



### Attention Youth Parents

I will post weekly sign up sheets on the youth door for MYF Sunday dinners. If you are able to sign up for a dish it would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Sondra at 642-0467 for further information.

### Time Change for Youth Bible Study

Beginning January 6, 2008 both middle and high school study groups will meet from 5:00-6:00 p.m. Study groups will still be held according to age.

A big thanks to Sue Morecock for providing a wonderful meal for MYF in November and December.

Your kindness to the youth of Bethany is greatly appreciated!

**PLEASE NOTE!** Be sure to make the change on the January calendar about the time change for youth Bible Study.

### Congratulations to the new 2008 Youth Council Officers

Michelle Taylor – President  
Emily White – Vice President  
Jon Brock - Secretary  
Brandy Westerfield – Treasurer  
Dennisa Booth – Chaplain

### Confirmation Class to Begin

The pastor will lead a ten-week confirmation class for young people sixth grade and up who have not yet become full members of the church. The classes will address topics such as Jesus Christ, the Bible, faith, prayer, salvation, worship, service, Christian vocation, Methodism, and our membership vows. The classes will begin with a light lunch at 12:15 with a one-hour class running between 12:45 and 1:45. Orientation for parents and young people will be held on Sunday, January 13, immediately following the second service in the Youth Classroom. Please direct your questions to Pastor Steve (832-0979).

### Introducing the New President of our UMYF

At their meeting on Sunday, Dec. 9, our United Methodist Youth Fellowship (UMYF) had its annual elections and elected a new president. Nick LeMay had ably served as president of our UMYF for a few years, but as a busy senior in high school and one anticipating going off to college in the fall, Nick stepped aside in lieu of someone who could serve for the entire year. Michelle Taylor was elected as president to fill Nick's big shoes.

Michelle Taylor, 15, is a freshman at Gloucester High School. Michelle's association with Bethany Church goes back to 1996 when she was a graduate of one of the first Head Start classes held at Bethany Church. Michelle's family did not attend Bethany Church in her early years, but in 2006 her friend Emily White began attending the youth group at Bethany and invited Michelle to attend. Michelle found the Lord through our youth program and enrolled in the pastor's Confirmation Class in the spring of 2007. Michelle was confirmed on June 17, 2007 and became an active member of the church.

Michelle plays flute in the Gloucester High School Marching Band and plays softball with Parks and Recreation. She enjoys being in front of an audience and was one of the stars in our Christmas musical *Meet Me at the Manger*. Michelle has two older brothers and a younger sister, Cheyenne, who has also started to come to youth group. Her parents are Ricky and Nancy Taylor, and Michelle has asked for prayers for her mom, since she may need to begin kidney dialysis.

Asked why she wanted to run for UMYF President, Michelle said, "I had so much fun being a member of the youth group--I thought how many more fun things I could help make happen as leader." One of Michelle's favorite Bible verses is 1 Samuel 16:7: *The Lord said to Samuel: Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.* Congratulations to Michelle Taylor, a wonderful young lady and a growing Christian!

### Scholarships Available for Students at UM Colleges



The Norfolk Foundation offers scholarships for Gloucester County students planning to attend a United Methodist-affiliated college. Applications are now available for scholarships for the 2008-2009 year. Students may download an application at [www.norfolkfoundation.org](http://www.norfolkfoundation.org). The deadline for submitting an application is Feb. 29, 2008.

### 2008 Budget Available

The budget for 2008 was approved at our fall Church Conference and is available for any interested person to pick up beginning on Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup>. The balanced budget represents a 6 ¼ % increase over our 2007 budget. Anticipated receipts include income from pledges, income from individuals who give faithfully but who choose not to pledge, and loose plate offerings. Budgets will be available on the tables at both sanctuary entrances. The Finance Committee appreciates the generosity of the congregation in undergirding the ministries and the mission of Bethany UMC!

## District Leadership Training on Jan. 26

The Rappahannock District is planning its annual Leadership Training Event for Saturday, Jan. 26, at Kilmarnock UMC. We anticipate that registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. and that classes will end at 3 p.m. There is no charge for the event; however, a bag lunch will be available for \$7. Any layperson is welcome to attend. The registration deadline is Jan. 22. The following classes will be offered:

- **Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit**, taught by Dr. Lovett Weems, Jr., Distinguished Professor of Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary
- **A Presentation for Staff-Parish Relation Committee Members**, led by Rev. Joe Carson, District Superintendent of the Rappahannock District.
- **Understanding Our Theology of Mission**, taught by Rev. Denise Honeycutt, Virginia Conference Director of Mission and Global Outreach.
- **A Year of Outreach Events for Children**, led by Ann Davis, Virginia Conference Director of Children's Ministries and Discipleship
- **Our United Methodist Social Principles**, led by Rev. Ray Edmonds, Virginia Conference Director of Higher Education and Social Concerns
- **So I'm the Lay Leader**, led by Martha Stokes, Virginia Conference Director of Lay Life and Work, Disabilities, and Older Adult Ministries
- **Basic Functions of Local Church Trustees**, led by Rev. Doug Hill, retired pastor and former district superintendent

## Pastor to Offer Lenten Course in Spirituality



Pastor Steve will offer a Lenten course entitled *Exploring the Way: An Introduction to the Spiritual Journey*. The course is a six-week introduction to Christian spirituality for small groups and is a module in the Upper Room's highly acclaimed *Companions in Christ* series. Both a morning and an evening class will be offered, beginning on Wednesday, Feb. 6. Further details will be available in early January.

## List of 2008 Church Officers

An official list of our 2008 Bethany UMC Officers, elected at our fall Church Conference, will be available at both entrances to the sanctuary during the month of January. Please pick up a copy and take note of the leaders of our church for the new year.

## Coin Boxes Being Received

One of our recent traditions at Bethany during the Advent season has been to fill coin boxes to support the work of the Society of St. Andrew. The Society of St. Andrew sponsors the Potato Project, Harvest of Hope, and the Gleaning Network, all dedicated to providing food for those who need it most. Although most coin boxes were distributed in early December, a few boxes are still available at both sanctuary entrances, if you did not get one earlier. Please try to return your coin box to church no later than Sunday, January 6.



## Bethany Welcomes New Members

On Sunday, Dec. 9, Bethany rejoiced to receive five new members and one associate member into the church family.

**Lorraine Johnson** transferred her membership from Union Baptist Church in Achilles. Lorraine is the widow of one of the pillars of Bethany Church, Johnny Johnson, who died in 2006. Lorraine has three grown children, seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Before retirement Lorraine worked as a buyer for Binns Fashion Shop in Williamsburg. She resides at 2144 Hayes Road (642-4855).

**Ruth Stilianos** transferred her membership from First United Baptist Church in Lowell, Massachusetts. Her husband **Scott** is being received as an associate member, while keeping his full membership in the Greek Orthodox Church. They have one son **Steven** (7), who is being added to our baptized roll. Ruth is self-employed as a massage therapist, while Scott is an engineer serving on the SS Flickertail State, a crane ship at the Cheatham Annex. The Stilianoses reside at 2727 Charmaine Dr. in the Bena area (642-3431).

**Suzanne Sterling** transferred her membership from Gloucester Point Baptist Church. Suzanne is HVAC Dispatch Coordinator at Phillips Energy. She and her husband Bruce live at 7456 Bellehaven Drive in Gloucester Point (832-3964). Suzanne has been a featured soloist at several Bethany events.

**Brenda Thomas** transferred her membership from First Baptist Church in Newport News. Brenda is the wife of M. E. Thomas, a 50+ year member of Bethany Church. The Thomases have one grown son. Before she retired, Brenda worked at Newport News Shipyard. The Thomases live at 7384 Hoefork Lane in Gloucester Point (642-5223).

**Linda Booth** grew up in the Roman Catholic tradition and joined Bethany by reaffirmation of faith. Born Gerlinde Martin in Heidelberg, Germany, she came to the United States in 1966. Widowed twice, Linda has one grown child, two grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Before she retired, Linda worked for the chemical company, BASF Corporation. She resides at 7392 Motley Lane, Hayes (642-2645).

## New Member Class Offered

Pastor Steve will offer an Adult Membership Class for three consecutive Sundays in January--Jan. 13, 20, and 27—during the Sunday School hour (9:45 – 10:45 a.m.). This class is open to all persons seeking to understand the basics about what we believe about faith in Christ, being United Methodist, and privileges and obligations of church membership. The class will meet in one of the partitioned classrooms in our fellowship hall.

## Revised Membership Directories Available



Every six months Bethany prints an updated directory of our membership, with current addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses (no photos). Updated directories will be available on the tables at both

entrances to the sanctuary during the month of January.

## A Report from Clara Biswas

Clara Biswas, our missionary in Cambodia, is back to her mission work in Phnom Penh after recuperating from her broken ankle. Christmas is a huge celebration in the Christian community in Cambodia, and Clara participated in major celebrations at the Dumpsite on Dec. 8 (250 children and visitors), at the Bording and Bassac resettlement on Dec. 10 (200 children and visitors), at the original Bording and Bassac site on Dec. 15 (300 children and visitors), and the Kein Khleang Orphanage on Dec. 16 (200 children and visitors).

Clara writes: *The project staff and volunteers have been working very hard preparing for the Christmas program. The children from the different projects, together with their support helpers, have joyously prepared for their Christmas items. Over the years we have seen the children growing physically and spiritually. It is indeed a joy to see their delightful faces while they sing and dance during this Christmas time. We are working with the poor and needy, the most disadvantaged section of the community; through our work we can spread the news of the Lord. I encourage you to continue to support our work and improve the quality of our children's lives and their communities. We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2008.*

**Clara Mridula Biswas**

## Sympathy to Our First Lady



We offer our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Donnie Carson, wife of District Superintendent Joe Carson, on the death of her father, Don Schiel, in Michigan.

## Lois Smith Remembers Bethany

Two months ago Bethany United Methodist Church was blessed to receive a generous bequest of \$43,974.59 from the estate of Lois Smith.

Lois and her husband Herbert transferred their membership to Bethany in 1982 when they moved here from Norfolk. They lived in Tidemill on Tillage Lane, next to Sarah's Creek. Lois took special pride in her flowers and liked to plant flowers that attracted butterflies. She was an expert in raising camellias and azaleas.

When it was time for the biennial Bethany bazaars, Lois went to work. She was an excellent baker, and her raisin cakes were "to die for". She loved to crochet and do other handiwork that she donated to the bazaar or to her friends and family. She was a faithful wife to her husband Herbert and a loving mother to her son Larry. Those who knew Lois considered her a lovely person and a good Christian lady.

During her later years Lois was a resident of the York Convalescent Center in Yorktown. But even then, when her eyesight was gone, her hearing was diminished, and her mind was fuzzy, she was still sweet and kind. Lois Smith died on July 1, 2006. Her (and her husband's) photo is posted on the memorial photo display near the church office. We give thanks to God for the thoughtfulness of Lois Smith in remembering Bethany Church with such generosity in her will.

(The Vision Committee will soon be studying possible uses for the bequest money. If you have ideas or opinions, please contact the pastor.)

# Thank You, God!

## Pastor's Column: "Ending the Year with Gratitude"

*We give thanks to God always for you all, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thes. 1:2-3)*

As we come to the end of another year, Susan and I wanted to take this opportunity to share our heartfelt gratitude to you for your faithful ministry with us at Bethany Church. Effective ministry in a local church is always based upon teamwork, and I am convinced that we have a wonderful team of servants working together for Christ here.

I'm thankful for an outstanding staff, whom I would put up against the staff of any other church of our size. They do outstanding work, well beyond the call of duty or the suggested hours on their job descriptions: Thank you Alliyson, Frances, Kris, Rudy, Sandy, and Sondra! We are totally blessed to have you serving at Bethany.

I'm thankful for the dozens of volunteers who perform regular tasks at Bethany, whether big or small, which make the church go on week after week: Sunday school teachers, choir members, ushers, kitchen crew, acolytes, nursery helpers, altar guild--I could go on and on. What would the church be without its volunteers? Especially I am grateful for the faithful service of Warren Belvin, who never misses a day in coming by the church to make sure that everything (and everybody) is clean, secure, and working.

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I'm thankful for the loyal support of you, the congregation, as regular participants in our worship services, at our church-wide dinners, and at our special programs and concerts. I'm thankful for your faithful financial support of the church, whether you give \$2 a week, \$200 a week, or somewhere in between.

I'm thankful for your prayers for Susan and me in our ministry here. I'm thankful for your words of encouragement, your expressions of gratitude, your wise counsel, and, when needed, your gentle correction.

Most of all I am thankful to God, who helps me in spite of my weaknesses to love and to serve this great church in the spirit of Christ. All praise be to him!

Susan and I thank you for a wonderful year just past, and we pray for each of you a fruitful and blessed new year to come!

**Pastor Steve**

## Audit Time is Here

All treasurers are requested to turn in for audit all check books and bank statements. Please bring to church office no later than January 15<sup>th</sup>.