

Bethany Messenger

Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church, Montoursville, PA

570-368-8932



Campus Location: 369 Broad Street,
Montoursville, PA

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Mrs. Mary Paulhamus – Director of Church
Music

Mr. Michael Twigg – Church Secretary

Mrs. Deborah A. Harman - Sexton

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At A GLANCE, THIS IS WHAT'S GOING ON:

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“SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY” Is one way to help the Shepherd of the Streets to help more people in need. It is an effort to glorify God and care for “The least of these” by donating a dollar (or more) on **February 12**. Offering plate will be at the door.

LENTEN SEASON BEGINS FEBRUARY 22nd with Imposition of Ashes in the Chapel at 12:00 pm. And Disposition of Ashes in the Sanctuary at 7:00 pm

LENTEN WEEKLY BOOK STUDY “40 Day Journey with Martin Luther” Begins on Wednesday March 1st. There will be an informal soup and salad lunch during the book study at the noon study.

MESSAGE FROM REV. STEVE SHIPMAN

As I look back on nearly half-a century of ordained ministry and three-quarters of a century of being involved in Lutheran churches, I have to ask, “What the heck happened?” Folks at Bethany recall setting up chairs in the aisle for Christmas and Easter, and I worshipped here more than once in Pastor Logan’s day when you filled the church twice each Sunday. And it isn’t just a Bethany problem. The Upper Susquehanna Synod just informed its congregations that it can no longer provide supply pastors every Sunday for all the churches that need them. As we baby boomer pastors (who once were told there weren’t enough calls for all of us) retire or transfer to Heavenly realms, there are not nearly enough younger pastors coming along to replace us. Which shouldn’t be surprising — there aren’t all that many young people in our churches.

I hear all sorts of proposed solutions, ranging from “we need to hire a youth pastor” to “we should ditch the liturgy.” The reality is that even churches that do that are only about a generation behind us, as the largest religious group among younger adults is “none,” and that group is growing rapidly.

An article in Forum Letter put it this way: “They just aren’t into us.” That is true of increasing numbers of folks even in the more mature ages. I grew up in an era in which most people expected that they should participate in a church, even if they didn’t show up often. In the 21st Century, people see no need to be part of churches even on Christmas and Easter.

Some of the perceived irrelevance of church and Christianity is our own fault. We have dumbed down preparation for church membership. We turned Christian formation over to the schools, and when the Supreme Court (correctly in my opinion) stopped the practice, we kept whining that “they took God out of our schools.” I don’t think it was the Supreme Court that took God out of our homes.

And we did not always convince the world that we are disciples of Jesus by our love for one another. We have too often majored in minors (does it really matter in what order the candles are lighted?). Or we have tried to appeal to people by entertaining them, when there is much better entertainment on the television set (or now computer screen) in their homes.

First we need to recover a sense of awe and humility before God and before one another, so that people see our love and respond, “Surely the Lord is in this place.” The reality of God alone can motivate people to abandon their “spiritual but not religious” lifestyles.

We Lutherans know that we cannot create faith in ourselves or in others; faith is the work of the Holy Spirit as He comes through the Word and the Sacraments. Just so, as we focus on the Word and the Sacraments we can trust that the Spirit of God blows the reality of God to us and creates faith as He makes Jesus real.

If the Spirit seems not to be at work among us as in the past, maybe we need to ask whether it was Jesus that brought us together back then. And it may not be a bad thing that the old church ways are dying. Our God has a track record of bringing life out of death.

As we look to the future of Bethany and of churches in every place, I urge that we resist simplistic answers and shallow solutions. This is a time to get back to the basics, and to trust God to work through His Word to glorify Jesus in our midst.

Steve Shipman, Interim Pastor

Bethany's Lenten Book Study

40-Day Journey with Martin Luther

Edited By: [Gracia
Grindal](#)

By: [Martin Luther](#)

Drawing from the vast collection of Luther's sermons and other works, editor Gracia Grindal here selects forty inspiring passages that raise profound truths about faith and life. Includes a short introduction to Luther's life, journal-writing exercises and daily prayers. A rich resource for personal journal-writing prayers. A rich resource for meditation or small group discussion.



Bethany's Lenten Book Study

Continued page 4

Bethany's Lenten Book Study continued:

An inspiring companion anytime. Ideal for traveling through the seasons of Advent and Lent.

Gracia M. Grindal is Professor of Rhetoric and teaches preaching, the history of hymnody, and the devotional texts of Lutheran nurture at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. She has had a lifelong interest in the writing of Martin Luther.

“For Luther, the Christian life...was to be lived in confidence and serenity because Christ had thwarted sin, death, and the power of the devil. For Luther, Christ is always the victor, the one who went to the depths to win us over. His words should give us the same confidence as we learn to trust more simply and profoundly in Christ.” - From the Preface

Our study will be led by Vicar Megan beginning on March 1st at Noon and 7 pm. All participants will each receive a book, daily reading outline, notebook, and pen. Each week we will discuss the readings of the previous week. Sign-up sheet is posted in the hall outside the office, or you can call the office to sign up. The last day to RSVP is February 12th. Books and supplies will be ready for pick up on February 19th after church.

Suggested donation of \$15. For those who are unable to make a donation yet, but want to participate, please let Vicar Megan know. Please don't let the donation suggestion prevent you from participating.

Bethany's Lenten and Easter Worship Schedule

February 22: ASH WEDNESDAY

- 12 Noon, Disposition of Ashes in the Chapel (Spoken Service)
- 7 pm, Disposition of Ashes in the Sanctuary

March 1st:

- 12 Noon, Book Study in Social Hall with informal Soup & Salad
- 7 pm, Book Study in the Seekers Sunday School Classroom

March 8th:

- 12 Noon, Book Study in Social Hall with informal Soup & Salad
- 7 pm, Book Study in the Seekers Sunday School Classroom

March 15th:

- 12 Noon, Book Study in Social Hall with informal Soup & Salad
- 7 pm, Book Study in the Seekers Sunday School Classroom

March 22nd:

- 12 Noon, Book Study in Social Hall with informal Soup & Salad
- 7 pm, Book Study in the Seekers Sunday School Classroom

March 29th (Final Session):

- 12 Noon, Book Study in Social Hall with informal Soup & Salad
- 7 pm, Book Study in the Seekers Sunday School Classroom

HOLY WEEK:

April 2nd: Palm Sunday

April 5th: Holy Wednesday Service of Corporate Confession and Forgiveness,
7 pm Service in Sanctuary

April 6th: Maundy Thursday, 12 Noon Spoken Service in the Chapel
Traditional Service, 7 pm in Sanctuary

April 7th: Good Friday Service, 7 pm in the Sanctuary

April 9th: Resurrection Sunday,



**CHURCH COUNCIL ACTIONS: THE CHURCH COUNCIL HELD IT'S LAST MEETING ON MONDAY
JANUARY 16TH ,2023**

New council members installed January 8th, 2023 during the Sunday Service are Sally Lomison, Tracy Rhian and Dennis Smith.

2023 CHURCH COUNCIL OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT- DAVE GRUBE
VICE PRESIDENT – MIKE STOVER
SECRETARY – NICOLE CAREY
TREASURER – WES MILLER

January Reports are posted outside the church office

2022 Congregation Officers:

President-Dave Grube, Vice President- Michael Stover, Secretary-Nicole Carey, Treasurer-Weston Miller

Council Members: Jamie Brouse, Michael Brouse, Glenn Kaufman, Kathie Snauffer, Gail Stover, Michael Stover, Sally Lomison, Tracy Rhian, Dennis Smith

Council will hold its next meeting Monday February 20th at 7:15pm

Income & Expenses through December 31, 2022

<i>2022 Income</i>	<i>\$125,965.11</i>
<i>2022 Expenses</i>	<i><u>164,766.45</u></i>
<i>Expenses Over Income</i>	<i>- 38,801.34</i>

CONTACTING THE CHURCH OFFICE: 9:00 am. to 2:00 pm., Monday through Thursday
(570)368-8933 & email: secyBethanyNALC@gmail.com **this email can reach ALL STAFF*
IN AN EMERGENCY: Vicar Megan Shaffer (570)764-1214 (Call twice in a row – if no answer)
Gail Stover - Prayer Chain (570)971-5710 / stover1104@gmail.com
BETHANY'S WEB SITE: www.BethanyNALC.org
BETHANY'S FACEBOOK PAGE: www.facebook.com/BethanyNALC.org

MINISTRY UPDATES

Homebound Ministry Volunteers Urgently Needed

As their time here with us is ending, Pastor Shipman and Vicar Megan are looking for 2-3 volunteers willing to do home visits with our shut-ins.

"As ministers, this is our favorite part of our call(s) to ministry, and we love visiting with our flock. Yet, our departure will leave a void, not to mention some lonely sheep. Perhaps you are living alone and find that you are bored or lonely many days. Please know that you are not alone; many homebound people can relate. If you answer 'yes' to this question, would you bravely step up to meet the needs of your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ? This is a great ministry opportunity to lift someone else's and your own spirits!"

How does it work? You talk with Flip about who you would like to visit and when. You can make the arrangements, or he can, and you can show up at the appointed time. We have some devotionals for you to take along, and communion kits are available. Pr. Shipman and Vicar Megan are also offering times for potential volunteers to go on visits with them to see what visitation is all about. Please email or call Vicar Megan if you are interested in helping with this fun and highly rewarding outreach ministry.

Attitude of Gratitude

Thank You Heavenly Father, Thank You Lord for giving us each other to go through this life on earth with. Thank you for the change of scenery today; it is snowing today and it is a pause in our daily norm to recognize that we are not in control of what may happen in our lives in a few hours' time. Thank you for our many blessings.

Thank you to the Bell Choir in performing on Sunday after the weeks of practice on winter nights.

Want to thank someone who showed you kindness? This is a great way to show our appreciation for our brothers and sisters in Christ who take time to up lift others! Feel free to submit your 'gratitude' for our next issue.

Email Vicar Megan: MeganAnnShaffer@gmail.com with Attitude of Gratitude in the Subject Line.

Looking for resources to Enrich Your Walk with the Lord? Here are Free Resources

<https://thenalc.org/> - See the Devotions Tab

<https://www.bible.com/> - Has a large variety of studies and devotionals by topic, book or author. Its Free!

https://www.moravian.org/daily_texts/ - Daily Texts and Reflections for Study.

*Prayer List Changes *

We Are Updating And Refining How We Monitor The Prayer List.

Some Changes You Need To Be Aware Of:

- *New* 90 Day Cycle - Every 90 days the list will be updated to remove/add/keep persons on it.
- When requesting someone be added to the list we kindly ask for the following to be provided:
 - Individual's First & Last Name
 - How Name is to Appear in the Bulletin (Full or First)
 - If Name is Only to be Mentioned During Service (Not in Written Communications).
 - Connection to Congregation (If a Non-Member)
 - If the Person Would like Pastoral contact (Include Phone Number)
 - Any Specific Intentions (If Possible)
 - Long Term or Short Term Thank you in advance for your understanding. It is an honor to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ and it is something we take very seriously.

Harvest of Hope – Volunteer Opportunities & Fresh Free Veggies and Fruit

We are currently following the COVID-19 requirements. The Fresh Express program continues the second Thursday of every month; however, we distribute the food as cars drive by. We are currently supplying the schools with backpack food items to supplement weekend food.

Fresh Express is open every 2nd Thursday of the month from 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM. Volunteers assist with this program every 2nd Thursday of the month from 1:00 PM - 5:30 PM utilizing 2 hour shifts for set up, sorting, distribution and clean up. The Backpack program packs food every 3rd Thursday of the month from 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM during the school year. The backpack supply team meets the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month from 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM. The backpack set up team meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month from 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM.

Harvest of Hope is now celebrating our fourth year! Although the dream and seed of this project began about 5 years ago, we could not have imagined the rate of its growth. The community involvement from the schools, organizations, businesses and churches has been a blessing. The stories that we have been privileged to hear warm our hearts! With that being said, we have a long way to go to meet the needs of the community. We are currently serving 120 students in the Montoursville School District with weekend supplemental food. We have approximately 550 students that qualify for this food. We are working on a financial plan to increase the number of students to meet this need. We serve approximately 75 families with our Fresh Express program. If you are interested in being part of helping financially please see "How to Help".

Our Backpack program is organized so that a child in need will receive one bag of food every Friday during the school year. In that bag they receive 2 entrees, 2 breakfast items, 1 vegetable, 1 fruit and 2 snacks along with a special item on holidays.

We have 12 churches committed to help us with food donations for the backpack program as it functions purely from donations. We are so blessed to have this community group effort. We have received food donations from school events and personal food donations. If you would like to donate please see "How to Help".

Our Fresh Express program receives a delivery of fresh and nutritious items in the morning from the Central PA Food Bank. We open our doors later that day for families to shop for their groceries. A hospitality team welcomes the families and provides them with snacks. The initial paperwork is completed as required by the State for statistics.

Thank you for your interest in the Harvest of Hope and we look forward to meeting you in some way in the future. Sharon Atherholt Jane Zimmerer Co-Chair's of Harvest of Hope
Located within Faith Church: 700 Fairview Drive, Montoursville, PA

BACKPACK BREAKFAST NEWS:

The Backpack Program is continuing into this new school year. Families are grateful for the items that we are able to contribute!

They continue to appreciate our donations of:

- Oatmeal (1-2 oz. packets)
- Cream of Wheat (1-2 oz. packets)
- Boxed Cereal (Individual, 1.5-2 oz)
- Cereal Bars (individually packaged)
- Multigrain Bars; Breakfast Bars; Pop Tarts; Belvita Breakfast Biscuits (1.76 oz.)

EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE

Equipment is always available to borrow during recovering from surgery and for those who may be experiencing difficulties. We have walkers, canes, equipment for the bathtub and commodes available. Please let us know if you have any needs, and we will assist you.



be all

HOME COMMUNION AVAILABLE

Home Communion is again available to our shut-ins! If you wish to have a pastor come and visit and administer the Sacrament, please contact Flip Oechler or the church office to schedule a visit.

NEED A COAT, TAKE ONE; HAVE A COAT, LEAVE ONE



Winter is coming, and we know that cold days are ahead! If you are considering some closet cleaning, we certainly can use more coats, especially as we know that there are some local families who are going through difficult times. We accept children's and adult's sizes, and have a bin for hats, mittens, scarves, and gloves.

Also, if you know **anyone** in need of a coat or jacket, please remind them of our supply.

When someone receives a gift of warmth, it helps show others that people who Love Our Lord also care about them!



PROJECT LINUS & SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS

We are still sharing our knitting, crocheting, and quilting gifts with others by making blankets of all sizes (baby, children, adult) for those with cancer or going through traumatic experiences at hospitals. You may bring these items to the Church Office. We are also collecting winter hats, gloves, and scarves to share with the Shepherd of the streets.

UNITED CHURCHES FOOD PANTRY

The Food Pantry currently is blessed with an abundance of food, but that will probably change as we go into the fall. They are beginning to prepare for the upcoming holidays, and are also beginning to distribute gift cards (\$5-\$10) to each client so that they are also able to purchase if they need something that is not available at the pantry (so monetary donations are also very appreciated).

The following is a list of pantry items for which they are currently requesting:

- Coffee
- Rice
- Condiments
- Pop Tarts
- Hamburger Helper
- Potatoes
- Jello & Pudding mixes
- Pie Filling

You may drop off items at our church and they will be delivered to the pantry.



FEBRUARY 2023

BETHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 7:00PM Handbell Choir 8:00PM Chancel Choir	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9:00 AM Holy Communion 10:30 AM SCS/ Confirmation	1:00PM Women of Bethany	9:00AM Quilters *Dave Neidig	No Rehearsal			
“SOUPER’ Bowl						
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9:00 AM Holy Communion 10:30 AM SCS/ Confirmation	7:15 PM Mission Committee	9:00 AM Quilters 7:00 PM Bible Study <u>NEWSLETTER</u>	<u>ITEMS DUE</u>	7:00PM Handbell Choir 8:00 PM Chancel Choir		
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
9:00AM Holy Communion 10:30 AM SCS/ Confirmation	7:15 Church Council	9:00 AM Quilters 7:00 PM Handbell Choir 8:00PM Chance Choir	ASH WEDNESDAY 12:00 Noon CHAPEL 7:00PM SANCTUARY	PRE ORDERS DUE FOR SOUP SALE		CHICKEN / CORN SOUP SALE 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
26	27	28	March 1			
9:00AM Holy Communion 10:30 AM SCS/ Confirmation		9:00AM Quilters 10:00 AM Stuff Newsletters 7:00 PM Bible Study	Lenten Book Study 12:00PM Lenten Book Study 7:00PM			