

DECEMBER *BETHANY NEWSLETTER* 2019

BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1235 Broad Blvd., Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44223

Website: bethany@bethanyucc.org

330-923-5277

Pastor Kim's blog: throughtheweaverseyes.blogspot.com

TONIGHT Wednesday, November 27th at 7 pm Begin your Thanksgiving celebration with a peaceful time to pause and offer thanks. Join us for traditional Thanksgiving hymns and prayers. Bring a non-perishable donation for our annual collection for Good Neighbors. (see page 4 for details)

Invite Friends and Family to join us! Note: Office Closed Nov. 28th and 29th

New for December...

Advent Sunday - December 1st

Join us this Sunday for our **Advent Celebration** in the Social Hall immediately following 10:30a worship. Sloppy Joes and drinks will be provided. Last name A-H please bring a dessert to share. Last names I-P bring a side dish and last names Q-Z a salad. We can't wait to see you there!

- There will be no Congregational Conversation in December due to the Advent Celebration

Reception of New Members – December 8th, 2019

This will be our last opportunity to receive new members in 2019 – and just in time for you to vote at the Council Election on December 15th. If you would like to learn more about joining this church please speak with Pastor Kim. She will arrange a new member orientation class for you at a time that is mutually convenient.

A Wrapping Party will be hosted Wednesday, **Dec. 11th** with the MOMS Club of Cuyahoga Falls. A wrapping party is an opportunity to wrap gifts out of the view of kids while enjoying the fellowship of friends in the community. Join us at 7pm in the Social Hall. Plan to bring your gifts, wrapping paper, and a snack to share. We are looking for the following donations and volunteers to help carry in gifts at 7pm. We need donations of (drop off box in Social Hall)

Wrapping paper Bows, Tape, Scissors (mark with your name to be returned)

If you are a skillful wrapper and would love to help our guests wrap, please plan to attend as well!

The Bethany Nominating Committee is taking names of people interested in serving on Church Council. If you are interested in serving as a member of Council for a term of two years or know someone you would like to nominate, (with their permission), please contact: Judy Welfley, Pat Cochran, Tamara Urasek, or Bob Peyak. You may also call the church office. Nominations will be taken until this Sunday, December 1st. The task of the Nominating Committee is to secure names as nominations to the Church Council to be voted on by the congregation **at a congregational meeting set for Sunday December 15, 2019 after service in the sanctuary.**

Pastor's Bible Study – What do the Gospels say about the Birth of Jesus?

Join Pastor Kim for an hour-long Bible Study and time for prayer each Thursday at 12:30 pm (so those who are working can attend on their lunch hour). Bring your lunch and a desire to experience how our still-speaking God's voice can be heard in scripture. During December we will look at the Gospels to see how each one tells the birth of Jesus (or doesn't).

- 12/05: What does Matthew have to say about the birth of Jesus (Chapters 1 & 2)
- 12/12: What's up with Mark and John? Beginning of Luke (Chapter 1)
- 12/19: Continuing on with Luke 2: 1-40
- 12/26: No class

If you have any questions, please speak with Pastor Kim. All are welcome!

Help! We Need Many Readers for Key Services in December

Three of our services have an abundance of readings:

Sat 12/21: Longest Night (**10** poetry/prose readers are needed – can be choir members)

Sun 12/22: Lessons and Carols (**7** scripture readers are needed – can be choir members)

Sun 12/29: Festival of Christmas Carols (**5** intro to the carol readers are needed)

If you would like to read for one of these services, please let the church office know which service(s) you can be a reader. Pastor Kim will be in touch with the readings asap!

Christmas Eve At Bethany - Come Home for Christmas

7 pm – Festive Family-Friendly Candlelight Service

The children will help Pastor Kim tell the Christmas Story. Susan D'Amico, organist

11 pm – Festive Traditional Candlelight Service

The Chancel Choir and Memory Bells will join Pastor Kim in creating a beautiful and meaningful Christmas celebration. Josephine McGrath, organist.

Thoughts from Kim...

*I've waited all autumn for winter to come
I have watched the dark evenings surrounding the sun
I have lighted my fire, the season's begun
Because Christmas is with us again
Yes, Christmas is with us again*

- Eden's Bridge

I have not lighted my Advent fire yet, but I will on the eve of the First Sunday of Advent. My favorite Advent candles come from a family-owned all beeswax candle company that makes the most beautiful Advent (for me) and Hanukkah (for the boys) candles. The Advent candleholder is out – just waiting for Saturday's sunset. My favorite devotionals are ready, with the one that starts on November 15th already under way. I love Advent! Seriously – I *love* Advent!

In the Godly Play story about how the church tells time, the storyteller puts the white block symbolizing Christmas with four purple (or blue) blocks symbolizing Advent in front of it. The storyteller gently tells the children that Christmas is such a great mystery that we need those four weeks to get ready for it.

Getting ready for mystery – I like that. But I've been savoring this *getting ready* time now for decades, and I still cannot begin to grasp the mystery of the Incarnation – how God's love for us could be so strong that God would choose to enter creation as a completely helpless, totally dependent baby (and born into poverty with parents who were about to become political refugees)! What kind of love would compel such a choice?

And there we have the mystery. A mystery that is worthy of our time and attention.

I invite you to slow down this Advent so you can be grasped by this mystery of love. Allow your life to slow to the point that you can be still and be bathed in the light from the star while you listen to the song of the angels and hear the cry of that newborn baby – a cry of unfathomable love. These gifts are not found in shopping malls or on amazon and they are worth more than anything we can imagine. But in order to perceive them, we have to slow down and make time for silence and stillness, for joy and wonder. And...

...make time for worship – allow the beautiful music and readings and rituals and resonance of 2000 years of Advent to *season* you for your Christmas celebration. Please don't get lost in the things of lesser value – you are worth so much more than tinsel and trinkets! And -

- make time for service – to engage in acts of kindness and compassion. Be God's hands and feet and arms and legs and bring love, peace and justice into our world in honor of this mysterious love that was born in Bethlehem.

And if you find yourself in a dark place this Advent, please reach out to the people around you and allow the love of God to be incarnate in those people who can be God's arms for hugging and ears for listening. You do not have to be alone – let someone know that you need some companionship to find the light from the star. The Wise Ones did not travel alone – neither should we.

Come, my friends – enter into this time of preparation. A great mystery awaits us !

With love and prayers for our journey to Bethlehem,

Kim

Preparing for Advent

The Season of Advent begins on Sunday, December 1st. Traditionally Advent is a time for watching and waiting – for preparing one’s heart to birth Christ’s love into the world. Here are two steps you can take now to make your Advent journey rich and meaningful:

1. **Lighten and focus your December schedule.** Block out time each day for “watching and waiting.” This can include meditation, quiet contemplation, and “waiting” as a discipline of service (like “waiting” on tables). Build in **non-stressful meaningful time** with family and friends – and with those who are lonely. Build in **silence and time for awe and wonder – for mystery.**

2. **Select an Advent Devotional to assist you in your contemplative reflection.** Reading a devotional can be a good way to focus thoughts and prayers during the Advent Season. There are many different options.

- Pick up your “A New Earth” devotional (suggested donation \$5). They are available in worship on Sunday and in the church office during the week.

Here is a list of additional devotionals Pastor Kim recommends:

- *Preparing for Christmas: Daily Meditations for Advent*, by Richard Rohr ^[L]_[SEP]
- *All I Really Want: Readings for a Modern Christmas*, by Quinn G. Caldwell ^[L]_[SEP]
- *Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas*, by Plough Publishing House ^[L]_[SEP]
- *Monastery Journey to Christmas*, by Brother Victor-Antoine D’Avila-Latourrette ^[L]_[SEP]
- *The Mood of Christmas & Other Celebrations*, by Howard Thurman ^[L]_[SEP]
- *Advent and Christmas: Wisdom from Henri J.M. Nouwen*, Redemptorist Publication ^[L]_[SEP]
- *All Creation Waits: The Advent Mystery of New Beginnings* by Gayle Boss (great for families)
- *The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Birth*, by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan ^[L]_[SEP]
- *A Season of Little Sacraments: Christmas Commotion and Advent Grace*, by Susan Swetnam
- * *Light Upon Light: A Literary Guide to Prayer for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany*, edited by Sarah Arthur
- * *Celebrating Abundance: Devotions for Advent* by Walter Brueggemann

If you want additional guidance on ways to observe Advent, please speak with Pastor Kim.

The Challenges of the Holiday Season

The holiday season can find some people feeling sad, depressed, alone, isolated and overwhelmed. If you find yourself having these kinds of feelings, please reach out to your health care provider or pastor and they can help you access the support you need to move through these feelings.

Please pay attention to the people around you and notice if they are showing signs of distress. All of us are called to be good neighbors – God’s hands and feet in the world. We do not have the power to “fix” others, but we can carry a flashlight and journey with them as they move through the darkness.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

We will meet Monday, **December 9th** at 9:30 a.m. as we continue to knit prayer shawls, pray for the recipients of the items we create; we pray for those who deliver our items; and we pray for hope, healing and peace throughout our world. New knitters always welcome!

Bethany Buckeyes

Question. Why is a buckeye called a buckeye?

If you correctly answered the question, you are entitled to join the fun at Bethany Buckeyes.

If you didn't answer the question correctly, who would know? Either way, you are entitled to join the fun at Bethany Buckeyes, Friday, **December 13**, 6:00p...dinner, board games and good friends. Make your reservation on a Sunday attendance card or call DeAnne in the office by Monday, December 9. We'll see you there.

(Answer: because the buckeye resembles the shape and color of a deer's eye.)



Bethany Kitchen Saturday, November 16th ~ 11:30 a.m.

Bethany Kitchen provides a free luncheon for those in the community who need a meal. Help is always needed for food preparation, serving and cleaning up. All are welcome to join us and enjoy food and fellowship. Contact Kathleen Keenan for more information.

Anniversaries		
HUNT, William & Joan		12/05
MALORNI, Mike & Arnette		12/20
WARD, Sharon		12/28
BUJAK, Gladys		12/31
Birthdays		
RENNER, Dale		12/01
BEDLION, Nelsy		12/03
SHROYER, DeLois		12/04
WELFLEY, Judy		12/07
SEYMOUR, Matthew		12/08
NOVAK, Rob		12/12
STADELMAN, Charles		12/13
GALLAGHER, Madeline		12/14
NIELSEN, Jacob		12/14
DAVISON, Shane		12/15
DUGAN, Kinley		12/15
RENNER, Austin		12/15
COOL, Ewan		12/17
OCEPEK, Steven		12/17
OCEPEK, Tracy		12/19
LEES, Elizabeth		12/20
OCEPEK, Charles		12/23
REAC, Rosalie		12/23
ROACH, Susanne		12/24
ROHREK, William		12/24
PIERATT, Mary Ann		12/25
WIACHOVEC, Alex		12/26
JENSEN, Emma		12/27
STADELMAN, Julianne		12/28
EBER, Carol		12/29
FRATZ, Kevin		12/29
GASKILL, Mark		12/30
HAFT, Richard		12/30
HOUSLEY, Rose		12/30
LORENTZ, Sage		12/30
OCEPEK, Adam		12/31

Happy Birthday!

Calendar: November 27th to December

11/27 7:00p Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service
11/28 Happy Thanksgiving! Office Closed
11/29 Office Closed
11/30

Sunday ~ December 1st

Nursery Available: 10:00a - 12:00 up to 2 yrs.

First Sunday of Advent

10:30a Worship/ Communion/ Baptisms
11:30a Fellowship Hour: Advent Celebration
11:30a Nominating Committee (L)
5:30p YF

12/02 11:30a Balancing Class
5:30p G. Scouts
7:00p B. Scouts
12/03 10:00a Newsletter Deadline
7:00p PIV Grp.
8:00p AA Meeting (L)
12/04 11:30a Balancing Class
6:30p Bethany Band, Danbury
12/05 12:30p Bible Study
2:00p Stewardship
6:00p Memory Bells
7:30p Chancel Choir
12/06
12/07

Sunday ~ December 8th

Nursery Available: 10:00a - 12:00 up to 2 yrs.

Second Sunday of Advent

10:30a Worship
11:30a Fellowship Hour
12:00p (SH) Rsrvd.

Volunteers for Thanksgiving Eve Worship

Ushers: J. Seymour, S. Holle, M. Spring

Volunteers December 1st

Custodian: J. Mancinelli, J. Seymour
Fellowship Hour: Faith Fellowship
Greeters: T. Urasek, D.&M. Renner
Liturgist: L. Rorrer
Nursery: S. Gaskill
Sound System: M. Boling
Ushers:

Please remember Bethany members who are unable to worship with us Sunday mornings, Betty Caiola @ Briarwood, Joan Porter @ Western Reserve Masonic Community in Medina, Dick Holle @ Mulberry Gardens Memory Care, Phoebe Gero @ home, Mary McCauley @ Maplewood, Nancy Dietz @ Cardinal Retirement Village, Hugh and Audrey Kleason at home.

Nov 24 Terry, Vanessa, Barb, Frank, Linda, Cheri, Russell, Franny, Joanna, Mona & Family, The Kleasens, Patrick, The Clark Family, Kristen, Jen, Katie, Denise, Diane, Mila Naver

Frank Lid, Lutheran Hospital

What Pastor Kim is Reading During December:

Advent devotionals, and a little reading for my dissertation. But mostly the Advent devotionals (I love Advent)!

Pastor Kim's Schedule (generally speaking)

- **Sundays:** Worship, fellowship and visitation
- **Mondays:** In the office (I try to take Mon off if I work Fri/Sat)
- **Tuesdays:** Visitation and presence in the community
- **Wednesdays:** Writing and study from home (and monthly Association meetings)
- **Thursday:** Bible Study and time in the church office
- **Friday and Saturday:** Sabbath and personal activities, attendance at church activities as needed
- **Pastoral Care Emergencies:** Whenever they occur regardless of my schedule

Update on the Education Wing

Council has formed a *Partners in Vision* working group to begin the process (with denominational assistance) of recommending a plan for repurposing our Education Wing to both extend our mission and ministry while generating additional income for the church. They will meet for the first time in December to complete the *Partners in Vision* application (required to participate in this denominational resource and visioning program). Members of the working group are Jason Roach, Susan Gaskill, Larry Thompson

Worship During December – A Season of Glorious Music and Story

The Season of Advent Begins

01 December

First Sunday of Advent

Communion (in the pews)

Baptisms (!) – Beverly Joanne Davison and Jaxon Maximus Lipinski

Theme: Keep awake! Prepare

Advent Godly Play Story For All Ages

Beautiful music

Pastor Kim, Preaching

Advent Celebration after worship

08 December

Second Sunday of Advent

Theme: Prepare the way – make straight God's path

Advent Godly Play Story for All Ages

A Special Surprise!

More beautiful music (Advent has the most amazing music)

Reception of New Members

Pastor Kim, Preaching

15 December

Third Sunday of Advent

Christmas Pageant – *The Friendly Beasts*

Advent Godly Play Story for All Ages

Beautiful Advent music continues

Council Election immediately following the service

Sat 21 December 7 pm

Longest Night Service of Light (music and poetry)

Amazing music – Chancel Choir

Ellen Wingate, Organist

Nancy Paterson, Harpist (from our Anniversary Gala)

Poetry by Mary Oliver, Jan Richardson and others,

Prose by Madeleine L'Engle, Anne Lamott and others

Come and unwind in a peaceful, beautiful, hope-filled service.

22 December

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Advent Lessons and Carols

Chancel Choir and Memory Bells

Amazing Advent music!

Christmas Fund Offering

Advent Godly Play Story

The Season of Christmas Begins

Tue 24 December

Christmas Eve

7 and 11 pm – (an early candlelight service inclusive of children;

a later traditional candlelight service with the

Chancel Choir and Memory Bells and a professional

organist for both services)

29 December

First Sunday after Christmas

A Festival of Christmas Carols – come and sing the carols you love,

while learning a little bit about them! Susan D'Amico, organist

Coming in January –

A brand-new Sunday Nursery Program at Bethany!

In order to reach our goal of providing a welcoming space for families with very young children, we are taking a new approach to our church nursery! Starting in January, from 10-noon on Sunday morning our nursery space will be transformed into a place any very young child would love (ditto for their parents). We are hiring a credentialed nursery/preschool teaching team to design and staff the space each Sunday (with help from our wonderful volunteers), providing developmentally appropriate “programming” for infants through toddlers (around 3 yrs old). Watch your *Weekly Updates* and *January Newsletter* for additional information on our new program!

New Office Hours and Changes to How Things Are Done

With only one staff person in the church office beginning in January, there will be a few adjustments to allow DeAnne to keep up with her enhanced responsibilities. Church office hours (where she is available to assist you and answer phones) will be limited to 9 am – 3 pm. DeAnne will still be working eight hours per day, but those other two hours will be devoted to focused word-processing or bookkeeping tasks that are best done without interruption. During those times when DeAnne needs to be away for medical/dental appointments, we will have a group of volunteers trained to answer the phones and open the doors so that the office hours are maintained.

With Sarah’s departure the Property Committee will help with building cleaning/maintenance when Sue is away. The Finance Committee will be taking over Barb’s responsibilities related to making the church deposit.

We offer thanks to the many volunteers who are stepping up to continue the important work needed to continue the mission and ministry of Bethany UCC. Bethany has amazing people!



Christmas Poinsettias

Please help celebrate the Christmas season with beautiful poinsettias for the altar or for the decorations of the church **The cost is \$10.00 for each plant.** The poinsettias will be on the altar and in the back of the church Dec. 15th through Christmas Day and will be delivered to our friends on the *Remembrance List* by our Ministry Committee. **Have your donation(s) in by Sunday, Dec. 8th so it may be noted in our Christmas Eve bulletin.**

Poinsettias and/or decorations

I would like to DONATE _____ plant(s) for the Sanctuary @ \$10.00 each.

Decorations _____

Total \$ _____ Check enclosed

Please fill out and circle one ...

In Memory / Honor of: _____

YOUR NAME(S): _____

Bethany's Missions for Christmas 2019

How **YOU** can support our missions

THE GIVING TREE – Dec. 1 is the last day to pick up HEART tags.

The Giving Tree contains gift tags for certificates to area businesses for our Family Promise families when they move into their new homes. It also has tags for requested gift items from members of 17 families from HM Life Opportunities that we have committed to support for the holidays.

Family Promise is an emergency shelter for homeless families and H.M. Life Opportunities provides transitional housing to families up to two years. Several of our Family Promise guests have gone to live at H.M. Life.

The gifts for the H.M. Life Families are HEART shaped.
These are due back to Bethany on **Sunday, Dec. 8**



The gifts for the Family Promise are STAR shaped.
These are due back to Bethany on **Sunday, Dec. 22**



If you would like to provide for one of the gifts requested but don't want to do the shopping, the Mission Committee will shop for you. Look for members of the Mission Committee in the Social Hall this Sunday.

How the Giving Tree Works:

- ◆ Take a tag from the Giving Tree in the social hall.
- ◆ Record your name on the list by the number written on the tag.
- ◆ Buy the item on the tag. If it is for a gift certificate to Marc's or Acme, get whatever amount that works for your budget.
- ◆ Bring the gift back to the social hall **unwrapped** by **Sunday, December 8.**
- ◆ The gift cards/tags for Family Promise are due back by **December 22.**

GIFTS OF THE HEART

We selected 6 of the mission projects Bethany supports. You can use this list to give a gift in someone's name or as a special Christmas donation you would like to make. Return your list and check in the offering plate or the church office. The check list is included in this newsletter.

GOOD NEIGHBORS

We are collecting food items for client's Christmas dinner. All donations will be given to clients of Good Neighbors for Christmas. We will need these items by December 8.
Items can be placed on the table in the social hall.

SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGING

Bethany members will again be asked to help ring the bell for the Salvation Army. Our dates are December 14 and 24. Please call Becky Wachovec at 330-612-7097 to volunteer.

Thanks for your support of our Bethany missions. (11-26-19)

Christmas 2019 Gifts from the Heart

Bethany United Church of Christ Mission Committee

Gifts from the Heart is an opportunity to give a gift, in honor of a friend or relative, to a variety of local missions. Use the list below to select your gifts.

	Amount
AKRON-CANTON REGIONAL FOODBANK: To help our community foodbank with needed funds to provide food items to those that are food insecure.	
BETHANY KITCHEN: A free meal is provided in the Bethany Social Hall for anyone in our community in need of nourishment and social interaction on the third Saturday of each month.	
CHAPEL HILL COMMUNITY: Formally known as Chapel Hill Homes, this UCC Home offers residential, assisted living and skilled nursing and has been home to former Bethany members.	
FAMILY PROMISE: Bethany provides leadership and serves as a host congregation for this interfaith program which provides housing and support for homeless families.	
GOOD NEIGHBORS: This ecumenical outreach program provides food, clothing and utility assistance to those in need in our community. Bethany helps with donations of food and personal items.	
SALVATION ARMY The Salvation Army not only provides for basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter but also invests its time in the human spirit by offering counseling, education programs, recovery/support programs, and spiritual support for those willing to accept it.	
If you have a Bethany mission you would like to donate to that is not listed above please write in the name below and indicate the amount of your donation.	

YOUR NAME: _____

GRAND TOTAL: _____

Envelope # _____

check total: _____

Please make your check payable to Bethany United Church of Christ

- ✓ All gifts may be included on one check
- ✓ All gifts on this list are tax deductible as charitable contributions and will appear on your statement
- ✓ Please return your list and check/cash in the offering plate or to the church office

Thanks for your support of our Bethany missions.

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Envelope # _____ check total: _____

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Thanks for your support of our Bethany missions. 11-19-19

JOIN FAITH FORMATION FOR OUR

Advent Celebration

December 3, 2019
Social Hall, immediately following worship

SLOPPY JOES AND DRINKS WILL BE PROVIDED

WE ASK YOU BRING A DISH TO SHARE
LAST NAME A-H: DESSERT
LAST NAME I-P: SIDE
LAST NAME O-Z: SALAD