

Bethany UMC Newsletter

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DECEMBER 2014

God with Us—Rev. Donna Martin

Special points of interest:

- *Pastor's Page & Events*
- *Blessings of Bethany*
- *Cold Weather Shelter*
- *Healthy eating and Yoga*
- *Operation Christmas Child*
- *Benevolence and Ministries*
- *Lay Leader*

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Happy New Year! That's what I said to the children on the First Sunday of Advent during Children's Time. They quickly responded, "Happy New Year!" but there were confused looks on their faces. They knew it was only November 30 and Christmas had to come before we would get to January 1. But then I explained that the First Sunday of Advent is the first day of the new church year. Year endings and beginnings are a good time to reflect on our past as we prepare for the time to come. So, as we prepare for Christ's coming and a new year, I want to take a few lines to reflect on the ways in which Emmanuel (God with us) was present in our midst here at Bethany during the past year.

It has been eighteen months since you approved the Small Church Initiative prescriptions recommended by the Conference consultation team. Since July 1, 2013 we have:

- Acknowledged as our mission the mission statement of the United Methodist Church, "to make new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world," understanding the surrounding community to be the

starting place of that transformation.

- Developed and adopted a vision statement. As part of our weekly worship we affirm that "We are Christ-centered, faith-in- action believers committed to sharing God's love with all people."
- Conducted a mission audit of every ministry of the church to ensure compliance with our mission and vision statements.
- Conducted a needs-based survey in an effort to connect with community members currently accessing church-housed program (outside groups renting or utilizing our facilities) to help us better understand where our current or future ministries align with community needs.

Also in 2014, we launched a new ministry - Life Transformation Groups. LTG's are small accountability groups of 2 to 3 individuals meeting weekly for confession, discussion of scripture readings, and prayer (especially for those who do not yet know the love of Christ). About 1/3 of the congregation is currently participating in this ministry and most indicate their participation has been

meaningful and spiritually encouraging. Meanwhile we continue to emphasize Christian formation and education through our 2 adult and 2 children's Sunday School classes, monthly youth gatherings, and seasonal book studies.

In addition to these activities, the church continues its ministry to "the least of these" through benevolence contributions for those in need of partial rent, utilities, or gasoline; by maintaining a small food pantry; and through the distribution of manna bags (lunch for the day) and bus passes. Furthermore, for the 14th straight year, Bethany will host a Cold Weather Shelter this winter for the homeless in our community on nights when temperatures are forecast to be freezing or below. Other outreach activities included our 2nd Annual Community Picnic and the 4th Annual Patty B. Harris Thanksgiving Lunch.

As you can see, we have been a very busy church in 2014! So sometime in this season of celebration, take time to celebrate how God has been with us. I can't wait to see what plans for the transformation of our church and our community God has in store for 2015! Happy New Year!

Pastor Donna

Upcoming Events

Dec. 11	6:00 pm	Leadership Council meeting
Dec. 14	11:00 am	Children's Christmas program
Dec. 14	12:00 pm	Sweet Something's after church
Dec. 21	12:00 pm	Sweet Something's after church
Dec. 24	7:00 pm	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Blessings Like Raindrops by Janie Franz

Rain comes in sprinkles and sometimes in downpours. Blessings in life come in unexpected ways as well. In October and November, Bethany has received several unexpected blessings.

A friend (former teacher) asked me to speak at her Red Hat luncheon and talk about our missions here at Bethany. They wanted to donate socks to our cold weather shelter. The 10 ladies collected 72 pair of men's socks. Blessing #1.

Another friend who teaches at one of the schools where I taught for 15 years, sent me a message that their school held a Socktober event and had two large trash bags filled with socks! After counting, they had collected 470 pair of socks for men, women and children! Blessing # 2!

A friend from another church stopped by with her mom. Her 86 year old mom knitted 43 hats for us to give to our guests during the cold weather! She knitted 43 warm hats for us and 100 for Haven for Hope! Wow! Blessing #3.

We have people who stop by the office on a daily basis needing something. So, when I saw this lady at the door, I assumed she needed something. Karen, however said she needed to give money to our church for our benevolence ministry. She moved to Texas from Colorado and just felt the call to donate to us. Blessing #4.

The Martinez family held a BBQ fundraiser here for a family member who had a kidney transplant. They sent us a thank you for allowing them to use our facilities. (Their own church wanted to charge them \$800 to use the facility.) Their benefit was a success! "We thank God for you and the love you have shown our family. You are our brothers and sisters in Christ." We were a blessing to a family in need. Blessing #5.

We received blessings from Precious Stone Church who has worked to beautify our grounds! Blessing #6.

We received an anonymous donation! Blessing #7

God is so very good...all the time!

Continue your prayers, your support, your faith, and the belief that God sends blessings in unexpected ways.

Blessings come like raindrops, sometimes slow and easy and sometimes in downpours. This month, we have received many blessings. Sometimes we were the giver of blessings, but we are also the receiver! God is good! You never know when you might be a blessing to someone.

As in the song *Blessings* by Laura Story:

We pray for blessings, we pray for peace

Comfort for family, protection while we sleep

We pray for healing, for prosperity

We pray for Your mighty hand to ease our suffering

And all the while, You hear each spoken need

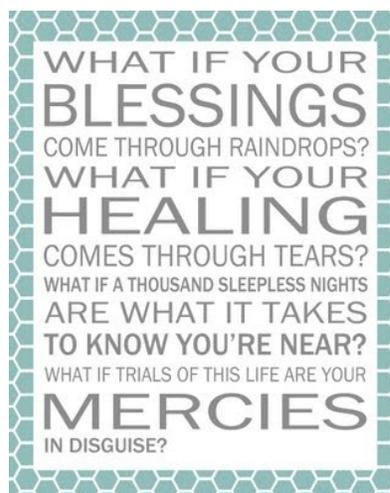
Yet love us way too much to give us lesser things

'Cause what if your blessings come through raindrops?

What if Your healing comes through tears?

What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know

You're near?



Cold Weather Shelter by Sherrie Boyer

Year 14 of the CWS starts.....NOW!! Last year, our first night open was November 26th. By that time this year, we had already been open twice! The first night we had 44 guests and 41 the second night. We could not open at all if not for the generous volunteers from Bethany UMC as well as other entities such as Coker UMC, Haven for Hope, Windcrest UMC, Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church and St. Peter's Catholic Church. We are always in need of white tube socks and gloves!

Maybe you're wondering if we REALLY make a difference in the lives of those we reach. Here is a letter we received:

"To the person or people that are the preacher, preaching at the church: I am Cindy. I have stayed at your church many times when you had the church open for cold weather in the winter. Thank you so much. This church was always great to us homeless and feed us well. Thank you so much. This is a Great God's church! I would like for someone to pray for me. I am getting better with God's help. Thank you for all

your help. God is alive and Good. Thank you, Cindy"

Cindy included \$2.00 in her letter. I am touched by her generosity. How much can we do with the many blessings WE have?

As a church, we have opportunities to reach out beyond our comfort zone and help those in our community. Grab them with gusto!

Benefits of Chair Yoga for Seniors by Enomie Rosenthal

October 6th, 2014 was our first Chair Yoga Class at Bethany United Methodist Church (Senior Nutrition Center). It was an amazing response and participation; we had 17 participates. Currently, thirteen seniors are consistent in attending our Senior Yoga Class. Chair Yoga easily adapts to the individual fitness level and abilities. The chair helps eliminate strain on your joints while increasing stability and balance. Chair yoga is an easy and effective way to get all the benefits from yoga without leaving your seat.

Muscles and joints were designed to move and basic yoga stretches will do just that, get you moving again in a gentle stress-free way.

The gentle bending and moving of yoga is important for relieving stiff joints. Remember, you have to "move it or lose it"!

Chair Yoga benefits your body, makes the mind calmer, and lifts your spirit. Chair yoga also improves circulation and increases range of motion. Our participates has gained a new sense of self and self-confidence in being able to do simple basic yoga positions.

Recent comments by some of our participates include: Yoga, has improved my flexibility, another said, "it lifts my spirits" and another stated it makes me feel better.

Thank you for participating. It is a blessing to serve you.

Join this great group of Yoga enthusiasts on Monday mornings at 11:00 in the Fellowship Hall during the Senior Nutrition Program.



Operation Christmas Child

This year we rocked the boxes!! There is no "I" in team and Bethany's elves made sure of that. The 7Up's class and Youth Group put together boxes overflowing with candy, toys, clothing, hair accessories and the list goes on and on. Under the supervision of Rachel DeMarco, Lorraine Flakes, Katie Fralick and Lynse Salas, the kiddos assembled over 40 boxes! Combined with the donations from the Towers, 75 boxes were delivered to the drop-off location! From there they will travel to countries far and wide. Upon their arrival at their destination, a book in their

native language is included. *The Greatest Journey* is a dynamic approach to discipleship – including 12 engaging Bible lessons- that local trained teachers use to instruct the next generation of believers on how to become devoted followers of Christ and boldly share their faith with others.

Here at Bethany, we know it our mission to make NEW disciples of Jesus Christ. From Matthew 28:18-20: Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.

Therefore, **go and make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." This is what we do through Operation Christmas Child. Amen and Amen.



Giving With Ease—Sherrie Boyer

No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world", said Robin Williams. Here are some random acts of kindness that take little to no time and just a little effort:

- Open the door for someone.
- Give a helping hand when you see someone carrying a lot of stuff.
- Purchase a couple of blankets, umbrellas or ponchos to keep in your trunk and hand out when needed.
- Pay for someone's meal behind you at a fast-food drive-thru.
- Send a card to someone.
- Drop off a toy or game at a hospital. Drop off a teddy bear at the fire or police department to give to traumatized children.
- Volunteer at a non-profit organization.
- Smile!
- Say hello.
- Offer to help an elderly neighbor with their household chores.
- Call a friend and let them know you're thinking of them.
- Bring a treat to work to share with your coworkers.

ALSO check out these ideas to do with children or your family:

www.myshineproject.com/2012/11/51-holiday-service-projects.html



Planning for Healthy Holidays Meals –Enomie Rosenthal



Holidays don't have to be a time when your healthy eating habits have to stop. One good way to stay on target with heart-healthy eating is the DASH Diet, developed by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. DASH, which stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension, follows heart-healthy guidelines to limit salt or sodium, saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol, and focuses on increasing intake of fruits, vegetables, and fat-free or low-fat milk products. It is also rich in whole grain products, fish, poultry, and nuts. Try these tips during the holidays to stay on track with healthy eating:

If you eat only one or two servings of vegetables per day, try adding one serving at lunch and another at dinner. Gradually switch to fat-free or low-fat milk and reduce servings of soda or other sweetened beverages.

Choose whole grain foods, such as whole wheat bread or whole grain cereals to get added nutrients, such as minerals and fiber.

When shopping, read the Nutrition Facts label on foods to find sodium content, and choose items lowest in salt or sodium.

Start with a simple 15-minute walk during your favorite time of day and slowly build up.

Don't worry about a slip. Start again, and be sure to celebrate successes.

The DASH guide is available for ordering through the NHLBI Information Center, (301) 592-8573 or (240) 629-3255 (TTY) or online at <http://hp2010.nhlbi.nih.gov/yourguide/>. Please contact Enomie with any questions.

Submitted by
Enomie Rosenthal, RN
Wesley Nurse

Do Something - What is Your Gift?

Can you believe we are coming to the end of 2014? Did you accomplish your goals and fulfill any dreams this year? If not, now is the time to step out in faith and do something for God. God promises He will not leave us nor forsake us. In the song "Do Something" by Matthew West, the lyrics speak directly to us.

Do Something by Matthew West
I woke up this morning
Saw a world full of trouble now
Thought how'd we ever get so far down
And how's it ever gonna turn around

So I turned my eyes to Heaven
I thought God why don't You do something

And He said I did, I created you

If not us then who

If not me and you

Right now it's time for us to do something.

We all have gifts. We all have passions. We are all different and can't do it all. What are we called to do? We are called to tell the world about Jesus. Is that our priority? If not, what are we busy doing? If we focus on God, could things begin to fall into place? *If not us, then who?*

Matthew 28:18-20

18 Jesus came near and spoke to them, "I've received all authority in heaven and on earth.

19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age."

We are called to Do Something!

Lay Leader-Lorraine Flakes

This will be my last article as your Lay Leader. I'll still be your representative to the Annual Conference, but as of January I pass the baton of Lay Leader to Silas Perkins.

Having served for four years, I have seen some beautiful blessings served upon Bethany. We have grown so much as a church, through the Small Church Initiative and Life Transformation Groups! We have also seen our congregation change, as we lost beloved members, and welcomed new ones.

I see this congregation being exactly as our mission states: Christ-centered, faith-in-action believers. Let us continue to be so as we love God, and share his Word.

Thank you for your confidence and the opportunity to serve as your Lay Leader. It has been a privilege and an honor.

Lorraine Flakes

Ministries

Happenings at Bethany

- Sunday School
- Godly Play
- Worship
- Women's Ministry
- Men's Ministry
- Senior Nutrition Center
- Praise Team
- Prayer Team
- Bethany Players (Drama team)
- Media Team
- Care and Concern Ministry
- Cold Weather Shelter
- Food Pantry
- Manna Bags (lunches)
- Movie Night
- Pizza Family Fun Night
- Family Potlucks
- Boy Scouts
- MELD
- TOPS
- NA

**We are saving YOU a place!
Join us!**

Bethany Benevolence Report

Bethany Benevolence Report

Since December of 2013 Bethany has given out over 220 bags of groceries. Thank you Bethany!



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"Some religions don't eat meat on Friday because there's separation of church and steak."

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"Yes, the disciples followed Jesus... but not on Twitter."

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The most powerful position is on your knees.