



Penny Tittle, BMC member and greeter extraordinaire, holding Evelyn James Brown.

The Little Harbinger

Bethany Memorial Church

Second Quarter
2023

The Pastor's Pen

By Rev. Erin James-Brown

The past four months have been full of wonder *and* beauty *and* love *and* learning *and* so much more. On January 28, my family welcomed its newest member. Evelyn James Brown was born at 11:35 AM, weighing in at 6 lbs. 9 oz. Her older sister, Margot, age 3, greeted her new sibling with a mix of curiosity and excitement. I immediately began my eight weeks of parental leave thanks to our newly crafted and approved parental leave policy and Bethany Memorial Church received a grant from the Pension Fund (DOC) to provide honorariums for guest preachers during my time away. I am honored by the people who agreed to share God's hope, justice, and joy during my absence. It is such a gift to have beloved colleagues who say, "Yes, of course," to serve BMC with their prophetic voices. I knew that the congregation would continue the great care for one another while I was gone.

You, dear reader, probably already know what I am quickly learning: The people of Bethany Memorial Church love each other because they know and have embraced God's love for them.

Returning to the work of worship, community development, and nurturing our life together has been such a joy, but I've also encountered new challenges. If you've ever loved a child in your life, you know that they are wonderfully delightful and unpredictable. Children take all your best, perfectly laid out plans and upend them. I get small humans dressed, and teeth brushed in the morning only to walk out the door and realize I forgot to brush my own teeth! While folks share their joys and concerns during our midweek prayer meeting on Zoom, I attempt to look serene when a toddler melts down just off camera. My growing family makes balancing work and home and worship to God complicated. And maybe balance is the wrong goal. Achieving balance or conquering the challenges in my life on my own is

not the goal of being part of a Christian community.

Therefore, when I feel myself drowning in the routines of parenthood, I look to the community for love and care. Raising Evelyn and Margot is not my task alone. For a sleep-deprived mother, this is good news! I have a committed Christian community, who helps to instruct and equip my children as they grow up. The people of Bethany Memorial Church feed my children on Sunday mornings when we gather in the lobby after worship. The church prioritizes the safety of children by employing childcare workers in the nursery. Church members will share with them the stories of Jesus. Other adults will encourage parents with hugs and laughter and friendship. Parenthood, especially those early days with a newborn, can be lonely and disorienting, but with fellow Christians surrounding my family, I feel confident that we will continue to be a strong unit because we have the support of our church family.

The Pastor's Pen continued

by Rev. Erin James-Brown

I like to imagine the stories my spouse and I will tell our children when they are older. Similar to the stories I hear some of you tell me about raising yours in the church. People often launch into the story by saying, "I remember when ..." This will be the phrase I will use when I tell my children stories about being a parent and a pastor. I remember when the church surprised us with a baby shower and big sister gifts for Margot. It was after that celebration, Margot started to show an interest in becoming a sibling and sharing her toys. I remember when I had to lead a prayer. One person instinctively took the baby out of my arms. Another person chased the rambunctious toddler who ran out of the room at the opening of "Dear God..." I remember when a former schoolteacher told me, "Oh, yeah. That's normal" when I worried about my child's development, and I hugged them with relief. I remember when someone responded with grace when I forgot to send them an email about something. I remember being loved. Someday, Joel and I will ask our children, "Do you remember when the church loved our family so well that we felt the love of God?"



NEW MEMBERS JOINING BMC



Jan Forsty, Moderator and Elder of Bethany Memorial Church, giving the right hand of fellowship to Rev. Erin James-Brown and family, Dr. Joel Brown, Margot and Evelyn.

STAINED GLASS WINDOW UPDATE

by Charlotte Chambers

As we near the half-way point in the restoration of our Memorial Windows and the time to make the second of the three \$38,000 payments, we can begin to imagine the beauty of the cleaned and restored stained-glass so amazingly designed for this building in 1914. It is also interesting to consider the long line of dedicated Christians memorialized or honored by these currently restored works of art.

Fittingly, Alexander and Thomas Campbell, along with Robert Richardson and W.K. Pendleton, are on the large left side sanctuary window. To the left of the Campbells, ministers Robert Milligan and J.J. Morgan are memorialized. Other saints will be remembered as we look at the large window over the balcony at the back of the sanctuary.

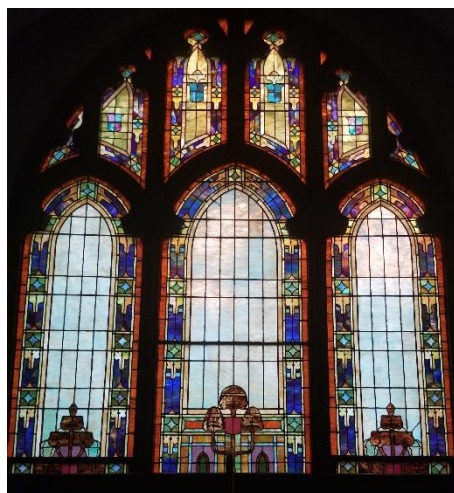
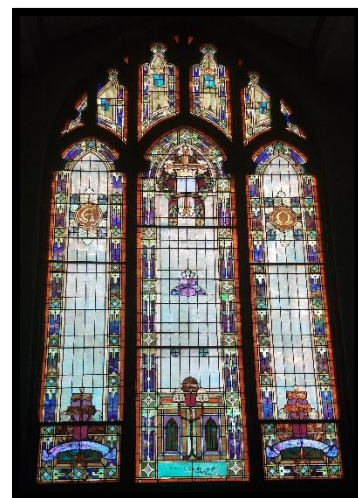
Names will be refired and needed repairs made on the William B. Allen window located in the Board Room, the James and Marjorie Carty window in the Pastor's study, and the Victor Herbert family window located in the upstairs Sunday School room. Damage incurred by the Choir window in the Narthex will also be repaired.

Two appropriate additions will be made to windows in the Board Room. Suzi's name will be added along with her husband, D. Duane Cummins, and Wilma's name will be added on the window with her husband, J.S.V. Allen. Both ladies were a very important part of the BMC congregation.

If you have noticed the baptistry window looking a bit dull, that will change when the four outside windows by the organ and baptistry are restored and returned to allow the bright sunshine in.

With the restoration, two new names will be added. Rev. Sharon E. Watkins will be honored on the Communion Room window for her loving service to BMC, and Bethany Chapter #64 Order of the Eastern Star is memorializing Verna M. Fowler on the window located on the landing above the Communion room.

Deepest appreciation is extended to all who have supported this very important project. May these windows now remain beautiful and enjoyed for another one hundred years.



Helping Others Through Lent

by Connie McVicar

For several years now, as part of our Outreach, BMC has given money to the Backpack Buddies Program. This year, we joined Beech Bottom Community Christian Church in their Lenten Season Project of collecting food items for the Backpack Buddies Program and the local Food Pantry.

Each day throughout Lent, from Ash Wednesday through Palm Sunday, one non-perishable food item was suggested for donation. Purchasing these food items ourselves not only called us into action, but also heightened our awareness of the needs of others. Each week, items grew in number. By the end of the Lenten Season, we not only filled the box set out to receive these items but also filled a table with boxes of food and paper supplies. Total collected were: 90 canned food items, 32 paper products, and 100 other non-perishable food items.

One BMC member, buying a week's worth of Lenten donations at a local grocery store, saw a member from Beech Bottom in the same aisle picking up different types of pasta. Enthusiastically, they both exclaimed, "I'm shopping for Lent!" Thank you all (to both congregations) for your outpouring of gifts to feed our neighbors through these crucial programs.

You may find more information on Backpack Buddies Programs through [feedingamerica.org](https://www.feedingamerica.org/our-work/hunger-relief-programs/backpack-program) or by clicking the link below:

<https://www.feedingamerica.org/our-work/hunger-relief-programs/backpack-program>

Backpack food programs offer families free groceries for weekends and school breaks. Food backpacks include healthy, easy-to-prepare food for kid-friendly meals.

Every Backpack Program is unique. Most backpacks include enough food to make a few healthy meals. That way, kids return to school on Monday, ready to learn.

Backpacks may include:

Breakfast items like cereal, oatmeal, or granola bars

Easy to prepare meals like mac and cheese, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, or canned soup

Bread

Milk or juice

Fresh or canned fruit & vegetables

Snacks

Kids and teens can just show up during the scheduled meal hours and receive a free meal. You don't need to fill out paperwork or show proof of income.



Programs usually take a break during summer. During the summer, they may host **summer meal programs**. In the Summer of 2022, the Feeding America network served over 24 million meals through the **Backpack Program**, **School Pantry Program**, and summer feeding sites.

Volunteer. Many Backpack programs **rely on regular volunteers**.

Donate. In 2022, network Backpack programs served over 54 million meals. You can **support Feeding America** or **your local food bank**.

Host. If you want to become a backpack site, reach out to your **nearest food bank**

The BMC Green Team Digs into Good Soil

by Gerard NeCastro

In the parable of the sower, Jesus said that some of the seed “fell on good soil and brought forth grain,” and this produced the best results. The BMC Green Team has taken these words to heart, as it has installed a new composter behind the church. The Green Team, including Helen Moren, Karen McFadden, Holly Hillgardner, and Gerard NeCastro, has been working on several projects this Spring, including the new composter.

The composter is simply a black barrel set horizontally on a metal frame. Each time new materials are added, the barrel is spun. This allows the materials to break down evenly and quickly. Fruit and vegetable scraps are ideal along with handfuls of grass clippings. In a couple months, these scraps become beautiful soil.

Karen McFadden and Gerard NeCastro, along with visiting angel Anita Weaver, assembled the composter in late April, and Helen Moren initiated it soon afterward. The idea is to create new soil for BMC’s gardening projects. If there is extra soil, BMC will share it with community members.



Gerard
NeCastro

and

Karen
McFadden



The Green Team has also been active this spring with new plantings. Helen Moren and Karen McFadden have been adding new flowers to both the church and the Old Meeting House. These will keep things colorful between the end of the spring daffodils and irises (some of which were planted last Fall) and the appearance of the red berries on the newly planted winter berry hollies in Fall.

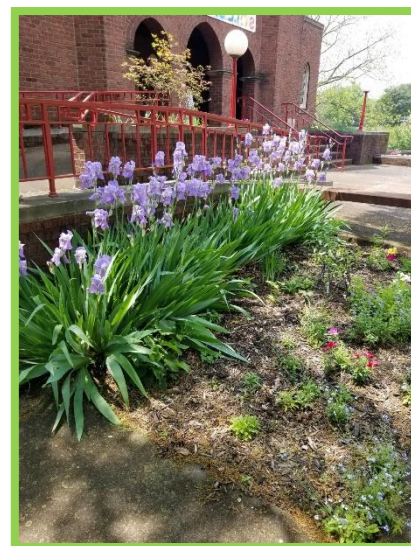
They have also planted along College Street two new redbud trees, one of which is a replacement for an over-stressed tree. The three trees are memorials to members of the Tye family.

The Green Team is also hoping to replant the small orchard behind the Campbell Mansion. Holly Hillgardner and Gerard NeCastro have been learning from Jeanne Cobb, long-time Special Collections Archivist with Bethany College, about the early gardening at the Mansion and are eager to begin planting in the Fall.

All these efforts are inspired by the Green Chalice initiative, whose “mission is to connect Christian faith, spiritual practice, and creation consciousness in order to demonstrate the fullness of God’s shalom.”



Holly Hillgardner



Pentecost 2023 at the Old Meeting House

by Connie McVicar

“Pentecost comes from a Jewish harvest festival called Shavuot. The apostles were celebrating this festival when the Holy Spirit descended on them. It sounded like a very strong wind, and it looked like tongues of fire. The apostles found themselves speaking in foreign languages, inspired by the Holy Spirit.”

Living in Bethany, the Pentecost service has become especially meaningful. For the last 11 years, the Pentecost service has traditionally been held at the Old Meeting House, where area churches have been invited to worship with us. The Pentecost service is a joint effort from both the Beech Bottom Christian Community Church and Bethany Memorial Church. This year as with tradition, members from both congregations participated: Carrie Cronin Wheat led us in singing and led the volunteer choir consisting of both congregations and guests; Laura Cramblet provided beautiful music on her Dulcimer; Vicki NeCastro led us in our unison prayer; Alisa Smith read the scripture, Acts 2:1-21; Rev. Erin James-Brown delivered the sermon; Rev. Dan Harry led us through Communion. And afterwards, in keeping with tradition, we all met at Bethany Park for a Potluck lunch, where we caught up with old friends, met new friends, shared recipes, while in the background, sounds of laughter and joyful sounds of young children were heard.

As I reflect on the day, May 28, 2023, celebrating Pentecost at the Old Meeting House also reminds me of the early days when members of the Disciples of Christ Church worshipped every Sunday in the Old Meeting House between the years 1851 and 1915. Listening to the beautiful a cappella voices singing our favorite old hymns, hearing scripture read with the acoustics of the Old Meeting House, and seeing everyone dressed in red, filled with the Holy Spirit, helps me visualize the early days of our denomination. While we can look back at our roots and remember our heritage, we can also be inspired to look for ways the Holy Spirit continually helps us to grow and to live out our faith into future generations.



Prayer List

Therefore...pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. – James 5:16

- The men, women, and children of Ukraine
- Paige Gardner (granddaughter of Vonnie Larson)
- Hunter Knisely (grandson of Jay & Maryann Eisenhauer)
- Jay Eisenhauer
- John and Anne Burns
- Pastor Janet Hellner-Burris (co-Pastor of Wilkinsburg Christian Church)
- Tammy Ritchea
- Roma (mother of Brenda Hart)
- May Tittle (mother of Penny Tittle)
- Jeanne Cobb
- Judy Pyle
- Joe Lovano
- Hilary Miller
- John Cole
- Elizabeth DeJong
- Becky Ayers and Family
- Rick Ehrhart and Sharon Zacherl (cousins of Vicki NeCastro)
- Jennifer (niece of Vicki and Gerard NeCastro)
- Christina (sister of Gerard NeCastro)
- Larissa and Hannah Holland (friends of Vicki NeCastro)
- Debbie Guillony Geisler (sister-in-law of Jim McMillan)
- Sarah Hunsberger (mother of Anita Weaver)
- Madeline Wilson
- MaryAnn Eisenhauer
- Michael (brother-in-law of Vicki & Gerard NeCastro)
- David Gnatek (brother-in-law of Holly Hillgardner)
- Alan Clifford (brother-in-law of Connie McVicar)
- The Tennant Family (friends of MaryAnn Eisenhauer)
- Carole Cook
- Butch Brown
- Vonnie Larson
- Lynn, brother of Shirley Kemp
- Eldon Beery (Debra Hull's father)
- Mary Wilson (former mother-in-law Holly)
- Nancy Pietrangelo (sister of Penny Tittle)
- Sharley Hillgardner

Upcoming Events: Ohio Valley Pride Festival Saturday, July 8, 2023

Email Erin at ejamesbrown@bethanywv.edu and she'll get you more information.



**Follow us on Facebook at
bmcwv.org**

Godspeed



Giving our love to Vonnie Larson as she leaves for her new home in Boulder, CO.



Honoring our 2023 Bethany College Graduates:
Noah Gill and Aaron Baird

The
Little
Harbinger
Bethany
Memorial
Church

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