



# The Little Harbinger Bethany Memorial Church

July 2020

HAPPY 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY

## The Pastor's Pen

by Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins

On Sunday, July 5, at 10:45, **Bethany Memorial Church will re-gather in person for worship.** Those who have been hungering for worship in the physical presence of others, will be able to do so.

**We will also continue to worship via Facebook Live.** Those who are still not comfortable in gatherings of more than a few, or who are too distant to come to Bethany, can still be part of the worshipping community. Win/win!

If you choose to come to the sanctuary for worship, **bring your sense of adventure!** Seating will be every third pew, and each person or family unit six feet apart, so your vantage point will be different than from your former favorite pew. (A deacon

will help you find a seat and will also dismiss you row by row at the end of worship – like at a wedding.)

Our slogan will be: **Spread the gospel not germs – Wear a mask!** You will be greeted at the door by a deacon who will provide a mask if you do not have one. Masks will be required to enter the sanctuary. This is the way of love right now.

The greeter will also help you find the hand sanitizer, pick up your communion elements, and locate the offering box. The deacon will also help people maintain distance as they enter. Please maintain distancing outdoors as well. Here, the catchphrase will be: **Winks and waves, not handshakes or hugs!**

The worship service will be new as well, resembling the Facebook Live worship of recent weeks. It will be briefer than before, as we will not pass the peace or offering plates or communion trays. You may bring your offering and place it in a receptacle as you enter or leave the service. (You may also mail it in or give online on our BMC website.) You may bring your own communion elements or use the individual cups and wafers that will be provided.

We will continue to be moved by the wonderful music Vicki NeCastro brings us every week, but we ourselves will not sing. Singing is a higher source of droplets in the air than speaking (potentially virus-laden droplets.)

Worship leaders will wear masks or clear face guards in order to keep worshipers safe from us! Studies show that when speakers project their voices, the safe social distance is 20 feet, rather than six.

**Obviously, worship is going to look different than before.** We will need to remain flexible and continue to learn and tweak how to be safe and worshipful both in this time.

We've been so fortunate in Brooke County to have largely escaped infection. As the state opens up, and the colleges begin to reconvene, we will want to be particularly careful to put into practice all we have learned about how to stem community spread. July, in many ways, will be our practice month before school opens.

My experience is that the single most important factor in

whether a worship service is meaningful is the attitude and readiness that each worshiper brings to the service. God is the main actor in our worship, and we are there to interact with our Creator. **As we gather, in person or virtually, may our hearts be ready to worship in spirit and in truth.** Those of us tasked with leadership will do our best to provide a safe and well-prepared space for the Holy Spirit to do its work!

Blessings,  
Pastor Sharon

## BMC Adoptees-Outreach Opportunity



You might recall reading of the BMC adoption of two children and two elders through Global Ministries.

Pictured to the left is Chinna Appu, one of our adoptees. Chinna and his brother (and two other siblings) were found wandering the streets and begging for food. Now a resident of the Family Village Farm (FVF) in Tamilnadu, India, recent communication indicates that while Chinna was very quiet and fearful when he first arrived at the FVF, he is now eating well and mingling with other children. Now he looks “healthy, clean, cheerful and active.” He attends play school every day.

Mrs. Muniyammal is our elder adoptee who is also housed at the FVF. In each cottage, an elder is assigned to act as “grandmother” to the children in that cottage. Mrs. Muniyammal, we are told, is happy. She is described as being helpful in the kitchen cleaning vegetables and greens, peeling garlic, and any other “petty work in her capacity.” She attends morning devotions on a regular basis and was recently prescribed a hearing aid.

**Would you be willing to provide greeting cards for these two adoptees?** While there might be a language barrier, Chinna might delight in getting cards in the mail; cards with bright colors and maybe even stickers. Mrs. M. would surely enjoy cards with beautiful flowers or scenes. If you are willing to help out, purchase some cards and drop them by the Church during the month of July. We will then mail the cards in a large envelope to India. If you would prefer to make a monetary donation, we could forward that to the appropriate office as well. Please contact the church if you have any questions. We thank you in advance.

# A Grandfather's Love

by Brenda Hart

Hugs are powerful medicine but COVID has placed a brutal reality in our lives. I'm a hugger and as I watch friends and neighbors endure the harshness of life in this time it is heart wrenching to deny them the comfort of a hug or to be denied myself of that comfort. Recently, God reminded me of a beautiful childhood moment to help fill that void.

My family attended a small Appalachian farming community church with a circuit preacher that served 5 churches. So when the preacher showed up it was an event! Mamaw was the piano player and occupied the bench throughout the entire service to provide music as the Spirit led. Papaw sat in the back of the church in the same pew every Sunday with me on his lap.

Papaw always had candy in his right jacket pocket but Mamaw forbid him to pass candy during services because the sound of the wrappers created

a distraction. That was a serious offense especially when the preacher was present.

But one Sunday I looked into Papaw's pocket and he gave me a wink. So I pulled out a piece of candy and carefully tried to get that wrapper off but without success. Mamaw heard it and we got that stern look of disapproval. My head turned to look at Papaw's face and his head was bowed deeply to hide a grin that stretched ear to ear. I snuggled up to him and he wrapped those long, lanky, tanned, farmer arms around me like a warm and comforting cocoon, with the smell of earth and pipe tobacco still vivid in my mind. My ear was pressed against his chest and I could hear his heartbeat like a steady drum.

The security and bliss of my Grandfather's arms in that moment was indescribably precious and filled my heart overflowing with a love for him that bonded us forever. I can still hear the beat of his heart.



Looking back, I believe God was loving up on me that day. Now facing a personal crisis, I imagine myself in God's arms in the same way. Listening to the comfort of my Creator's heart and reciprocating the love filling my heart with every beat.

God's love and mercy always emerges in my life when hardship arrives. My hope and prayer for anyone reading this is that you have a similar memory or experience to draw from. And if you do, write it down. Share it. I would love to read about it in this forum.

**I knew the sound of his tractor and would fly out the door to find him.  
I knew his cattle call and would run to him just as the cows did.  
I knew the smell of his pipe and the pace of steps.  
I followed him wherever he went.  
The love of a Grandfather  
is forever.... (Brenda hart)**



# The Green Team

by Gerard NeCastro

Bethany Memorial Church is beginning a new effort to be good stewards of God's creation. A five-person committee, composed of Helen Moren, Karen McFadden, John Rodenberg, Holly Hillgardner, and Gerard NeCastro (chair), has begun to look at ways that our congregation can live out our faith more fully by caring for the earth.

The effort, inspired by Pastor Sharon Watkins, is in keeping with the DOC Green Chalice Program, which "aims to empower congregations with ideas and resources to enable them to walk gently on the earth." The BMC committee, which calls itself the Green Team, is hoping that BMC can become a Certified Green Team Congregation. Such a

Designation requires a series of actions, beginning with a commitment to the Green Chalice Covenant and completion of several initial green changes.

The committee has begun to look at several improvements, including the installation of LED lights in the sanctuary, using glass communion cups, serving fair trade coffee, and working with the town of Bethany and Bethany College to restart the recycling program in one form or another. It also hopes to call attention to environmental issues through inclusion of information in BMC publications and perhaps a Bible study series on environmental stewardship. The committee welcomes the suggestions and help of the entire congregation.



To learn more about the Green Chalice Program, which operates through Disciples Home Missions, please visit <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/missions-advocacy/green-chalice/>



Preparing for Phase I of Regathering at the Church facility.



**Become a WV Disciple  
Women's Prayer Partner  
Email  
jrheaallen@yahoo.com**

The annual Disciples Women's Fall Retreat has been cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. From the WV Disciples Facebook page:

"However, your WV Disciples Women's Cabinet is dedicated to offering alternative ideas to be together while apart. Jennifer Allen, President, and Ann Hamm, Worship Director, are organizing prayer partners. Prayer is a must. Our world needs it more than ever. **Women are strong, powerful and change makers.** Therefore, we are offering other women in your region to pray with you. If you would like to be paired with a prayer partner, please email jrheaallen@yahoo.com. It is our intent to link two women together to be each other's strength and companion through prayer. Monthly, each partner will be given suggested scriptures and materials to work through together. Partners can choose to communicate by voice, email or snail mail. We will coordinate to link women by communication preferences."

Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup> was Pastor Watkins' birthday, and the Pastoral Relations committee decided that she be given a well-deserved day off. So, worship on the 14<sup>th</sup> was organized and delivered by the Elders of BMC. Elder John Rodenberg requested video birthday wishes from Sharon's family, friends and colleagues, past and present, and put them together in a video shown during the service. On her actual birthday, Sharon received flowers and a gourmet meal of salmon arranged by Charlotte Chambers and her hospitality helpers. She was also serenaded by BMC members and neighbors with a lively version of "Happy Birthday" while still maintaining recommended social distancing guidelines.



## Financial Statements

Mid-year financial statements will be mailed soon to those who made pledges to Bethany Memorial Church. If you have a question about your statement, please call the church office at 304-829-7138.

End of year statements will be mailed to all those who gave sometime in early January.

Please remember that you can drop your offering off at the church, mail it to PO Box 149, bring it with you if you choose to worship in-house, or submit it by going to the church web page [www.bmcwv.org](http://www.bmcwv.org). Contributions made through the web page can be made by credit card or through PayPal. We are grateful for your continued support through this time of pandemic.

## **Guidelines for Phase 1 of BMC's Re-Gathering**

### **Introduction:**

In light of the West Virginia phased reopening plan, Bethany Memorial Church Board has voted to return to in-person worship beginning Sunday, July 5. To protect all who wish to return to worship at BMC, the Board has approved the re-gathering policy contained herein.

Until further notice Bethany Memorial facilities remain closed to non-Church related activities. In order to keep you informed, BMC will make announcements and general information available via the BMC website, Facebook, the elders' phone-tree, and other outlets as possible.

### **General Information:**

- Individuals with compromising health issues may wish to attend worship service via Facebook Live.
- For individual safety, and the safety of other in-person worshippers, anyone experiencing covid-like symptoms (temperature, sore throat, cold-like cough) and/or exposed to someone with Covid-19 is expected to participate in worship via live stream rather than in person.
- Persons whose covid-like symptoms persist are encouraged to seek COVID-19 testing before deciding to attend in-person worship services on a subsequent Sunday morning.
- All individuals attending services must wear a facemask. Any individual unwilling to do so is welcome to view the service in the Mahaffey Parlor via television. A willingness to wear a mask is regarded as an act of love in an effort to protect fellow worshippers and adheres to CDC guidelines. Masks will be available at the church.
- Children under the age of three are not required to wear masks.
- The drinking fountain and all classroom/common areas will be inaccessible.
- The restroom on the main floor will be open. As sanitizing agents will be available, individuals are expected to sanitize surfaces before and after use.

### **Seating and Worship:**

- Individuals/couples/families intending to worship must maintain a six-foot social distance and wear masks.
- Worshippers will maintain the required social distance until they reach the building's entrance where they will be greeted by a deacon.
- When individuals enter in single file, they are requested to sanitize their hands using the free-standing dispenser just inside the door.
- After sanitizing hands, attendees may pick up a printed bulletin which should be disposed of when they exit.
- Since excerpts from the bulletin and lectionary selections will be projected on the overhead screen, worshippers can assist BMC in its Green Chalice efforts by relying on the overhead screen instead of a paper bulletin
- A tithing/offering box and a tray with individualized sacraments are on a table at the entrance to the sanctuary as collection plates and communion will not be passed during the service.
- Worshipers are welcome to bring their own communion elements and to continue their giving online or by mailing in checks to the church office.
- Individuals will be seated in the middle section of the pews first. BMC's Phase-1 plan limits middle section occupancy to no more than 20 individuals.
- Every third pew in the central section will be accessible for seating to affect 6-foot physical distancing, front to rear. Once the central section is filled, a side section will be opened.
- A deacon will direct individual/couples/families to specific seats to guarantee 6-foot distancing. Specific seating locations will be indicated by a cross taped on the back of the pew.
- Individuals and families are expected to occupy only the area where a deacon indicates seating is available.
- There will be music but individuals are asked not to sing.
- Once service has ended, a deacon will indicate when an individual/family/couple is to exit.
- Individuals are advised to sanitize their hands and dispose of communion/bulletin refuse upon exiting.
- To maintain social distancing, no congregating or socializing inside the Church is permitted.

## Prayer List

---

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. -  
Philippians 4:6*

---

- Perry Jones, Jr
- Xenyah Pickens
- Della and Ed Rogers (Parents of Vicki NeCastro)
- Gary and Vonnie Larson
- Bob and Jackie Andrews
- Barb Stevenson
- Linda Jacobs (sister of Jan Forsty)
- Nancy Pietrangelo (sister of Penny Tittle)
- Mike Cunningham (Sydma's Dad) and Dottie Hanners
- Jeffrey Yost
- Shana Hatzopoulos
- Mary Sutherland (sister of Pat Sutherland)
- Holly Cramblet Bowman
- Caden Knisley
- Joanne Sykes
- Ellen Sanford
- Ruth Tye
- Frank Hillgardner, father of Holly Hillgardner
- Mary Jane Jackson
- Donna Norman (sister of Becky Ayers)
- Dottie Smith
- Linda Owens Walters
- Holly Cramblet Bowman
- Sharon Poyneer (sister of Vonnie Larson)
- Mary Sutherland (sister of Pat Sutherland)
- Holly Cramblet Bowman

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

---

*Gray hair is a crown of splendor; It is attained in the way of righteous.*  
*Proverbs 16:31*

---

July 2 – Gary and Vonnie Larson (1960)

July 3 – Lloyd "Peanut" Van Horn

July 10 – Bev Chambers

July 13 – Michael Thayer

July 14 – Mary Bess Halford

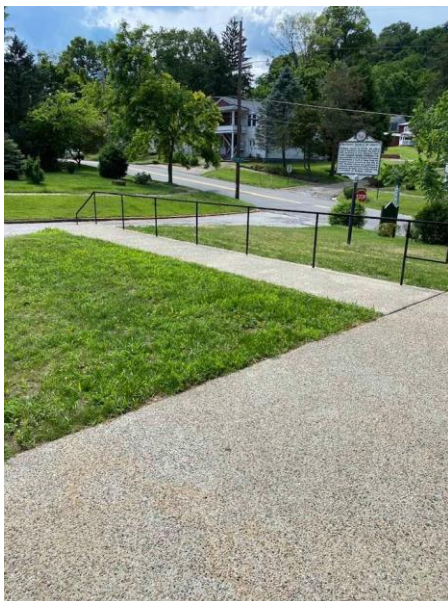
July 14 – Wendy Seidewitz (B)

July 17 – Jeanne Thayer

July 20 – Paul and Wendy Seidewitz (A)

July 27 – Sarah Webb and David Carvat





The work at the **Old Meeting House** is now complete. The building is now accessible by those who are mobility impaired, those in wheelchairs, and those in heels. Hearing from some individuals that attendance at special services at the Old Meeting House was no longer feasible because of lack of accessibility was the impetus behind this change. We look forward to services there again when all who want to can attend. Special thanks to John Cole who worked so hard to get this done.



# The Little Harbinger Bethany Memorial Church

PO Box 149  
Bethany, WV 26032