

May 2026 Newsletter

Monthly Updates from Bethany Presbyterian Church

From our Senior Pastor

Rev. Dr. Brian Janssen



I hope this finds you well as we move deeper into spring and look ahead to the emerging days of summer. I was recently remarking to our staff that, after celebrating such a wonderful Easter here at Bethany, there isn't a built-in season of rest like we experience after Christmas. Given that Easter is the most theologically significant event in the life of the church, one might expect some time away. And yet, it feels fitting that the church continues moving forward with energy and purpose.

During the Easter season, we hear stories of disciples running to share the good news—that Jesus had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. We see Jesus on the shore, cooking breakfast for his friends. We hear the Great Commission at the end of Matthew 28. All of these moments prepare us for the sending of the church at Pentecost. What an extraordinary journey—from the obscurity of Bethlehem, to the cross, to the empty tomb—and now to a global church present on every continent, speaking hundreds of languages and thousands of dialects. The church is alive and in motion.

That sense of momentum carries into May. While we begin to wrap up our program year, it is also a time filled with celebration and meaningful activity. Our Confirmation class will share their statements of faith with Session and their families, and we will joyfully welcome them into the life of the church on May 17. On May 24, we celebrate Pentecost Sunday, when Pastor Larry will preach on the powerful story of the Spirit sending the church into the world. We also look forward to Education Sunday and Graduation Sunday as we honor growth and milestones across our congregation.

On May 31, Session will host a congregational conversation to reflect on what we have learned through the Holy Cow Congregational Study and Listening sessions. This gathering will also mark the beginning of sharing our emerging three-year strategic plan. The first year, which we are calling "*Laying Foundations*," will focus on listening deeply—to one another and to our community—through qualitative research, as well as reviewing and strengthening how we carry out ministry together.

We warmly invite you to join us for this important conversation. We are asking for about an hour of your time following the 10:00 AM service, and we believe it will be a meaningful opportunity as we continue to discern and imagine where God is leading us.

Blessings,

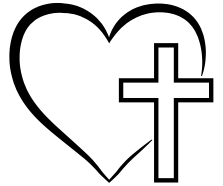
Pastor Brian



From our Interim Associate Pastor

Rev. Dr. Larry Ruby

Faith is for Sharing!



Dear Friends in Christ,

What do you like to talk about? It's not a trick question. What is it in your life that you are so excited about that you can't wait to tell someone? For me it's my children and grandchildren (and right now I'm waiting for my first great grandson!) and on a much lesser plane, golf or the Steelers and for the first time in a long time the Pirates! For others, it's what's on The Voice or American Idol or the latest sit-com or tv drama.

In light of our willingness to talk about things both significant and insignificant with energy and enthusiasm it may be surprising to find out what many of us are not talking about, with each other, or anyone else. A major study of American Mainline Churches has discovered that most of us don't talk much about our faith and most pastors and members of today's churches struggle to answer the question: "What difference does it make in your own life that you are a Christian?" The study continues:

"People who have grown up in the church think of their Christianity like breathing. Being Christian is so natural you don't really think about it. You just do it; you just are it! This is the big downside of growing up nurtured in the church. ... Unless you think about it hard, you assume everyone thinks the way church people do. It's hard to have much perspective on what a life without faith would feel like. So, it's hard to help others see what faith would add to their lives."

The reality is that the heart of being a Christian is being in love with God and loving and caring about others both inside and outside the church, whether they know about faith or not! Sharing our faith should never be about "getting more members" or "recruiting more young families with children." It must be motivated by a growing love of the Lord and of the people around us... unconditionally.

I came upon a great definition of faith sharing recently: *People sharing with others their personal understanding that life is better, richer, and truer if one has faith in Jesus Christ and lives in a faith community!* When that happens, we can't help but pass that faith on to others. Doesn't that sound a lot like the things we are already talking about with one another? Things that make life better, fuller and more meaningful are easy to talk about.

So next time someone asks, "What difference does it make in your own life that you are a Christian?" be prepared to simply share how your life is "better, richer, and truer" because of your faith in Christ. Once you know the answer to the question, you might not even wait till someone asks!

Pastor Larry Ruby



Easter Sunrise Service Look Back

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Easter Sunrise Service a success.



Women's Sunday School Class



The women's Sunday School Class ended their season with a cover dish brunch. Over this Sunday school season we studied *A Jesus Shaped Life* by Lisa Harper and 12 Daring Women of the Bible. We also encourage each other through prayer and joy filled fellowship.



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

Working in youth ministry can be so weird, chaotic, and overall just crazy - yet it is truly the biggest blessing. I get to experience watching these kids grow into amazing young adults. I get to watch them process hard discussions about life.

I get to watch these students grow, not just physically (they grow up SO quickly!), but emotionally and spiritually - into incredible young men and women. I get to walk alongside them as they ask hard questions about life, faith, identity, and purpose. I get to see them wrestle with what they believe and begin to make their faith their own. And maybe one of the most beautiful parts - I get to watch them build real, lasting friendships rooted in something deeper than just shared interests.

Youth Group is a place for the youth of Bethany (and beyond) to come together and breathe. It's a place where they can find peace in Jesus in the middle of busy schedules and noisy lives. It's a place for laughter, belonging, and growth. While a lot of times this looks like basketball, volleyball, or the BYG classic "Code Red" - something deeper is always happening beneath the surface. In those moments, students are forming unbreakable bonds with one another and quietly building a stronger foundation in their faith.

I recently took a picture at one of our Group Nights that really captures this. We had just received new Bibles, and the excitement in the room was contagious. These Bibles break Scripture down into smaller, more digestible sections, which helps make it more approachable for our students. They also include QR codes that connect each story to a short video explanation, giving students another way to engage and understand what they're reading.



BETHANY YOUTH GROUP CONTINUED

That night, we gave the students space to explore. They picked their own stories, watched the videos, and then came back together to share. What stood out most wasn't just what they chose, but how they talked about it. They were engaged. They were thoughtful. They were passionate. Hearing students speak openly and confidently about Scripture they had just explored on their own was incredibly powerful. **Moments like that are reminders that faith is taking root.**



And then, almost immediately, we transitioned right back into chaos as they ran to finish the volleyball game they had started earlier. That's youth ministry. Deep conversations about God one minute... and diving for a volleyball the next.

One of my favorite "problems" we've been having lately is that students don't want to leave. They stay after, lingering in conversations, finishing games, and simply enjoying being together (sorry, parents!). But honestly, that says so much. It means they feel safe here. It means they belong. It means this space matters to them.

While youth ministry often looks like fun and games (and it absolutely is) there is so much more happening in the hearts of these students than what we can see on the surface. **God is moving. Seeds are being planted. Faith is growing.** We hope you were able to catch a glimpse of that during Youth Sunday. It was such a joy to see our students lead, serve, and worship. More than anything, we hope you saw just how much they love Jesus, and how He is actively working in their lives.



Thank you for being a church that supports, encourages, and invests in the next generation. It truly makes a difference.



THIS SUMMER

May is our last month of regular routine meetings for BYG. We have our last official Group Night of the year on May 3rd, we will NOT meet on Mother's Day May 10th!

PAINTBALL will be at Pittsburgh Paintball Park on May 17th, we take off the weekend of Memorial Day, and then we'll come together on May 31st for a Family Cookout in the Courtyard!



The Family Cookout is open to all Bethany youth in FIFTH - 12th grade, their parents/guardians and siblings! There will be lots of delicious food & treats, competitive games, and we will discuss the 2026-2027 year and what that will look like for BYG. Parents are highly encouraged to come as there will be important information about retreats, trips, and big calendar items.

While we take a break from our weekly schedule during the summer, we will still have lots of other fun activities and events for the youth to come to! Our pop-up events will make a return (like Milkshake Mondays, FroYo Fridays and a new edition of Wing Wednesdays!). We also have a few bigger events that will be loads of fun - be on the lookout for more information about that!

From our Music Director Nadina Robusto

The month of May is when our "regular" liturgy changes over to "summer" hours- please be sure to mark your calendars for this! Our "regular" music ministry programs wind down, and as April showers lead to May flowers, I'm reminded to reflect on and look forward to all the beautiful things to come!

What an incredible year of worship with you all- the Bethany Choir, The Adult Chime and Sunday School Cherub Chimes, The Adult and Youth Ukulele Choirs, our Bloom musicians, the Sunday School Singers and "Rockers", our gifted instrumentalists on violins, percussion, and brass and the many gifted soloists we've heard from throughout the year. We welcomed our Music Associate, Caleb Auldridge, and have been blessed with his leadership, his multi-talented set of gifts, and his expertise in sound and technology. Our new sound system has enhanced both our in house and broadcast quality and we are grateful for this growth. We've planted a lot of seeds for additional growth in new music ministries, and I look forward to seeing how the Holy Spirit will bless us through them. So, my many thanks to all of you for your talents, time commitment, and SUPPORT to implement these changes and grow new ministries. Thank you, God, for these opportunities- we bring our praise to You through all seasons as we work together to glorify Your name and grow Your Kingdom. To all of you at Bethany, THANK YOU for sharing your talents and support!

Our summer line up will be equally spectacular- stay tuned for our music offerings starting in June, ranging from Bloom at the Gazebo & Front Lawn, to Choral Courtyards and Sacred Music/Tech Sampling, as well as some fresh and new offerings this summer!

Worship Notice!

We move to Summer Worship Hours on **May 24th** which is also **PENTECOST** Sunday. You are invited to wear **RED** that Sunday as we recognize when Christ poured out His Spirit.



From our Music Associate Caleb Auldridge

It's been wonderful being with you all this choir season as a music associate here at Bethany, and I've enjoyed making such lovely music with you all! I am excited to offer private voice lessons in the summer for anyone wanting to keep their vocal chops up. I will send out a sign up link in May that will have 30 minute slots available. These will be first come, first serve. I look forward to working with you on improving vocal technique, breath support, and tone this summer!





Golden Oldies



Golden Oldies was visited by Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs where we got to see a service dog in action and hear about the lifesaving help and benefit that these dogs bring to the Veterans they serve.



COMING SOON... VBS!

BETHANY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PRESENTS!

**JUNE 15-19
9AM-NOON**



RAINFOREST FALLS

**EXPLORING THE
TRUE NATURE OF GOD**

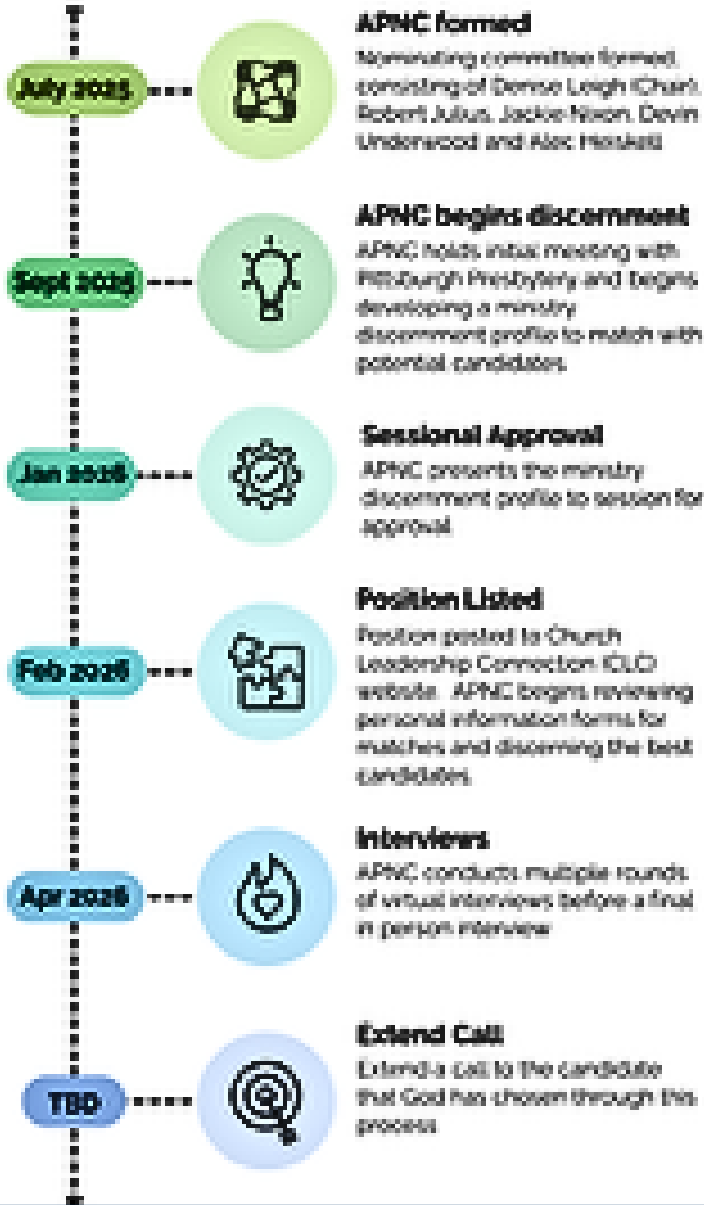


**FOR KIDS AGES 4 THROUGH
ENTERING 6TH GRADE**

Associate Pastor Progress Timeline



Associate Pastor Calling



Big Day May 24th!

May 24th our summer Worship hours begin. Services will be at 8:15 and 10:00am!

On May 24th Please join us in wearing red to commemorate the Sunday of Pentecost.



During the April 18th Food Bank distribution, 94 families were assisted which included 34 children, 68 adults and 70 elderly.



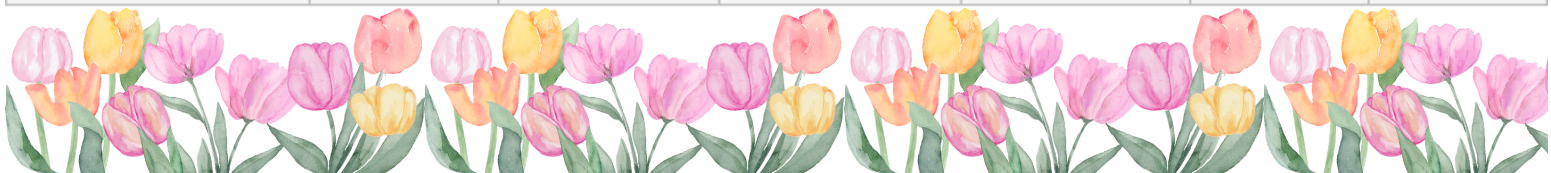
CONDOLENCES

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to Tom Jones and family, on the passing of Tom's beloved wife, Ruth Jones, who passed away on April 8, 2026. They shared nearly 76 years of marriage together. The sympathy of the congregation is also extended to the family of Valeria Lorenzi, who joined the Church Triumphant on April 13, 2026. Al and Val Lorenzi were very active members of our church and were loved by Bethany; and to the family of Dolly Rastetter who passed away on April 28, 2026.





Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Worship with Communion at 8:15AM & 10:45AM 9:30AM - Sunday School 5PM - BYG	4:30PM - Body Carpenter Workout 6:30PM - Men's Huddle	7PM - ALANON	10AM - Fellowship of Prayer 11:30AM - Knitters 6:30PM - Scouts 7PM - Choir	9AM - Quilters 12PM - Rotary 6:30PM - BLOOM 7:30PM - AA		11AM - Knitters
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Mother's Day Worship at 8:15AM & 10:45AM 9:30AM - Sunday School	4:30PM - Body Carpenter Workout 6:30PM - Men's Huddle	6:45PM - Session Team Meetings 7PM - ALANON	11:30AM - Knitters 6:30PM - Scouts 7PM - Choir	9AM - Quilters 9AM - Morning MomCo 12PM - Rotary 6:00PM - BLOOM and Café Bethany 7PM - Evening MomCo 7:30PM - AA		FOOD BANK
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
CONFIRMATION SUNDAY Worship at 8:15AM & 10:45AM 9:30AM - Sunday School 4PM - BYG Paintball	4:30PM - Body Carpenter Workout 6:30PM - Men's Huddle	7PM - ALANON 7PM - Deacons Meeting	11:30AM - Knitters 6:30PM - Scouts 6PM - Choir Dinner 7PM - Choir	9AM - Quilters 12PM - Golden Oldies 12PM - Rotary 6:30PM - BLOOM 7:30PM - AA		DIAPER BANK 11AM - Knitters
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
SUMMER HOURS BEGIN PENTECOST SUNDAY Worship at 8:15AM & 10:00AM 9:30AM - Sunday School	Memorial Day	7PM - ALANON 7PM - Session Meeting	11:30AM - Knitters 6:30PM - Scouts	9AM - Quilters 12PM - Rotary 6:30PM - BLOOM 7:30PM - AA		
31						
Worship at 8:15AM & 10:00AM 9:30AM - Sunday School 11AM - Congregational Meeting 5PM BYG Family Cookout						





May Birthdays



05/01 Joseph Mizia
 05/01 Alice Eiszler
 05/02 Jackson Gullo
 05/02 Helena Brickner
 05/04 Phyllis Matthews
 05/04 Bethany Orosz
 05/06 Brenda Woleslagle
 05/06 Annie Doty
 05/07 Rusty North
 05/08 Timothy Gastgeb
 05/08 Tom Harold
 05/08 Jody Romanelli
 05/08 Jenna Foltz
 05/08 Valeria Lorenzi
 05/08 Kara Julius
 05/09 Mirabel Stout
 05/09 Alex Harbison
 05/10 Brandon Orosz
 05/11 Kaycee Nelson
 05/11 Jacquelyn Nixon
 05/12 Jim Davidson
 05/13 Brittany Edney
 05/13 Alyssa Padula
 05/13 Karen Talerico

05/15 Amy Gastgeb
 05/16 Liam Edney
 05/16 Colleen Heasley
 05/16 Susan Nagy
 05/17 Max Nagy
 05/17 Denise Leigh
 05/17 Rebecca Stout
 05/17 Emma Jean Hughes
 05/18 Carolyn Morelock
 05/18 Melina Robinson
 05/18 Priyanka Vaddi Sepuri
 05/18 Susan Witwicki
 05/18 Judy Vietmeier
 05/18 Elaine London
 05/19 Pat Frye
 05/20 Joseph Szallar
 05/20 David Verduci
 05/21 Linda Manzini
 05/21 Connor Schultz

05/22 Lara Bizzack
 05/22 Logan Smith
 05/22 Faith Ruehle
 05/23 Katelyn Morelock
 05/24 Samantha Hartnett
 05/25 Wendi Duffill
 05/25 J. D. Cellone
 05/26 Margaret Bolam
 05/27 Rebecca Findley
 05/28 Robert Montagna
 05/29 Cindy Lamberti
 05/29 Terri Berton
 05/29 Sara Sunderlin

Happy Birthday!



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Save the Date!

**Barbecue after
 church on June 14th!**

**More details
 coming soon!**

