

CHESTER BETHEL United Methodist Church

NEWSLETTER

February 2005



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Ruminations from Rev. Al

Illustration from Preaching Plus:

A boy told his father, "Dad, if three frogs were sitting on a limb which hung over a pool, and one frog decided to jump off into the pool. How many frogs would be left on the limb? The dad replied, "Two."



"No, the son replied. there's three frogs and one decides to jump, how many are left?"

The dad said, "Oh, I get it, if one decides to jump, the others would too. So there are none left."

The boy said, No dad, the answer is three. The frog only DECIDED to jump.

Sound like any New Year's Resolutions? Great inspiration and great resolutions but often time we only "decide", and months later we're still on the same limb doing nothing.

I don't believe we were put on this earth to sit on our rump or limb of safety and do nothing. We were created in the image of God and God said what he made was very good. I know we have messed up and I'll be preaching on "The Fall" on February 12 & 13, but I also know that Jesus came to set us free and give us abundant life right now, and eternal life in the future. That does not mean we can read the "Left Behind" series and sit on our fannies till He comes again in all His glory. We are called to receive the gift of forgiveness and to bear fruits worthy of repentance. We are called not just to maintain but to be in mission for Christ's sake! We've had a Long-Range Committee seek answers for a year, and the Building Committee met all of last year. The work of the Kingdom and the preparation has been done. After 30 years of talking its time to jump off the limb! I believe that God is in this decision to build and I know that God's grace is sufficient for all our needs. God did not give us this church land just to sit on like a "knot" of toads. This land, like our life, has been given so that we might soar in ministry as an "exaltation" of skylarks. Think about how God has blessed you and pray about how you might help with new building program. You have received a large yellow envelope in the mail. It's a risky thing to open. May God be with us as we jump into the future.

Love,
Rev. Al

The Newsletter

The newsletter is your means to communicate events and thoughts to the entire congregation. Please feel free to comment and participate. You may place articles in the "Newsletter" mailbox or E-mail information to me at ghanby@bernardon.com. Deadline for articles in the March 2005 publication is NOON on Sunday February 20.

.....Gerry Hanby

Thank You

I wish to thank all of my good friends at Chester Bethel Church for the get well wishes and beautiful Christmas cards I received during my recent illness. I am happy to report after two transfers that I am nicely settled in Assisted Living at Rockford Place, 1519 Rockland Road, Wilmington, Delaware 19803.

Again, many thanks!!

.....Barbara R. Bond

The Importance of Small Groups – by D. Michael

Over the last 10 years, social scientists have documented the vitality of small groups in shaping Americans' social and spiritual lives to a remarkable degree. Did you know, for example, that two out of five adults in the United States report involvement in some type of regular small-group meeting? The vast majority of these small groups are faith-based, with sociologists estimating that as many as 2,000,000 small groups (out of a total of 3,000,000) involve Bible studies or Sunday school classes. Thousands of other church-based groups provide spiritual and emotional support for issues ranging from marital counseling and parenting to financial planning and surviving cancer. When the Gallup organization asked Americans a few years ago in the nation's largest study on the subject why they join small groups, the top responses were "to grow as a person" (73%) and because they "were invited by someone" (60%). Forty-six percent wanted "a more disciplined spiritual life" and thought that a small group could help them deepen their faith.

Small groups are for the serious growers. For many small-group members, participation is anything but casual, with out two in three reporting that they attend group gatherings at least once twice a month (63%), that the meetings are lasting an hour or more (65%), and that they have been doing this for three or more years (64%). Research also shows that small-group involvement captures the attention of people from all walks of life, in all regions of the country and in communities of every size.

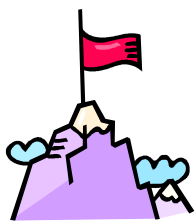
Small groups are not a passing fad. Church history shows that small groups have been part of Christian discipleship for centuries. For example, the German Pietist movement during the 17th century encouraged believers to meet in small-group "conventicles" or "colleges of piety" for spiritual growth and edification. Along the same lines, John and Charles Wesley joined with other believers in the Holy Club during their Oxford University days for prayer, Bible study, and spiritual accountability. Indeed, the genesis of the monastic movement was the accountability of "brothers" and "sisters" in Christ. The important news for us today, though, is that people of faith are meeting together in small groups in record numbers. Seven in 10 small group members report that they're also members of a congregation that encourages small group participation. A majority of respondents (57%) characterize small groups as a regular activity of their church, and about one-half (51%) report that their group meets at their church.



The Bible and prayer are basic to small groups. Small-group members in the study report that the Bible has become more meaningful for them as a result of their group involvement. A majority also reports that these groups have helped them gain a better understanding of people from different religious traditions. Sixty-nine percent of these group meetings include praying together, and over one-half (56%) include studying the Bible. Christian small groups can ease pandemic loneliness. While these numbers offer encouraging news on the number of small groups that meet on a regular basis and the dominant role that faith can play in these groups, this positive news is tempered by the ever-increasing fragmentation Americans report in their personal lives. As Robert Putnam's landmark study in Bowling Alone (Simon & Schuster) demonstrates, American society today is largely an individual-centered one. People in this country report an acute need for community and deep relationship. I pray that faith-based small groups address some of these concerns, but we must remain vigilant in welcoming and including the lease and the lost as these groups seek to serve and honor Christ more faithfully.

Building Committee

The Building Committee is rapidly approaching a threshold in making some critical decisions. During the month of February, we will meet to discuss all of the homework we have done to date regarding the scope of the work, the costs of that work, the sequencing of the work, setting priorities, and the potential fund-raising efforts. Many of you have expressed helpful opinions. Many of you were included in the creation of the Master Plan. And some of you participated in a special survey as part of the feasibility study. Thanks to everyone who has been involved. **The Building Committee will make a formal recommendation to Church Council during a special meeting immediately following Worship on Sunday February 27.** We already are fairly certain that we cannot do everything all at once. But we can certainly begin to "chip away at the mountain". We might have to go to that mountain several times, so let's get to it. Following an approval from Church Council, we hope to move into a Capital Campaign. There is always a lot of buzz and excitement when starting something new, no matter how small it may be. Please pray that the buzz will be happening for all the right reasons.....Always to glorify God.



A Comment from the

Several weeks ago I saw an obituary in the newspaper for a contractor whom I had worked with extensively many years ago while at Barley Mill Plaza. Just two years younger than me, he had a reputation for quality that is rarely seen anymore. And he was such a personable guy who demonstrated all the ideals of a professional person. I last saw him about a year ago, and he was as upbeat as ever. However, about a week after his death, I learned some crushing information.....His death was self-inflicted.

Very few people truly understand what it must be like to reach such a state of depression, anxiety, or desperation such that suicide seems to be the only way out. A lot of us come mighty close, though. Nobody saw this coming. Nobody expected it. Nobody even knew to reach out beforehand. But something was going inside of him. Maybe he never understood that he did not have to "go it alone". While it might be over for him, there is a wife and children, friends and other relations who will be left alone, and wondering for the rest of their lives what happened. There are some tough lessons here, but the most important is for everyone to understand that you do NOT have to "go it alone". God is always with you. Jesus is always with you. The Holy Spirit is always with you.....and our church family is always there with you. Make sure you let folks know when you need some support, accept the help, accept the prayers, and also reach out to those who need it.

.....Gerry Hanby

Thank You

If you want to smile, be sure to read last year's financial report in this newsletter.

Although the mission of the church is not ultimately about money, it is a fact that money is needed to support the mission and to extend the mission to places where a check can travel and we can't. Our willingness to contribute time and money to the cause and the things we spend that money for can give an indication of how we all feel about our church and what our values are. All these items show up beautifully in this year's final report.

It is your Finance Committee's job to pay attention to these things and we thank you for making us smile. We believe God is smiling and we hope you are, too.

Thanks are also due Earl Rosenberger for his extended expert service as Treasurer and to Dorene Jones for being willing to take over for him.



Youth Activities

Youth Rally 2005...

In early January, 10 youth and adults attended the annual Youth Rally conference at the convention center in Ocean City, Maryland. Those from Chester Bethel included **Sandy Hetrick (3rd Rally)**, **Noel Williamson (4th Rally)**, senior **Eric Grzeszkowiak (3rd Rally)**, sophomores **Kelsey Allesandrini (3rd Rally)**, **Nicole Hetrick (4th Rally)**, **Laura Putman (2nd Rally)**, and 7th grader **Kelsey Bartkowski (1st Rally)**. Everyone enjoyed the Christian music, keynote speaker, and learning more about Jesus Christ. Christian bands played various types of music from rap and soft rock, to heavy metal and rock and roll. Some of the featured bands were: The Katinas, Downhere, Sandtown, Daniel's Window, and Nate Sallie. Inspirational messages were given by Alvin Slaughter, Tammy Trent, and Duffy Robbins. "Who Do You Serve?" was the theme of the weekend, which comes from Galatians 1:10 – "we are not here to please others, we are here to serve the Lord." I think everyone learned after the Rally how to be a servant of Jesus Christ. They will now just need to show HOW they are a servant. The Rally keeps growing every year and this year there were over 5,000 in attendance. The event has grown so much that everyone cannot fit into one room anymore, so a second stage was created. It is true that we can't make a difference for everyone. In fact, in one weekend we may not be able to make a difference for very many. But we are convinced of this: We can make a difference for one! That's what Jesus would do. That's what we will do!

Youth Rally by the numbers....

Chester Bethel attended their record-breaking 4th consecutive Youth Rally this year. 3 out of this year's 7 youth, attended for the first time. Sophomore **Nicole Hetrick** is the only youth and **Noel Williamson** is the only adult from Chester Bethel, to attend the Rally 4 times since the conference began 18 years ago. In 3 out of the past 4 years, Chester Bethel has sent at least 10 youth and adults to the Rally, with a record-breaking 17 youth and adults in 2002.

February happenings...

The next youth meeting will be Sunday, February 13, at 6:30pm in the old building. We will discuss the details for delivering the message during the service later in the month. The youth will be involved in delivering the message on Sat/Sun. Feb. 26/27.

.....Noel Williamson
chesterbethelyouth@hotmail.com

Worship & Study

- Feb. 6 **Worship** Transfiguration Sunday, Communion
- Feb. 9 **Ash Wednesday** service at Siloam 7:30 p.m. – Rev. Al preaches
- Feb. 12 & 13 **Worship** Genesis 2: 15-17, 3: 1-7, Creation and the Fall.
- Feb. 16 **Wed. Bible Study** 7 p.m. on John 3: 1-17, Nicodemus at Night.
- Feb. 19 & 20 **Worship** John 3:1-17, Nicodemus at Night.
- Feb. 23 **Wed. Bible Study** 7 pm on John 4: 5-42 Jesus and the Samaritan Woman.
- Feb. 26 & 27 **Worship** John 4:5-42, Youth Rally presentation by UMYF.
- March 2 **Wed. Bible Study** 7 pm on John 9:1-41, Jesus heals the man blind from birth.
- March 5 & 6 **Worship** John 9:1-41, Jesus heals the blind man.
- March 9 **Wed. Bible Study** 7 pm on John 11:1-45, Raising Lazarus.
- March 12 & 13 **Worship** John 11:1-45, Raising Lazarus.
- March 16 **Film** on the Passion of Christ.
- March 19 & 20 **Palm-Passion** weekend – Cantata on Sat. & Sun. “Colors of Grace”
- March 24 **Holy Thursday** – Upper Room Service where 12 disciples receive communion – singing and prayers while we wait.
- March 25 **Good Friday** Tennabrae service 7 pm, combined choirs from Aldersgate & Siloam & Chester Bethel with readings and singing.
- March 27 **Easter** Service 10:30 am

** CELEBRATIONS **

Birthdays

- Feb 2 Pat Zimmerman
- Feb 3 Jason Barrowclough
Elva Bernard
Linda Weller
- Feb 5 Ruth Ann Graham
- Feb 7 Bruce Fay
- Feb 9 Elmer Saulsbury
Dana Cooke
- Feb 11 Suzanne Grzeszkowiak
- Feb 13 Raymond Ashley
- Feb 14 Nancy Carney
- Feb 18 Virginia Allen
- Feb 19 Bill Murray
- Feb 23 Brett Bowden
- Feb 24 Dottie Renshaw
Lane Pace
- Feb 25 Jason Wright
- Feb 28 Anthony Coover



Wedding Anniversaries

- Feb 13 Donna & Don McCormick

Thrift Shop News

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who assisted me and Ginny Lewis during my tenure as Thrift Shop Director. The Monday morning regulars, the retail shifts, the part-timers and those who showed up to help when the need was the greatest – you will never know how much your help was appreciated. The success of our Thrift Shop – well, it would not have happened without you. As this new year begins, I pray that you all will continue to be loyal servants to this most important mission of Chester Bethel. God Bless.

.....Norma Saulsbury

United Methodist

“Give, and it will be given to you.”

February is Pledge Month for the United Methodist Women. The women of Chester Bethel will receive a letter this month with information concerning our past and present mission work. Upon receiving this letter, please give it your prayerful consideration and respond by sending your pledge or donation to the church office, or placing it in the offering plate during the month of February.

We will have our next meeting on Monday February 14 at 7:00pm in the Fellowship Hall.

When I woke up on New Year's Day
I thought "Wow, a new beginning - a whole new way!
New adventures, new trials,
Even new creative styles.
We will miss yesterdays'
blessings,
Even remember the
Thanksgiving dressing.
A new beginning - a new joy,
Now the children are enjoying their very new toy.
Wow, now 2005
And look at how much our lives are so alive!



*Happy New Year – Keep poetry in heart
In the new year.....Love, Lorraine MacMillan*

Live Nativity 2004 – A Look Back



Thanks to approximately 110 people, we had a very successful Live Nativity this year. We would like to thank Lillian Coleman for working with us every night to help get people into and out of the costumes. (This can be quite difficult at times!) Also, thank you to Paul Loretto who was out in the crèche every night. He even stayed out for all three shifts on Monday night – the coldest night of all. We would also like to thank Denise Midgett for her help in planning this year's event as well as for narrating several shifts in the crèche.



Both the Nativity characters and the Bell Choir participated in the Claymont Christmas Parade this year. The weather was nice, and there were many people along the Parade route. We were given the honor of being the first group after the color guard in the parade. The organizers of the Parade said that we represented the true meaning of this parade and wanted us to be first. Thank you to Edgar Greer for driving his truck and getting the trailer for our group. The crèche was set up on a rainy cold day, and taken down on a sunny and warm day. Thank you to everyone who helped. The crèche was taken down and put away in record time this year!

The Nativity started out on Sunday, December 19th with rain that changed to snow, and then ice, which led to Monday, and freezing cold temperatures. Tuesday, and Wednesday were rather nice. Thursday we had torrential rains in the late afternoon, but it stopped by 6:00. Christmas Eve was cold, but dry. We had many visitors this year. We gave out 39 bracelets and 30 pins, which said "Jesus is the Reason for the Season" to the children that came inside. A script was added for a narrator to follow, along with a sheet of songs so that everyone (including the visitors) could sing along as the story was told. This seemed to work well – we had favorable feedback from some of our visitors. On Tuesday night the Bell Choir was outside beside the crèche playing the songs as everyone sang. On this same night, and again on Thursday, Denny St. Germain played his flute inside for the visitors to enjoy.

Two new banners were added. One large banner was hung on the front of the church (thank you to Bob Quinn for having this banner made, and to Bill Foster for putting it up and taking it down). A second new banner was made for us and displayed at the Mobile gas station at Foulk and Naamans road. Thank you to Willard Barrowclough for putting us in touch with Brandywine Signs who donated this banner to us. Also thank you to Brian, at the Mobile station, for allowing us to set up a sign on his property. Also new this year was a large sheep (sitting) donated by Elva Bernard. This sheep goes very nicely with the one we already had (donated by the Greer's). The new sheep (the one that is sitting) has been named "Chester" and the standing sheep has been named "Bethel".

The Live Nativity participated in the 7:00 pm Christmas Eve service again this year. Pam and Steve Manocchio with their baby Drew portrayed Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. It was a beautiful sight to see all the characters in the church while singing Silent Night by candlelight. We received \$341.00 in donations this year, and had \$109.86 in expenses, leaving a net income of \$231.14. A donation of \$240.00 has been given to the building fund. Maybe it will buy a doorknob (for the storage room for the crèche)!

This event is a lot of work; however, it is all worth it when we hear visitors who plan their evening around coming to see the Nativity, and those who come year after year. It is also nice to hear that many people look forward to participating with their family and friends to share the true meaning of Christmas with others. The costumes have all been washed and put away until next year. We are already thinking about what we might do differently next year. One idea we are considering is to change the time from 6:00 – 9:00 to 6:30 – 8:30 each night. It seems we have very few visitors from 6:00 – 6:30 and from 8:30 to 9:00. This would allow for two, one-hour shifts each night. (Please send us your feedback regarding this possible change.) Another idea for next year is to have the bells play as often as possible. The night the bells were outside was one of our busiest nights. It appears that when there is something else going on along with the Nativity, we attract more attention and have more people stopping by. We will also look at the script and songs and make some changes as needed (likely reduce the number of songs).

If you have any ideas or suggestions, please let us know. If it weren't for the help that everyone gives us with this event – from baking cookies, to serving refreshments, to dressing in costumes, to providing music – we would not be able to continue this ministry each year. It is hard to believe that next year will be our 9th year!

Thank you. Bonnie and Dave Wright 302-475-6692

Chester Bethel United Methodist Church

Calendar of Events – **FEBRUARY 2005**

- Tue **Feb 1** Handbell Rehearsal
Sanctuary 7:00pm
Finance Meeting
Fellowship Hall 7:00pm
- Thur **Feb 3** Chancel Choir Rehearsal
Fellowship Hall 7:00pm
- Sat **Feb 5** Happy Hour Praise Service
Sanctuary 5:30pm
- Sun **Feb 6** Sunday School
Classrooms 9:30am
Traditional Worship Service
Sanctuary 10:30am
- Mon **Feb 7** Thrift Shop Workday
Thrift Shop 9:00am
Finance Committee
Fellowship Hall 7:00pm
- Tue **Feb 8** Handbell Rehearsal
Sanctuary 7:00pm
Church Council
Fellowship Hall 7:30pm
- Wed **Feb 9** Ash Wednesday Service
Siloam Church 7:30pm
- Thur **Feb 10** Chancel Choir Rehearsal
Fellowship Hall 7:00pm
- Sat **Feb 12** Happy Hour Praise Service
Sanctuary 5:30pm
- Sun **Feb 13** Sunday School
Classrooms 9:30am
Traditional Worship Service
Sanctuary 10:30am
Youth Meeting
Serpentine Bldg. 6:30pm
- Mon **Feb 14** Thrift Shop Workday
Thrift Shop 9:00am
United Methodist Women
Fellowship Hall 7:00pm



- Tue **Feb 15** Handbell Rehearsal
Sanctuary 7:00pm
- Thur **Feb 17** Chancel Choir Rehearsal
Fellowship Hall 7:00pm
- Sat **Feb 19** Happy Hour Praise Service
Sanctuary 5:30pm
- Sun **Feb 20** Sunday School
Classrooms 9:30am
Traditional Worship Service
Sanctuary 10:30am
Newsletter Deadline
Church Office Noon
- Mon **Feb 21** Thrift Shop Workday
Thrift Shop 9:00am
- Tue **Feb 22** Handbell Rehearsal
Sanctuary 7:00pm
- Thur **Feb 24** Chancel Choir Rehearsal
Fellowship Hall 7:00pm
- Sat **Feb 26** Happy Hour Praise Service
Youth Presentation
Sanctuary 5:30pm
- Sun **Feb 27** Sunday School
Classrooms 9:30am
Traditional Worship Service
Youth Presentation
Sanctuary 10:30am
Church Council
****Special Meeting****
Sanctuary 11:45am
- Mon **Feb 28** Thrift Shop Workday
Thrift Shop 9:00am
Trustees
Fellowship Hall 7:00pm

This calendar is based on information posted in the Church Office as of publication date. Please check the weekly bulletin for updates.

As We Approach Holy Week....

March 16: A Special Movie
March 19 & 20: Palm/Passion Cantata
March 24: Upper Room Communion



March 25: Good Friday Services
March 26/27: Easter Services

Twenty Truths for 2005

1. Faith is the ability to not panic.
2. If you worry, you didn't pray. If you pray, don't worry.
3. As a child of God, prayer is kind of like calling home every day.
4. Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape.
5. When we get tangled up in our problems, be still. God wants us to be still so He can untangle the knot.
6. Do the math. Count your blessings.
7. God wants spiritual fruit, not religious nuts.
8. Dear God: I have a problem. It's me.
9. Silence is often misinterpreted, but never misquoted.
10. Laugh every day. It's like inner jogging.
11. The most important things in your home are the people.
12. Growing old is inevitable. Growing up is optional.

13. There is no key to happiness. The door is always open.
14. A grudge is a heavy thing to carry.
15. He who dies with the most toys is still dead.
16. We do not remember days, but moments. Life moves too fast, so enjoy your precious moments.
17. Nothing is real to you until you experience it, otherwise it's just hearsay.
18. It's all right to sit on your pity pot every now and again. Just be sure to flush when you are done.
19. Surviving and living your life successfully requires courage. The goals and dreams you're seeking require courage and risk-taking. Learn from the turtle – it only makes progress when it sticks its neck out.
20. Be more concerned with your character than your reputation. Your character is what you really are while your reputation is merely what others think you are.



.....submitted by Larry Graham

