

Bethany United Methodist Church
1860 Hayes Road
P O Box 527
Gloucester Point, VA 23062
Office (804) 642-2110
The Rev. Stephen E. Young, Pastor

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Mailed on January 28, 2008

THE BETHANY BANNER

February, 2008

Lenten Opportunities at Bethany

February 6: Ash Wednesday Service



Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent. We will have a brief worship service in the sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. that will culminate in the imposition of ashes upon the forehead of worshippers who come forward. Our choir will sing. A soup supper will precede the service at 6:15 p.m.

Lenten Study on Five Spiritual Practices

The pastor will lead both a Wednesday morning class and a Sunday evening class, introducing five different spiritual disciplines to be practiced during the season of Lent. Pre-registration is a must. The first classes will be held on Feb. 3 and Feb. 6.



March 16: Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday begins Holy Week, the most sacred week in the year for Christians. Our children will lead us in a procession of palms at the beginning of both worship services, as we celebrate Christ's triumphal entrance into Jerusalem.



March 20: Holy Thursday

Our Chancel Choir will present a Lenten cantata entitled *The Weeping Tree* at our 7:30 p.m. service. The celebration of the Lord's Supper will conclude this very special service.

March 21: Good Friday

A brief worship service to remember the crucifixion of Jesus Christ will be held in our church sanctuary at 12 noon.



March 22: Holy Saturday

Our Children's Ministry will offer an Easter Egg Hunt for children preschool through the fifth grade. Time to be announced.



March 23: Easter Sunrise Service

A Community Sunrise Service will be held behind Waterman's Hall at VIMS at 6:30 a.m. Bethany will provide the music for the service.



March 23: Easter Services

We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ at both worship services. A cross of flowers, along with a carpet of Easter lilies, will adorn our chancel. Easter anthems and hymns will express resurrection joy.

Sermon Topics for January

Feb. 3 "When Life Is on Overload"

based on Matthew 17:1-8

Feb. 10 "Tempting Situations" based on Matthew 4:1-11

Feb. 17 "The Salvage Business" based upon John 3:16-21

Feb. 24 "Jesus Loves me--this I Know"

based upon Romans 5:1-8

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.

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. For more information call David Chapin at 642-6822

New Study to Begin Soon



Psalms

The Women's Study Class will soon begin a new book. We will be discussing the book, Psalms for a Woman's Life by

Jill Briscoe. In this book we will study 7 of the 150 Psalms and how God is Our River, Our Shepherd, Our Light, Our Forgiveness, Our Word, and Our Song. Our class has a facilitator with a great deal of discussion among multiple generations of women. If you are looking to discover more about your faith and enjoy Christian fellowship with others, consider joining us on Sunday mornings at 9:45. – Carol Justis

Russian Youth Initiative

The Mission Committee has once again agreed to host Youths from Russia. The Russian Youths (6) and Interpreter (1) will be here in the late June/early July 2008 time period. This program provides BUMC to have a direct mission involvement with children from Russia. 98% of all Russian children are at a health risk due to the environment in Russia. Most of these children come from urban areas where there is extremely heavy industrial pollution of the water, ground, and air. Some of the children come from areas which also have extreme nuclear pollution as well. The children do not look sick, although many do experience respiratory problems and other health problems. It is the long-term effects of this pollution which we are trying to help. Medical studies have shown that the three weeks visit to our area has a significant beneficial effect on the lives of these children. There are also cultural and political benefits which come from the sharing of ideas and time.

The children's stay is highlighted by a variety of activities. These activities will include mission work, cultural, educational, and fun activities. Activities include visits to Virginia Beach, Busch Gardens, Water Country USA, VIMS, Jefferson Lab, Virginia Air and Space Museum, Bowling, Movies, a tour of Gloucester High School, Boys and Girls Club, Beaverdam Park, shopping, making their own pizza at Pizza Hut, and fishing on the York River, etc.

(Continued.)

BUMC host families will be needed to lodge and get the youth to BUMC for their various activities. The host families will need to provide the youth with his/her own bed. It is fine for the youth to share a bedroom. If you are interested in being a host family, or have any questions, please contact Mike Andersen: H: 642-2582; C: 815-5367. We look forward to sharing God's love with these children.

Adult Ministries



Getting to Know You

Do you have trouble putting fellow church members faces and names together? Do you ever think you would like to know your church family better? In 2007 we tried something that may lead to close, more personal relationships within our family. This "something" is called Friendship Eight Groups. The groups consist of eight adults who will agree to meet together once a month or every other month whichever your group decides. We will mix and match newer and older members so that new friendships can be developed.

One way this can be done is to meet at the home of first one and then the other for food and fellowship. The host or hostess would provide the main dish and the drinks; the guest would bring a complimentary covered dish. Meeting at a restaurant for instance would also be fine, but having someone eat with you at your table in your home has a special quality to it.

Friendship Eight Groups

It's time to reorganize our Friendship Eight Groups for 2008. In order to get more members involved we will have sign-up sheets in the bulletin for the next three weeks. Folks who participated in 2007 do not have to do anything unless you wish to drop out.

After this new signup period is over, all the names will be mixed together and new groups formed. You will be notified by the end of February as to your group assignment.

Yes I/we would like to join a Friendship Eight Group in 2008:

Name _____

Name _____

Phone No _____

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.

Children and youth



District Bowling lock in at Village Lane.

On February 1st Bethany youth will go to Village Lanes for a District Bowling lock in. The Van will leave the Church at 11:45 p.m. on Friday night and will return Saturday morning at 6:30 a.m. Youth need only bring money for snacks throughout the night. Hope you can join us! Deadline to sign up is January 20th.

Youth Go to St. Mark's United Methodist Church

Sunday, February 24th Trip to St. Mark's United Methodist to see guest speaker Jon Cash. Mr. Cash will speak on the topic on "Where Do You Find Happiness" Each student is asked to bring \$2.00 for Pizza fundraiser. There will be a love offering taken up to help Mr. Cash's ministry to help build churches and sending bibles around the world. The van will leave the Church by 4:30pm. Please RSVP to Sondra by February 16th.

Youth Rally at Union Baptist Church

Friday, February 29th Union Baptist Church, Youth Rally Enjoy an evening of drama, music, and a guest speaker.

Youth will need to bring money for dinner at taco bell.

The van will leave the Church by 5:30 p.m. for dinner.

Rally begins at 7:00 p.m. RSVP to Sondra by February 16th



District Youth Retreats

March 7-9 Blackstone District Youth Retreat

Open to youth in 6th - 12th Grade.

Enjoy a weekend of praise, worship, and fun

Spaces are limited. Deadline to register is February 24th.

March 28th - 30th, "Fan the Flame Retreat"

Enjoy a weekend of spiritual growth during your stay at the beautiful Rockbridge Camp in Lexington, Virginia.

This amazing opportunity is open to youth in 6th - 8th grade. Spaces are limited. Dead line to register is February 24th.

FYI

MYF and Bible Study will not meet on Sunday, February 3rd due to youth weekend activity

Please Save your Farm Fresh Receipts



Bethany's youth are collecting Farm Fresh receipts to exchange for supplies that can be used for the youth programs. Your help would be greatly appreciated! You can give your receipts to any Bethany youth, Susie or

Sondra. Thank your for your continuous support.

Special Thanks

Sue Morecock, Loreen Paiva and the Brock family for providing a delicious meal for Bethany's Youth Group in for the Month of January. You blessed many with your kindness.



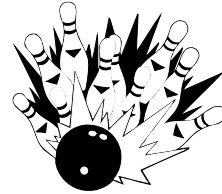
Come share the love at the old Fashioned Lemonade Stand located in the WBFH on Sunday, February 10 following both worship services.

Bring your pocket change and enjoy a sweet treat with your Valentine!

Hosted by the Children's Ministries Committee.

Donations will profit the Nothing But Nets Campaign

Come be a "King Pin" at the February CCF Event!!



It's the Bethany Bowling Bash for bowlers that are in preschool through fifth grade!! "Spare" some time on

Saturday, February 16th

Ride the Bethany Bus at 3:30 pm or we'll meet you at The Village Lanes at 4:00 pm.

****Snacks will be provided****

Contact Kris Kent

642-6438/kentcrew@cox.net

VBS PLANNING MEETING

at 7:00 PM February 19, 2008!!

VBS will be held July 14th -18th from 9 am to 12 pm.

Get a new BEACH Be-attitude and jump in to the fun!

We'll be riding the wave of God's LOVE!

See you there!!

Kris Kent

VBS Director

642-6438/kentcrew@cox.net



Sign Up!

Mission Trip to New Orleans

Urbanna United Methodist Church is planning a mission trip April 14 thru 17th. They will be working in the uptown area of New Orleans. Anyone interested in going, please contact Mike Andersen; 642-2582 or 815-5367 for further information.

General Board of Church and Society

In *The Social Principles of the UMC 2005-2008*, the principles are listed in 6 categories: Natural World, Nurturing World, Social Community, Economic Community, Political Community, and World Community. "The Social Principles, though not church law, are part of the Book Of Discipline. They are intended to be "instructive and persuasive in the best of the prophetic spirit," according to the Preface of the Social Principles.

¶160. The Natural World, addresses five areas. It says in part: "all creation is the Lord's, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. (1) Water, air, soil, minerals, plants, (2) energy resources (3) animal life and (4) Space are to be valued and conserved because they are God's creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings." (5) Science and Technology – "We recognize technology as a legitimate use of God's natural world when such use enhances human life and enables all of God's children to develop their God given creative potential without violating our ethical convictions about the relationship of humanity to the natural world."

Academy of Servant Leadership

Academy of Servant Leadership will be held at Blackstone at two different sessions. February 29-March 2 or March 2-March 4. 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 or call Dolores Hart at 642-0933.

Treasure Seekers Spiritual Growth Retreat

April 12-13, 2008 at Blackstone, VA
Sponsored by the VA Conference Board of Laity "Be still and know that I am God"- Psalm 46:10

These are busy and stressful days for most of us, and it seems there is not much time to be still and listen to God. This retreat is open to everyone (youth and adult). So come with an attitude of prayer and expectation. Great things will happen as you become a TREASURE SEEKER! Cost of this conference plus lodging is \$85.00. Deadline for registering is March 22, 2008. For more info go to www.vaumc.org and then link into Laity.

Temporary Address for

Loretta and Archie Leigh
669 North East Plantation Road
Unit #409
Stuart Florida 34996
1-772-334-5149 or 804-824-4804 (cell)



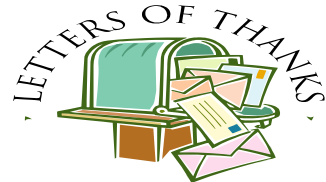
Couples Spiritual Renewal Retreat

March 1-2, 2008 Blackstone, VA

What is a Couples Spiritual Retreat? It's a time to be with other Christian couples for fellowship, worship, discussion, learning, and fun in an uninterrupted atmosphere away from the "world". It's non-denominational, so all are welcome. The retreat is a relaxing time to enjoy all of the above. Here you can freely share your love for each other and the Lord with one another.

It's a time of renewal. It's a time to renew your relationship with each other and God. Age is not a factor at Couples Spiritual Renewal. It is a time for us, young and old, to get closer to our mates and the Lord. It provides a quiet place; away from the hectic life we each lead.

The cost is \$125.00 per couple and includes registration, room and meals. Deadline for registration is February 21, 2008. Make checks payable to the VA Annual Conference and mail to: Lloyd Sholes
1313 Canterbury Lane
Colonial Heights, VA 23834



Lisa and I would like to thank all of our family and friends at Bethany for the prayers, cards, flowers, meals, and visits during my recent heart attack recovery. I'd especially like to thank Rev. Steve and his wife Susan for taking their valuable time for so many visits. – Blair and Lisa Hasty

~ ~ ~

A BIG THANK YOU from the Salvation Army – whether you rang the bell, gave food, helped with the Angel Tree, or contributed money. You made Christmas happier for others!

~ ~ ~

Thanks to all the folks at Bethany for their continued prayers, calls, cards, and the many "web wishes" that were sent via the Riverside web site. Thank you, Steve and Susan for your visit and a special thanks to the special "angel" that brought her communion.

Our Bethany Family is so special and your love and support has not gone un-noticed. Please continue to keep her and my dad in your prayers. The next few weeks at home will be very challenging to us all.

May God bless each of you today, and always,
Peggy Lewis

~ ~ ~

The family of Mary Agnes Hogge wishes to extend our heartfelt appreciation for the many acts of kindness shown by our Bethany Church family.

Your many expressions of Christian love have been a source of comfort and strength to each of us throughout her illness and since her passing. We have been especially blessed by the visits of Pastor Steve and Susan.

Leo, Kay, and Jacob
Billy, Wendy, Amy, John, and Brandon

Volunteers Needed



We all remember Hurricane Isabel and its impact on the local community. There is a Seaford couple that is still living with the disaster. They are not yet back in their home. Their house was flooded and when they tried to raise the dwelling it began to fall apart. The couple has been trying to rebuild. In May of 2007 the wife fell from a ladder causing numerous medical problems. The VAUMC has put out a request for volunteers to work on this project. BUMC is putting together volunteers to assist this family on Saturdays. All skill levels are needed. If you are interested, contact Mike Andersen at H: 642-2582; C: 815-5367.

Dear Bethany Friends,

I wanted to let everyone know that I will not be going forward to become a Local Pastor. After much prayer and with consultation with spiritual advisors, I have come to accept that my calling is to remain a layperson and to serve in that capacity. I want to thank everyone for their support, encouragement and prayers. -Blessings to all Marsha K. Miller

Bazaar News

Everyone is invited to our workshop, which began January 29th. We meet from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. We will be working on items for the Etc. and Ornaments shops. We need you to help make our November 8, 2008 Bazaar successful. If you are able and willing to have fun and fellowship come join us —we have a job for you. For more information contact Janet Chapin 642-6822 or Jeannie Harrell 642-2498.

COMMUNITY WIDE MEETING HOSTED BY BETHANY UMC



As part of our community outreach and service mission, Bethany will host the Gloucester County Sheriff's Office as they present an informative discussion on

INTERNET SAFETY

February 11 at 6:30 pm.

(This event will also be advertised in the Daily Press and Gazette.)

Please come to this important meeting and learn what parents, grandparents and loved ones can do to keep children safe from Internet predators.

Do you think "this type of thing" can't possibly happen to YOUR child? Think again and become informed!

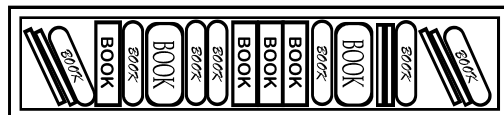
Please contact Kris Kent for more information.
642-6438/kentcrew@cox.net

Greeters Needed

The Greeter Coordinators for the 11 o'clock Sunday Worship has a new calendar on the bulletin board located in the hall near the church office.

Greeters are the first person someone meets upon entering the church so we are very important. Needed are greeters for the front door and for the side door.

Greeter duties are simple — give a warm welcome to every worshiper and hand them a bulletin. Try to identify visitors — hand them a visitor's card and Bethany leaflet information. Name badges for greeters are available in the Narthex. Please sign up. Frances will call you as a reminder. -Thanks, Carol Schultz and Dawn Cluts



It's all About Him: Finding the Love of my life

by Denise Jackson

This inspirational book gives the reader an all-access look into one of country music's most famous couples: their love story, struggles, dreams, success, the near-failure of their marriage, and the rediscovery of their faith and how that has dramatically shaped their lives.

Your Love is Amazing: A 30-day worship adventure

by iworship

A daily devotional based on popular praise and worship songs. Each entry in the book includes an electric mix of devotional readings, profound insights from songwriters, applicable Scripture and thought-provoking journal prompts to help the worshipper have a deeply meaningful daily encounter with God.

Sophie's Heart by Lori Wick

After the tragic death of his wife, Alec Riley struggles to put his life back together. He and his three children are lost in their grief...until Sophie walks unexpectedly into their lives. How can Sophie find peace in her new job? Will God use her gentle spirit to help heal Alecs broken heart?

If God is Love: rediscovering grace in an ungracious world by Phillip Gullely

Christians are called to treat everyone as family members loved by the Father, not to "save" them but to point them to God. This translates into a heart of forgiveness, giving generously to the worlds needy, a politics of compromise rather than division and an understanding that justice doesn't mean revenge. This book details well Christ's command to love others and how to live that out.

Movies

The Passion of The Christ

The Passion of the Christ focuses on the last twelve hours of Jesus of Nazareth's life. The film begins in the Garden of Olives where Jesus has gone to pray after The Last Supper. Jesus must resist the temptations of Satan. Betrayed by Judas Iscariot, Jesus is then arrested and taken within the city walls of Jerusalem where leaders of the Pharisees confront him with accusations of blasphemy and his trial results in a condemnation to death.

The Gospel of John

The best-loved but least understood of the gospels, John presents a uniquely human portrait of courage and passion encompassing Jesus' entire three-year ministry, the final years of his life. Intimate and reflective, *The Gospel of John* offers an unparalleled opportunity to experience the incomparable life and times of Jesus Christ.

Veggie Tales: The Wonderful Wizard of Ha's

Meet Darby [Junior Asparagus] who more than anything else in the world just wants to have fun. When he learns about the wonderful Land of Ha's — an amusement park with all the fixins — and its mysterious wizard who promises to make his dreams come true. This story of the prodigal son — an over-the-rainbow adventure reminds kids everywhere that there's no place like home.



RECENT BETHANY FINANCES

A review of recent Bethany financial giving reveals the following:

Year	Giving	Change from Previous Year
2004	\$249,347.00	\$13,709.00
2005	\$263,056.00	\$56,841.00
2006	\$319,897.00	\$-1,559.00
2007	\$318,338.00	

The growth in giving in 2005 and 2006 is remarkable and has allowed Bethany to move ahead in significant ways, such as:

- Remodel the 40-year-old parsonage kitchen
- Purchase classroom partitions for the Warren Belvin Fellowship Hall
- Hire directors of Children and Youth Ministry with positive results:
 - Growth in participants
 - Growth in activities including bible study, devotions, work and fun projects

Continued good outreach to the local community
Continued good adult worship, Sunday school and fellowship activities

Thank you for your financial support that allowed the growth in our ministries.

In 2007 we were surprised by a slight drop in giving. The Finance and Stewardship Committees and the Church Finance Secretary are working to determine why there was a drop in giving. Confidential preliminary results show that in 2007 pledges fell short by over \$22,000 which is attributed, at least in part, to the declining economy. This shortfall prevented Bethany from transferring any funds to our Capital Reserve Fund which we are trying to build up to an amount sufficient to cover big purchases in the future such as replacing a heat pump. But all other financial obligations were met.

We plan to reduce the 2008 budget line item (601, Capital Improvement/Replacement Fund) to \$6,000 saving \$9,275. We hope this reduction will preclude a deficit in 2008 finances.- Finance Committee

Kits for Conference

Now is the time to start preparing the kits that will be sent to Conference in June. The JOY Circle will be doing the layettes and the items needed are as follows:

- 6 cloth diapers
- 2 shirts
- 2 washcloths
- 2 gowns or sleepers
- 2 diaper pins
- 1 sweater or sweatshirt
- 2 receiving blankets (one may be a knitted blanket)

School Kits

- one pair of blunt scissors (rounded tip),
- two pads (or loose leaf) of 8 1/2"x11" ruled paper
- one 30-centimeter ruler
- one hand-held pencil sharpener
- six unsharpened pencils with erasers
- one eraser (2 1/2")
- 12 sheets construction paper (varied colors)
- one box of 24 crayons (only 24)

Health Kits

- one hand towel
- one washcloth
- one comb (large and sturdy, not pocket-sized)
- one metal nail file or fingernail clipper (no emery boards or toenail clippers)
- one bar of soap (bath size and up)
- one toothbrush (single brushes only in original wrapper)
- one tube of toothpaste (4-7 oz) , six Band-Aids

Year-End Statistics

Each year every local church in the conference tallies up its membership data for submission to the conference statistician and eventual printing in the annual Conference Journal. Some of the more salient statistics for Bethany as of Dec. 31, 2007, compared with the figures from one year ago, include the following:

Church Membership = 641, up 2%
Number of person baptized = 6
Number of persons received on Profession of Faith = 13
Number of persons transferred in = 14
Number of persons transferred out = 6
Number of deaths = 9
Average Worship Attendance = 217, up 7%
Average Sunday School Attendance = 81, down 7%
Membership in Youth Fellowship = 30, up 130%

Visitation Teams to be Trained



Would you like to be part of the visitor follow-up ministry of Bethany Church? On Wednesday, February 13, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Pastor Steve will lead a training session for individuals willing to make a brief doorstep visit on Sunday afternoon to first-time visitors to Bethany that morning. Statistics show that immediate follow-up visits by laypersons are extremely effective in reaching out to newcomers to a church. The training will be held in the Mary Lotsey classroom. All interested person are invited to attend.

Heart Havens Offering on Feb. 17

One of the very special ministries associated with the Virginia Annual Conference is Heart Havens, a series of group homes situated throughout Virginia that provide a place for adult children with developmental disabilities to live in a loving, Christ-centered environment when their parents are no longer able to take care of them. Currently, there are nine homes in the conference, the closest one being in Kilmarnock. However, ground has been broken on a new home in Newport News. A special offering to support the work of Heart Havens will be received at Bethany on Sunday, February 17.

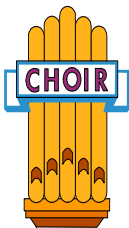
Mission Update

Jeff Lane to Present Mission Program

Last September Jeff Lane participated in a medical mission trip the nation of Cambodia. (While Jeff was in Cambodia, our missionary to Cambodia, Clara Biswas, was itinerating in the United States!) Jeff donated his skills as a pharmacist to help the poorest of the poor in that impoverished nation. On Sunday evening, Feb. 24, at 7:30 p.m., Jeff will present a power point presentation on the details of his mission trip in our church sanctuary. All interested persons are invited to attend.

Confirmation Class Underway

Because of the tremendous number of interested youth, the pastor is offering two confirmation classes this year. The one for older youth began in January and will culminate in a service of confirmation on Sunday, April 13. Young people enrolled in this class are: Cheyenne Taylor, Brandi Westerfield, Trip Vaughan, Mike Sage, Matt Sage, Josh Hasty, David Campbell, Dennisa Booth, and Kim Paiva. The second confirmation class, for 6th graders, will begin in April.



An Invitation to Sing

Twice a year our chancel choir recruits additional singers to join the choir for special performances. One performance, of course, is our Christmas cantata. The other occasion is our Lenten cantata, performed during Holy Week. Music Director, Sandy Fox, has issued an invitation to all singers who would like to join the choir for its Lenten cantata, *The Weeping Tree*, to come out to practice on Wednesday evenings from 7 until 8 p.m. The cantata will receive its performance on Thursday, March 20.

Boy Scout Sunday

Boys and their leaders from Cub Pack 113 will be in attendance during the 11 o'clock service on Boy Scout Sunday, February 3. Members of the pack will present the colors at the beginning of our service. The Cubmaster is Claudia Clifton, and our Scouting Representative is David Chapin.

Friendship Class Revived

At one time the Friendship Sunday School Class was the strongest class at Bethany Church with over twenty active couples. A casualty of Hurricane Isabel, the class has not been active the last few years. Thanks to the recent return of Al and Judy Burner to Gloucester and to their leadership, an attempt is being made to revive the class. The Burners are hosting a covered dish dinner on Saturday evening, Feb. 2, at 6 p.m., at their home (2704 Woodford Ave., Hayes). The first meeting of the class will be at their home on Sunday morning, Feb. 10. All former members of the class and all persons without a Sunday School class are invited to attend. Please call the Burners (642-6016) for further information.

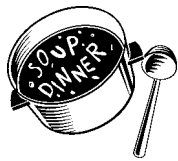
In the Event of Inclement Weather

When the weather for Sunday morning services is questionable, we will try to get out the word in several different ways to our congregation should there be a cancellation.

- A message will be placed on the church answering machine (642-2110).
 - Charlotte will send out a group e-mail to all those for whom we have addresses.
 - A message will be placed on our church website www.bethanygloucesterpoint.net Click on "What's New"
 - Listen to WXGM 99.1 FM for church cancellations
- Announcements will be placed no later than 6:00 a.m. on Sunday morning. If there are no announcements, it means that church activities will proceed as normal.

Ash Wednesday Soup Supper

February 6 – 6:15 p.m.



Please sign up for the soup supper. Sign up sheet is posted on the bulletin board across from the church office. Indicate amount of people and what kind of soup you will bring.

Family Ministries will provide crackers, drinks and desserts.

Hymn Stories

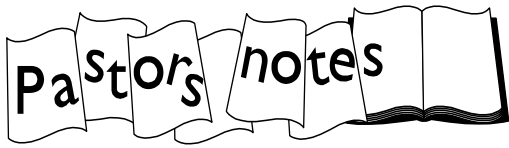
"It Is Well with My Soul"

Horatio Gates Spafford, (1828-1888)

Tragedy was associated with the writing of the words of this famous gospel hymn, and followed closely the composing of the music. H. G. Spafford wrote the poem on the mid-Atlantic over the exact spot where his four children had drowned a few days before. His wife and children were sailing to France on the *Ville du Havre*, one of the largest ships afloat. It was rammed by an English iron sailing vessel and sank to the bottom of the ocean within two hours, killing 226 people. Mrs. Spafford lived, but the four children were lost. Just weeks before this tragic drowning, Spafford had lost everything he owned in the great Chicago fire. And now, if not tested enough, he lost all of his beloved children. As soon as it could be arranged he sailed to Europe to join his wife. On the way, December 1873, the captain of his ship pointed out to him the spot where the tragedy had occurred. Here in the dark of night, with a heart heavy with grief and pain, but yet surging with faith and hope, Spafford wrote these words:

*When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrow like sea-billows roll,
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul!*

Philip Paul Bliss, great song leader and composer, wrote the music for this hymn in November 1876. Two weeks after it had been written, bliss and his wife were killed in a tragic train crash in Ashtabula, Ohio. It was said by witnesses that Bliss could have escaped, but chose to die by the side of his wife, who was caught in the flaming wreckage.



Pastor's Column: "Observing a Holy Lent"

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. (Ephesians 5:15-16)

Lent begins very, very early this year—February 6. As a matter of fact Lent hasn't begun this early since the year of 1913 and will not begin this early again until well into the 22nd century. Imagine that! The date of the beginning of Lent is, of course, fixed to the date of Easter. Lent always begins 46 days before Easter (forty days plus Sundays). The date of Easter is calculated to be the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the date of the vernal equinox. This year the first full moon after the vernal equinox is March 21. Easter falls on March 23.

We will celebrate the beginning of Lent with an Ash Wednesday service on Feb. 6 at 7:00 p.m. in our church sanctuary. Ash Wednesday ranks with Good Friday as one of the most somber services of the church year. On Ash Wednesday we are reminded in a very tangible way of our sinfulness as human beings, because at this service we will receive a black mark upon our very being. A black mark of ashes will be placed upon our forehead. The black mark is in the shape of a cross, to remind us that it was our sinfulness that made the cross necessary. Although some people disdain the solemnity of the service, there is something bracing about facing the reality of our sinful nature without our usual Sunday façades.

The season of Lent is a wonderful time to either "give up something" or "take something on" as an existential commitment to the Lordship of Christ. If we find ourselves fairly comfortable and self-indulgent in our lives, rarely saying "no" to our own inclinations, may I recommend giving up some cherished personal indulgence for the duration of Lent as a sign of our commitment to the Lord. If we are already over-busy in the use of our discretionary time, is it possible for us to give up some outside activity so that we can find time to be still before the Lord and nourish our souls during this holy season? If we find ourselves normally preoccupied with our own affairs and giving little time to church or community service, may I recommend taking on some new form of service during Lent as a sign of our commitment to the Lord.

I invite you to make the best use of the season of Lent that you possibly can. Commit yourself to doing something new, something challenging, something that will bless your soul, something that will bring glory to God. Friends, there's not much time to get ready. Lent comes very, very early this year.

A servant of Christ,
Pastor Steve

Pastor Offers Class on Spiritual Practices

Pastor Steve has chosen for this year's Lenten study a six-session class on five traditional spiritual practices in the church. The practices are journaling, scriptural meditation, prayer, holy listening, and daily self-examination. Biblical texts will be cited, as well as quotations from Christian spiritual guides, both ancient and contemporary. After the particular spiritual discipline is presented in class, participants will practice the discipline during the following week. Both a Wednesday morning and a Sunday evening class will be offered; each class lasts for one hour. Since the maximum group size is 10 persons, if you are interested in participating, please call the church office (642-2110) immediately to see if space is available. The first group meetings are Feb. 3 at 6:30 p.m. and Feb. 6 at 10 a.m. Both groups will meet in the Mary Lotsey classroom.

Rev. Jim Draper Returns to the Pulpit

Rev. Jim Draper, one of our retired pastors at Bethany, has been asked by our District Superintendent to provide interim pastoral leadership to the Middlesex Charge, in the aftermath of the tragic loss of their pastor. The charge is composed of two local churches, Forest Chapel, in Saluda, and Old Church, in Mattaponi. Jim will be preaching and providing pastoral care to both congregations.

Now and Then

-Mary A. Selden

*Think about the wintertime
And what it means to you;
Then turn your thoughts to childhood days,
To things you used to do.*

*Lean against the icy winds
In your heavy clothes;
Break off brittle icicles...
Strike a fencing pose.*

*Catch some snowflakes in your hand,
Taste their frosty lace;
Brush a pair of angel wings,
Tramp a circle chase.
Coasting down the nearest hill,
Steer your homemade sled;
Skate around a tiny pond
With flailing arms outspread.*

*Build a snowman, build a fort
With snowballs stacked in mounds;
Clear a space to slide upon,
Play at "fox and hounds."*

*Run for home to help with chores,
Hear the old clock chime...
Live again and know again
The joys of wintertime.*

