
February @ Bethany

Bethany Presbyterian Church

From the Pastor



Welcome to February, friends!

I have just finished writing newsletter announcements for some important dates at church during this month of February. Be sure to see the full newsletter for these events.

- ✓ February 14, 5pm Ash Wednesday service with the imposition of ashes.
- ✓ February 18, Congregational meeting
- ✓ February 18, first Sunday in Lent
- ✓ February 20, Lenten class begins

This is also Black History Month. February 10 ushers in the Lunar New Year and the Year of the Dragon. And of course there is the sweet if not socially pressured holiday of Valentine's Day.

There is one very special day in February this year, that doesn't come around very often. This year is a Leap Year (which is what the photo here is supposed to bring to mind!). That means that Thursday, February 29 is a gift. A gift meant to make up for the loss of the other 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 56 seconds that it really takes for the earth to complete one orbit around the Sun. I found this article very engaging: <https://airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/science-leap-year>

One entire day this year. Just think what that could mean? Do we get to pick our worst day and have a do-over? Do we get to pick our best day, and joyfully do *that* one again? Maybe we could have a Leap Party that day? I pity any poor children born on February 29, 2024 as they will join a cohort of people who always have to over-explain when their birthday is.

I'm reminded of a conversation the Ruth group (Ruthies) had this month, about the concept of time. How we spend it, how we value it, how we judge how we spend it, why "productivity" has so much to do with commercial, financial production instead of valuing the product of a healthy imagination, a really good idea, a well-rested body and soul? I'm also reminded of Mary Oliver's poem, *The Summer Day*, that ends with the line, "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" Of all of the ways, and of all of the possibilities available to you, what might you do with this gift of one full day?

Remember that God wants nothing more from you than you be happy and fulfilled, even as we live this full complicated life we have been given. As people of faith, we believe that the closer we are to God, the happier and more fulfilled we are. Imagine. One full day. Extra. How will you spend your day?

Maybe you'll spend it on my patio?

Blessings,
Deb



Community Life

Ruth Covenant Group

The Bethany Ruth Covenant Group will be meeting at the church on Monday, February 12th at 6:30 pm. We decided at our January meeting to try something new for our discussion topics. Each month, someone will select a woman who has been influential in some way during her lifetime and share a story about that woman. This subject can be someone from the Bible, from personal experiences, or from the culture. Tamra Hollenbeck will be sharing a story in February, and there will be a sign-up sheet for the following months. New attendees are encouraged join the monthly meetings (on the second Monday of the month, and if you can't come every month, you will be welcomed at any time. In addition to our discussion, there will be an opportunity for check-in, fellowship, and prayer. If you prefer to attend by Zoom, please let Tamra Hollenbeck know, and we will get a link sent to you. Many blessings to you as you remember a woman who has been an influence in your journey.



Deacon's Notes



The Deacons will host a Luncheon and Parish Coffees after worship on Sunday, March 10. A lovely repast will be served, and members of the parishes will be invited to sit with their Deacon to check-in with thoughts and ideas about how things are going for them at Bethany. Church directories will be available for each family with the most current information included, and for those who aren't able to attend, the directories will be mailed to your home. Please mark your calendars now, and we hope to see you on Sunday, March 10. Thanks!!

Music Notes

Our Director of Music, Jessica Reddell Popovich will be out on medical leave all of February and March 2024. She is scheduled to return in April 2024. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers. We are fortunate to have Amy Stephens-Chen filling in for her all of February and the last two weeks of March. I will continue to work towards filling any missing slots in March on going. Thank you.



Peace and Grace,
George Lynch, Personnel Chair



Birthdays

- 5 - Susan Gartner May
- 21 - Rina Ranahan
- 23 - Fred Matthews
- 26 - Beverly Bristow

Anniversaries

- 27 - Tom and Barbara Jessee

Women's Weekend at Westminster Woods

Westminster Woods in Occidental, CA, will be hosting the annual Women's Weekend from April 19 through April 21. Registration is already underway, and women of all ages are invited to participate in this weekend of refreshment and renewal. Rev. Sandy Tice will be the speaker, and the Westminster Woods website has this to say about the weekend:

As Westminster Woods transitions into a new chapter, Women's Weekend will serve as a time to root ourselves in God's Creation. The Gospel will also be brought to life again as we reach into the collective journey of loving one another as Christ loves.

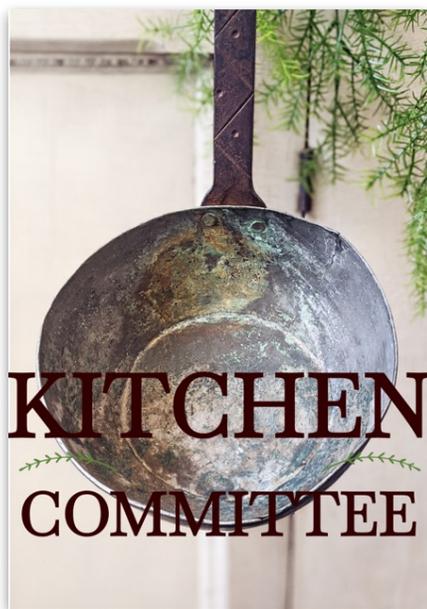
Through inspirational speaker time and experiential worship led by Sandy Tice, the group will embody Christ's Love in Action. Using the image of the redwood forest as a guide, we will explore biblical texts, prayer, and our lived experience to help us hear God's invitation to flourish and grow. Come to our sacred space for all women to rest and reflect, celebrate and sing, contemplate and lament, and be in community with one another.

This weekend is designed to welcome newcomers as well as long-time lovers of this retreat. As we reckon with the current brokenness in our world, we retreat not to 'escape,' but to root ourselves in Grace so we may reach out with the same grace to others. There will be space for solitude, community, rest and play - so that your deep longings can be met.

To register, please go to the Westminster Woods Website (www.westminsterwoods.org/womens-weekend). Bethany has camperships available to help cover the cost of the weekend if there is a need. Please let Pastor Deb McGuire know if you could use some financial assistance, and it will be arranged. If you have questions about the weekend, please talk to one of the people who have attended in the past - Janine Valine, Pam Matthews, Tamra Hollenbeck, Roxane Wales, Kathy Quickert, Chris Angeles, Rev. McGuire, or Bonnie Morgan (not an exhaustive list!). We would love to have you join to experience the delight that is Westminster Woods.



Kitchen Committee Clean-up and Out!



The Bethany Kitchen Clean-Up Committee met on Monday, January 22 to begin the process of removing unwanted items and discussing some ideas for revamping the current kitchen set-up. Several bins of kitchen items that are no longer needed in the kitchen were collected, and the congregation is invited to take a look in the bins to:

1. reclaim any long lost item that might have been inadvertently left in the kitchen;
2. find a special treasure among the discards that would be a perfect fit for your kitchen; or
3. give your reasons why you think a particular item needs to stay!

The bins will be stored at the back of the church for several Sundays (January 28, February 5, and February 12) for perusal and retrieval, then the items will be donated to a local charity (probably the Peninsula Humane Society's Thrift Shop, Pick of the Litter.) Thanks for your help with this project!

A Service of Imposition of Ashes

Wednesday, February 14, 5:00-5:30pm

Presbyterians don't like to talk about sin. Or we water down the idea of being bad people, ever. But you don't have to be a murderer to be a sinner. To sin simply means to fall short; to turn away. In my own Statement of Faith that I wrote for my ordination in 2001, I didn't even mention it – I called it "distortions of God's will." Too often talk of sin is accompanied by hell-fire and brimstone preaching, reminding us that we are all horrible people who will always tend toward depravity and darkness and our baser emotions.

That is not something I believe. I believe that God made us good, and that is our natural way of being. Being human however means that we have choices to make and needs to meet and find ourselves in situations where we fall so far short of any ideal that God had in mind for us. Sometimes we intentionally give up trying because life can get really difficult and we fall victim to circumstances that are not our own fault. Just like a baby or toddler might cry, "That's not fair!" or "That's not my fault!" we cry too. How many times have we said, "I just can't do it today." Or my favorite, "Why do I have to try so hard to do the right thing, when there are so many who don't care and don't try?" Then there are the circumstances that are of our own making, either out of weakness or anger or a life of self-protection and fears.

We are reminded of our shortcomings, not so that we can dwell on them, or so that we begin to believe that our shortcomings are the sum of us, but to remind ourselves to stay humble, to know that even our greatest selves are in need of God's grace. While we often think of the penitence of Lent as a personal (private) and inward matter, a service of worship on Ash Wednesday gives us the opportunity to repent as a community, to pray together, to enact the ritual of the imposition of ashes with one another, to make our commitment to a Lenten discipline together, and to realize that no one is alone on the journey. We wear the ashes of sin and repentance collectively as well as individually.



Lenten Study at Bethany



For our Lenten study this year will be enjoying a unique pilgrimage with each other, as we follow this daily Lenten devotional from the *Presbyterian Outlook*. In *Local Pilgrim* we are invited to be as pilgrims, as we explore and observe both new and familiar places in our communities. For example, one of the authors went to many new places and set her intention to just observe and be open to how God was present in these new places. Whether it is a new place, or a routine place we find ourselves – the post office, the grocery store, a walk near the shore – the question to us in these pages is, **What will God reveal to us when we pause, ponder and reflect?** Who

do we see? What do we hear? **God reveals God's self when we look.**

This daily devotional covers *every* day beginning Sunday, February 18, thru Easter Sunday, March 31. We will meet as a group *in person at Bethany, on Tuesdays from 5:00-6:00pm* to consider the reflection from the devotional booklet for that day, and share any reflections from the previous days of the week. (Due to session meeting at 4:30 on March 12, we will shift the study to another time for that day only.) I hope to see you there!

Deb

Community Action

Catholic Worker Hospitality House



•Catholic Worker Hospitality House (CWHH) – if questions, call Peter Stiehler at 650-827-0706 or email mail@catholicworkerhospitalityhouse.org

•Dining room volunteers - at St. Bruno's Catholic Church, 555 W. San Bruno Ave., San Bruno, CA 94066. Please phone (number above) or email Peter to schedule time to

volunteer at mail@catholicworkerhospitalityhouse.org

- Help with Laundry – call Peter at 650-827-0706
- Donations – Money is always appreciated. You may use PayPal or write a check to Catholic Worker Hospitality House and send to 672 Second Avenue, San Bruno, CA 94066
- Donate food and toiletries: canned fruit, canned soup, milk, butter or margarine, sliced bread, oatmeal, napkins, toilet paper, soup spoons, new and unused shampoo, new and unopened razors, new socks, new underwear (Men's 32-38), new or used, clean bath towels – bring these items to Bethany to be delivered to CWHH, call Lyn Hughes at 650-867-0667 if you need something picked up and delivered, or deliver to CWHH at 672 Second Ave, San Bruno, CA 94066

Second Harvest

- Second Harvest Grocery Distribution @ Belle Air Elementary School, 450 Third Avenue, San Bruno; 4th Wednesday of each month from 1:45pm to 4:00pm
- Second Harvest of Silicon Valley - call 408-266-8866 for information on other volunteer opportunities or go to www.shfb.org for "shift" information on volunteering and other details on how to help.



One Great Hour of Sharing

Your gift to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) enables the Presbyterian Church USA to share God's love with our neighbors around the world affected by natural disasters, food instability, and other issues affecting the poor and oppressed. In a world filled with disaster, hunger, and oppression, millions lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity.

The three programs supported by OGHS are:

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
- The Presbyterian Hunger Program
- Self-Development of People

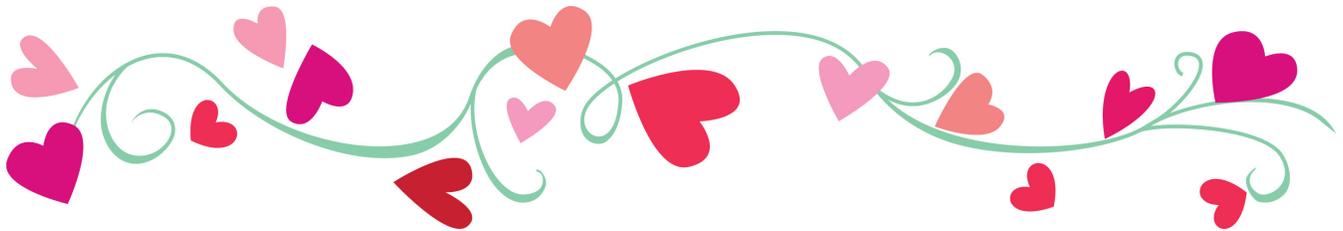
A One Great Hour of Sharing appeal letter will be sent to the congregation by the end of February. Included with the letter will be an OGHS offering envelope for any amount you wish to donate. None of the offering stays at Bethany, but rather is sent to the Presbyterian Church USA.

All offerings should be received at Bethany by Sunday, March 31, 2024. There will be extra envelopes, along with an informational pamphlet, in the Narthex. Thank you!



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Congregational Meeting February 18, after worship to present our 2023 Annual Report and our 2024 Budget



Monthly events at Bethany

Sundays: Worship at 10:00 am
Coffee Hour 11:00 am
(rehearsals start 8:30 am)

Wednesdays: Prayz 5:00 pm
Chancel Choir 6:30 pm
Prayer Group 6:30 pm

Submissions for W@B: Tuesday mornings.

Submissions for the March newsletter:
Friday, February 16

1st Sunday: Communion at Worship Service

2nd Sunday: Worship Committee 11:00 am

2nd Monday: Ruth Covenant Group 6:30 pm

2nd Tuesday: Session 4:30 pm

3rd Sunday: Deacons Meeting 11:30 am

3rd Monday: Financial Trustees 5:30 pm

Buildings & Grounds,
Community Action committees
– as scheduled

75 YEARS | ✨ ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

REPAIRING the BREACH

— ISAIAH 58

Providing relief from natural disasters,
food for the hungry and support for
the poor and oppressed.

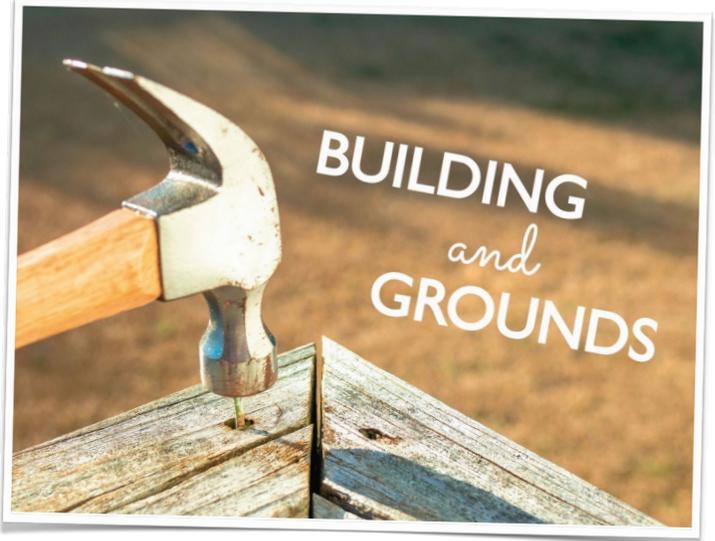


Financial Trustees

Note: Bethany's financial information is published quarterly. The final 2023 quarterly information was not available from our bookkeeper due to some personal issues, but hopefully will be updated and presented in the March 2024 newsletter.

Building and Grounds Issues

- One minor plumbing issue was reported to Dave Wales by Harry from the Sikh Association and dealt with in January.
- In progress: replacement of our antiquated electrical panel for maximum efficiency. Next steps: 1. Update electrical panel, 2. Decide on solar energy panels/installation, and 3. Install heat pump.
- In progress: Room 9 clean-up.
- In progress: The Kitchen Update Committee had a workday on Monday, January 22, to clean up and clean out the kitchen in preparation for the update. Lowe's was called for assistance, and we will continue to work with them as work towards our vision.
- Patio repair – discussion will occur with Session at our February meeting.
- Upper Roof Repair – on hold for now
- In progress: On-line giving opportunities. More information to come, hopefully by the February 2024 Session meeting.
- Global Witness and Peacemaking Offering – need a decision on where/what to do with the 25% of the 2023 offering (\$205.25)
- The 2024 budget was delayed as being final due to the bookkeeper's absence and receiving the final December 2023 information. All the information should be available during Bethany's Annual Meeting in February 2024.



Our Purpose Statement

Bethany's purpose is to provide a nurturing and energizing environment to feed the soul so we can go out into the world and reflect the glory of God, the love of Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our Welcoming Statement

We don't yet know who you are, but we do know that you are a dearly beloved child of God, and you are already welcome here. We invite you, on your unique spiritual journey, to join us in the life and ministry of Bethany Presbyterian Church.

Bethany Presbyterian Church

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Bethany is a member of More Light Presbyterians
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