

August 2026 Newsletter

Monthly Updates from Bethany Presbyterian Church

From our Senior Pastor

Rev. Dr. Brian Janssen



One of the things I have enjoyed about preaching through Genesis this past month or so has been the reminder that our plans can get interrupted. We all know what this is like. We had planned on going to the grocery store, but the dog needed to make an unscheduled visit to the vet; we had wanted to go on a nice dinner date with our husband or wife but then we looked at the calendar and the activities for the kids were so packed we would be lucky just to get McDonald's. Of course we need to lean into plans, or we would be totally lost. Yet we often find ourselves looking to try and understand God's plan. What does this great God of ours have in store for us this year, this month, this week, this day?

These are questions that could be asked by any of us and I am thankful that the great characters of the Bible experience asking the same questions themselves. August is one of those great months of planning for many of us. For many kids it is the first time when they need to begin planning that first day back to school outfit. Some will learn who their first teacher is going to be, and their first bus number. For parents this means the joy of seeing kids go back to school. It also means planning activities and practices, carpool schedules, and lunches.

The church is likewise in a season of planning. Getting ready for the upcoming program year, visioning with staff about new ministry initiatives, like our "Notes in the Margin" Bible study, Sunday School, and Worship and Wonder will soon be in full swing, choir practice will be going again soon and so much more. We know that it can be difficult sometimes to know where and how you will schedule more into your life. When this happens to me I often think of a parable my choir director used for us when I was in high school. He took a jar and some rice and walnuts. At first he poured the rice (all the little stuff of life) into the jar and then tried to "fit" the walnuts (all the big stuff of life) on top it didn't fit. Then he reversed the order. Low and behold when you put the big stuff (God, discipleship, worship) first, the little stuff had no trouble fitting in around it.

We believe in a big God who can handle all things. We believe in a big God who has big plans for you and me. We have a God who loves us and wants to be with us. I look forward to experiencing the plans God has made for you and me and Bethany Church.

Pastor Brian

From our Interim Associate Pastor

Rev. Dr. Larry Ruby

Faith or Fear?

"The most important decision we make is whether we believe we live in a friendly or a hostile universe." Albert Einstein



Think about that quote for a moment. First, notice that Einstein only gave us two choices, not seven, not five, not even three. Two choices, friendly or hostile.

Second, notice what the two choices are, friendly or hostile. There are a number of implications from those choices. If the universe is friendly, then it means it's on your side, it's like a friend, you can count on it, it has your back, it will provide you with whatever support you need or required.

If the universe is hostile, then it means it's an enemy, it's out to get you, you can't trust it, you have to watch your back, your survival is threatened, you're not safe, fear is appropriate and you had better be worried and/or concerned.

Every day we get to choose what we believe and it has a tremendous impact on what we see, experience and receive! If we don't choose faith, and trust, we get fear by default. If we don't choose to believe in abundance we get a belief in scarcity by default. If we don't choose to see possibility in everything, everything shows up as a problem by default.

To me it seems pretty evident that if you have to choose to believe one or the other, it makes far more sense to choose to believe we live in a friendly universe. But do you believe that? Our choice determines if we live in hope or in fear!

As Christians we have the advantage of knowing that whether or not the universe is friendly, the God of the universe is!

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD.

Jeremiah 29:11-14

Again and again, God's word assures us that we are not caught up in some random, cosmic, accidental and irrational world, but that there is a purpose for our existence and a direction for our lives.

God is not objective about you and me! God loves us! He is biased in our favor and His plan is for good, not evil, blessing and not curse, hope and a future!

So today and every day, choose to believe in the God who loves you, empowers you and always finishes what He starts!

Pastor Larry

God is good, all the time! And all the time, God is good!






Hugs For Everyone









This is a poem brought in by Karen Talerico, to remind us how important it is to love one another and be Christlike to each other; and it can be as simple as a hug.

A hug, indeed, says so many things.

HUGS FOR EVERYONE



It's wondrous what a hug can do

A hug can cheer you when you're blue.

A hug can say, "I love you so"

Or, "Gee, I hate to see you go."

A hug is "Welcome back again!"

And "Great to see you, where've you been?"

A hug can soothe a small child's pain

And bring a rainbow after rain.

The hug! There's just no doubt about it,

We scarcely could survive without it.

A hug delights and warms and charms,

It must be why God gave us arms.

Hugs are great for fathers and for mothers,

Sweet for sisters, swell for brothers.

And chances are some favorite aunts

Love them more than potted plants.

Kittens crave them. Puppies love them.

Heads of state are not above them.

A hug can break the language barrier

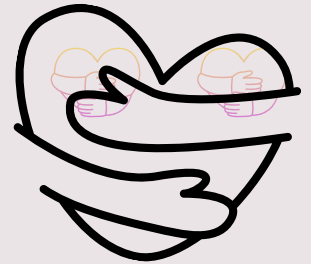
And make your travels so much merrier.

No need to fret about the store of 'em,

The more you give, the more there are of 'em.

So stretch those arms without delay

And give someone a hug today.



Written by Jean Brytus

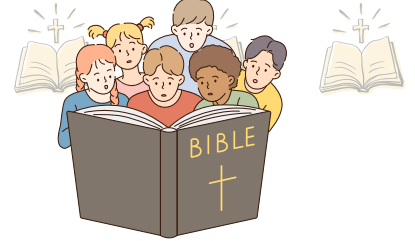
Church Picnic!

Come enjoy our Church Picnic! We will have our 10:00am church service on Sunday, August 9th at the picnic area at Fairview Park at the Rotary Pavilion followed by crafts and games! It will be catered but we invite all Bethany Bakers to bring a dessert if they want! Contact Ron Knapp at 412-526-5942 if you plan to bring a dessert!



♥♥♥ from Abbie Gardner, Youth Director ♥♥♥

What an incredible summer it has been! The highlight of these past few months has been our pop-up events. From simple gatherings and fun activities to opportunities for fellowship and connection, it has been such a joy to see our students spending time together, reconnecting throughout the summer, and building relationships with one another. Thank you to everyone who has supported these events through your prayers, encouragement, and participation. It has been exciting to watch our youth ministry continue to grow and thrive!



Another special highlight of my summer was having the opportunity to teach the 5th and 6th grade class during Vacation Bible School alongside my wonderful co-teacher, Mike. Spending the week with such an energetic and thoughtful group of students was an absolute blessing. We laughed together, played together, and most importantly, spent time learning about God's love and faithfulness. It was a joy to watch the kids engage with the lessons, ask great questions, and have fun while learning about God.



As summer begins to wind down, we are looking ahead with great anticipation to our **Back to School Bash on Saturday, August 30th.** This will be a wonderful opportunity for students to reconnect after the busy summer months, welcome new faces, and celebrate the beginning of a new school year together. We will have food, music, games, and we are most excited about... a **MINI GOLF COURSE** Right in our own yard!! We are praying that this event will be filled with fun, encouragement, and meaningful connections as our students prepare for the year ahead.



BACK TO SCHOOL BASH



Then, on Sunday, September 13th, we will officially kick off our regular youth ministry schedule once again with Sunday School in the morning and BYG kicking off Group Nights that evening! We are excited to return to our normal routine of gathering together for worship, Bible study, fellowship, and growing deeper in our faith. A new ministry year always brings fresh opportunities, and we can't wait to see all that God has in store for our students and leaders in the months ahead.



As we begin this new season, please continue to pray for our young people: that they would grow in their love for Christ, be bold in sharing their faith, and find encouragement and belonging within our church family. Thank you for your continued support of our youth ministry. We are excited for all that lies ahead and look forward to another amazing year together!



From our Music Director Nadina Robusto

I am writing this article while summer is at full swing, and I'm thankful for all the fun we had in our Summer Music Ministry programs! Thanks for joining us at Choral Courtyard, Sacred Music Sampling, Bloom at the Gazebo and Bridgeville's 125th, Creatives in the Chapel, and Bell Tree Hour! We look forward to the fall programming that will resume as we get back into our *regular* liturgical season which happens to line up with school schedules.



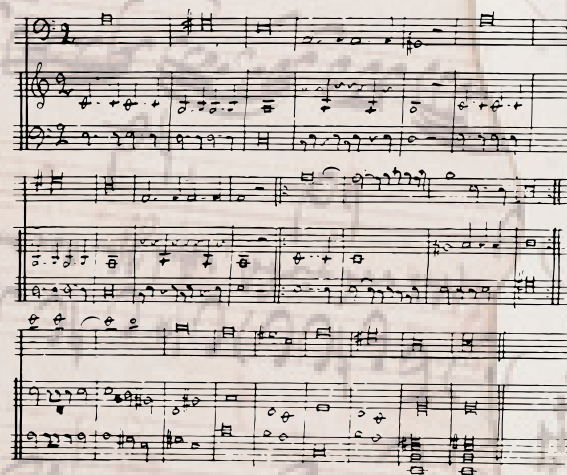
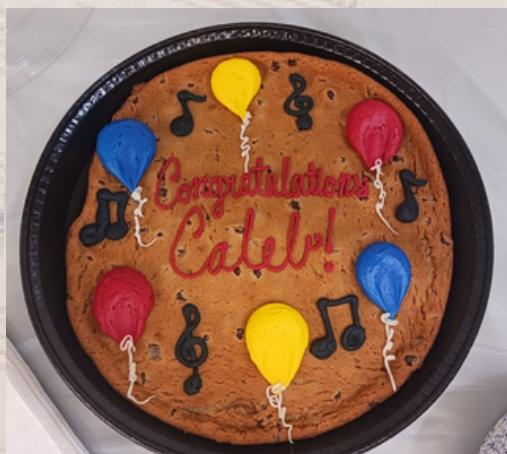
But looking ahead to August, our Summer Music Ministry programs will slow down as we prepare for the new season. Bloom will continue to meet to share in modern worship with some highlights for end of summer fun, though! Look for Bloom at the Church Picnic on **August 9th**, then at the Gazebo on **August 27th**, and then again at the **Back to School Bash on the 30th!** It's been fun to worship outside and enjoy God's beauty in creation.



Bethany Choir will resume rehearsals on August 26th, and I can't wait to hear all of their voices back together again! So many of them have been studying privately with our Music Associate, Caleb Auldridge; working on new techniques and building breath support is always a wonderful thing!



Speaking of new and wonderful things, we have the privilege and honor of announcing some big news for Caleb! The Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh hired Caleb as a professional core choir member. This is no small feat, as he auditioned with some very impressive classical repertoire and will be required to learn a full season of music for their prestigious concerts. Bravo, Caleb! We are blessed to have you on staff and celebrate your accomplishments! We are honored to share a core choir member with the Mendelssohn! And we all hope to get to hear you in a concert this year!



TOM JONES 100TH BIRTHDAY



Greg Price, 17, of Collier, sporting former Bridgeville resident Tom Jones' 1944 Naval outfit, shake hands during the event.



Tom Jones' Birthday Celebration was such a special time.

The children at VBS made him over 100 cards, and church members gave him cards as well. It was a great time of honoring a beloved member of our church.

Dear Bethany Family,

As many of you know, Lexi Brancadora has to move. This means that Friday, July 31, will be her final day serving on the staff of Bethany Presbyterian Church. Over the past year, Lexi has been a familiar face and welcoming presence in our church office, helping with communications, administrative tasks, and many of the day-to-day details that support the ministry of our congregation. We are grateful for the ways she has served Bethany and the relationships she has built during her time here.

As Lexi begins this next chapter, we want to thank her for her contributions to our church and wish her God's richest blessings in the days ahead. We pray that God will guide her steps, open new opportunities before her, and continue to use her gifts in meaningful ways. If you would like to share a card or a note of encouragement with Lexi, you are welcome to leave it with the church office. Please join us in thanking Lexi for her service and in praying for her as she begins this new season. As we continue through this transition please know that you can contact the office in the same way you always have. Our wonderful staff will be making sure that all administrative needs for the church are being met.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Brian Janssen



During the July 18th Food Bank distribution, 109 families were assisted which included 28 children, 69 adults and 89 elderly.



CONDOLENCES

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to Debby Hayes and family, on the passing of Debby's beloved brother, Joseph Edwin Burke, who joined the Church Triumphant on June 30, 2026; and to Joyce Bartolomeo and family, on the passing of Joyce's beloved brother, Jim Wright, who joined the Church Triumphant on July 20, 2026.



UPCOMING EVENTS AT BETHANY

Bible Study! --- Join us for Notes in the Margin, a discussion-based Bible study where we explore Scripture, ask questions, and grow in faith together. Whether you're new to faith, returning after time away, or looking to deepen your walk with God, you're invited. **Bi-weekly meetings from 6:30 to 7:30PM!** Bring your Bible, your questions, and an open heart. No expertise required!



WOMEN'S MINISTRY EVENTS!

8/15- Safety Seminar for all ages from 2-4pm in Fellowship Hall. Teenagers and up are all invited. This is a seminar only, not a self-defense class. It will cover situational awareness and de-escalation, physical and personal safety, parking lot safety, etc. Light appetizers will be served.



9/20- Finger Knit Chunky Pumpkin! Our Fathers Farm will be on site to teach us how to finger knit a chunky pumpkin for fall. The class will be in Fellowship Hall on Sunday 9/20 immediately following the 10:45am service. The cost is \$30/person and includes lunch. See Heather Lucas for more information.

9/29- Book Club! Book TBD
October-Event TBD



11/18 Book Club- Blind Date with a Book!

12/13 Ornament Exchange



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Worship with Communion at 8:15AM & 10AM	4:30PM – Body Carpenter Workout 6:30PM – Men's Huddle 6PM - BYG Milkshake Monday	9:30AM – Choral Courtyard 11AM – Sacred Music Sampling 7PM – ALANON	9AM – Bell Tree Hour 10AM – Fellowship of Prayer 11:30AM – Knitters	9AM – Quilters 12PM – Rotary 7:30PM – AA	6PM – BYG Froyo Friday	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Worship at 8:15AM 10AM - CHURCH PICNIC with Worship at the Park	4:30PM – Body Carpenter Workout 6:30PM – Men's Huddle	6:30PM – Notes in the Margin Bible Study 7PM – Session Teams 7PM – ALANON	11:30AM – Knitters	9AM – Quilters 12PM – Rotary 6:30PM – BLOOM in Courtyard 7:30PM – AA		FOOD BANK 2PM – Safety Seminar
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Worship at 8:15AM & 10AM	4:30PM – Body Carpenter Workout 6:30PM – Men's Huddle 6PM - BYG Milkshake Monday	7PM - Deacons 7PM – ALANON	11:30AM – Knitters	9AM – Quilters 12PM – Golden Oldies 6:30PM – BLOOM in Sanctuary 7:30PM – AA	6PM – BYG Froyo Friday	DIAPER BANK
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Worship at 8:15AM & 10AM	4:30PM – Body Carpenter Workout 6:30PM – Men's Huddle	6:30PM – Notes in the Margin Bible Study 7PM - Session 7PM – ALANON	11AM – Board of Pensions Luncheon 11:30AM – Knitters 5PM – BYG Wings Wednesday 7PM – Choir Practice begins	9AM – Quilters 6:30PM – BLOOM at Gazebo 7:30PM – AA		
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
Worship at 8:15AM & 10AM 5PM - BACK TO SCHOOL BASH	4:30PM – Body Carpenter Workout 6:30PM – Men's Huddle	7PM – ALANON	10AM – Fellowship of Prayer 11:30AM – Knitters 7PM – Choir	9AM – Quilters 12:00PM - Rotary 6:30PM – BLOOM 7:30PM – AA		



August Birthdays



08/01 Tyler De Rose
 08/01 Cheryl Harold
 08/01 Carol Willhite
 08/01 Robin Miller
 08/01 Austin Bryce Walker
 08/01 Celina Farabaugh
 08/01 James Cawley
 08/02 Stefani Jazudek
 08/03 Daine Lower
 08/03 Susan Radzik
 08/03 Lynn Underwood
 08/04 Donna Slack
 08/05 Bill Ramous
 08/05 Matthew Heasley
 08/06 Brady Gullo
 08/06 Kimberly McAuley
 08/06 Randi Shelton
 08/06 Amy Ryan
 08/06 Jennifer Jenkins
 08/07 Jaymi Neely
 08/07 Amie McAuley
 08/07 Rylie Mendenhall



08/08 Joy Heaps
 08/08 Laurie Sysak
 08/08 Dawn Starr Lytle
 08/08 Alexandra Jones
 08/08 Jeffrey Miklavic
 08/09 Veva Tessmer
 08/10 Peggy Nicholson
 08/10 Shawn Zwigart
 08/11 Savannah Houk
 08/11 Bettina Beattie
 08/11 Weston Jackson
 08/12 Susan Anderson
 08/13 Sarah Smith
 08/14 Joseph Del Conte
 08/15 Randall Shaffer
 08/15 Joseph DePaoli
 08/15 Henry Miles Hughes
 08/15 Mark Schneider
 08/15 Luke Bizzack
 08/16 Peter Young
 08/16 Melvin Sepuri
 08/16 Carson DeRoss
 08/16 Ashley Vollmer
 08/17 Bradley Miller
 08/17 Darey Julius

08/18 Jerod Winvicki
 08/19 Debra Poglein
 08/20 Nicole Casciola
 08/20 Audrey Clarke
 08/22 Michael Shildt
 08/22 Patricia Black
 08/22 Ashley McAuley
 08/22 Ian Hunter
 08/23 Sandra Miklavic
 08/24 Jordan Underwood
 08/24 Molly Mazzanni
 08/25 Lily Duffill
 08/26 Eric Millerschoen
 08/28 Scott Pyrdek
 08/29 Virginia Millerschoen
 08/29 Miriam Julius
 08/30 Patrick Harding
 08/30 Colleen Veneski
 08/31 Margie Smith
 08/31 Noah Sommerfield



Happy Birthday!

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