

BETHEL UCC beacon

JANUARY 2016

worship

JANUARY 3

God Made Known
Isaiah 60:1-6
Matthew 2:1-12
Rev. Kristen Curlee

JANUARY 10

Into the Water
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
Guest Preacher

JANUARY 17

Going Home
Exodus 6:2-9
John 2:1-11
Jason Thompson

JANUARY 24

Becoming Whole
Luke 4:14-21
Guest Preacher

JANUARY 31

Called to Speak
Luke 4:21-30
Jason Thompson

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

10 am Worship
11 am Fellowship

BETHEL UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

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WEB www.bethelucc-va.org

BY JASON THOMPSON

Looking Ahead

Happy New Year!

Have you ever had that feeling that no matter how much you get done there is still so much more to do? That is something I can understand. The letter to the Hebrews reminds us all that we must keep moving forward if we want to reach the perfection that is promised in the age to come. The work of our church and the universal Church is to keep looking forward.



As Christians, we live in constant tension with one foot in this world and one foot in the world that awaits. This is essentially what it means to be in transition. And that's where we are now. In the coming weeks, we will invite a new interim pastor into our midst to guide our church into the future. We are in-between who we are now and who we will be; we are in-between our grief and our joy.

As a student pastor, I know this feeling of "in-between-ness" can be an emotional tug-of-war. The warmth of the past can be a comfortable retreat while the unknown future can be a little daunting. I challenge us all to remember that the comfort offered by Psalm 23 is only possible because of the anxiety of Psalm 22. God is and will be with us as we journey onward.

(continued on page 2)

Every member of Bethel
are the ministers

staff & leadership

Senior Pastor
Rev. Kristen Curlee
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Associate Pastor
Rev. Carolyn Richar
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Seminary Intern
Jason Thompson
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Church President
Whit Wheeler

Director of Music
Angie Stevens
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Interim Pastor Emeritus
Rev. Dr. H. Donald Smith
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Looking Ahead CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Pastor Kristen's last day with us will be January 3. Though there is a great deal of sadness that is associated with a change in pastoral leadership, this can also be a time of great anticipation. What is to come? Who will our next pastor bring? Who are we as a congregation? Over the coming weeks and months, I invite all of us to reflect on these questions and see where God is calling Bethel as we turn the page into our own future. As we enter this season of Epiphany, let us be thankful for the blessings God is always providing!



Bethel Vision and Mission

Vision

To receive and share Jesus' message of extravagant love through compassionate care for our community and the world.

Mission

- We seek to know God and one another and open ourselves to be known.
- We seek to be a church where people are comforted, encouraged, and challenged by God's Word.
- We seek to be God's hands of mercy, affirming justice and peace in the world.
- We welcome and celebrate the diversity of people and thought, encouraging an individual's relationship with Christ.

A question that often comes up is "What are we going to do with this, when and if we adopt it?" Well, there are several things. First and foremost, it is a guide to us, the members of Bethel. It is like the star the wise men followed that lead them to Bethlehem, so that even when life's challenges pop up it keeps us oriented as the wind and rain buffet us. It says this is where God has called us to go and what Jesus would have us do. Secondly, the Consistory and

Long Range Planning Committee have discussed putting the entire statement on our website. That way, as new members of the community seek information about Bethel, this short statement tell them who we are and what the essence of our congregation is. There are other potential "next steps" as well. Our various committees can use pieces of the vision and mission that speak to their expertise and role in Bethel; we might distill the vision down to key phrases to use on our bulletins. Once we have adopted a vision and mission, then we will come together to determine the best ways to use it and "put it out there."

Over time, as Bethel grows and evolves certainly the vision and mission might as well. The work above based on an earlier version produced by our church a number of years ago. In this regard, we are not "trapped" or "confined" by our vision. Instead it is a tool to help us be intentional and conscious as a community to think about where God is calling us to focus and how His spirit moves us as a family to share Jesus' love with the world.

Online Giving



If you are a regular visitor to Bethel UCC's website (www.bethelucc-va.org), you may have noticed that Online Giving is now operational. It allows members and friends the option of keeping up with those pledges and giving regularly even if you cannot make it to church every Sunday.

As you click through you will enter a secure portal where you can give on a regular basis or for special collections. You will enter checking account information and your account will be debited for the amount and at the frequency you specify.

More information will be available in the future but it is easy to use so give it a try.

Sound Board Specialist Needed

No experience necessary! We are looking for one more person to learn how to run the soundboard when we have 5 Sundays in the month and to help with some special services like Christmas Eve, weddings, funerals, etc. Join this great team:

Thabo - First Sunday

Cheryl - Second Sunday

Peter/Kristen W - 3rd/4th Sundays

Talk with Peter Rich if you are interested.

Interim Search Committee

At the end of November, the committee (Bill Graver, Judy Norton, and Lisa Peterson) received the names of three very strong candidates to serve as interim pastor at Bethel following Pastor Kristen's departure. We conducted reference checks on all three, then held telephone interviews with them. At this point, we have narrowed the field to two choices and will be undertaking additional assessments of each of these candidates. The final decision is going to be quite difficult, as each would

bring different gifts to our congregation.

Unfortunately, holidays and travel schedules are going to slow our decision making process for a few more weeks. We expect to have a decision by the end of January. As I will be departing after January 10, Pastor Carolyn has started assisting in the interim search process so that the committee will still have three members after my departure.

While we work toward the final decision, our intern Jason Thompson has gracious-

ly offered to increase his availability to preach, provide pastoral care, and cover some of the administrative needs of the church. Jason and Pastor Carolyn will divide responsibilities and, when it appears that neither of them will be available, will make arrangements for outside support. We currently anticipate two Sundays in January when we will be using pulpit supply.

We appreciate your patience as we continue to work through this process.

AFAC Update:

This week, 76 boxes of cereal collected from the congregation in the month of December were delivered to AFAC. This brought the number of boxes donated by Bethel during 2015 to a grand total of 636, exceeding our goal of 600. A sincere thank you goes out to all those who donated, making this year's drive such a tremendous success!

Noteworthy:

Join us for Bible Study on Wednesday, January 13th at 7:00 pm in the library. We will be exploring the lectionary texts for the coming Sundays.

We celebrate with Lisa Peterson that she will be sworn in on January 4th as the US Ambassador of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Swaziland. May her tenure be blessed with peace and wisdom.

Advent 2015



Save the Date: Un-decorating, Saturday, January 9th at 10 a.m.

january 2016

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
					1 New Years Day 	2
3 10 a.m. Worship & Sunday School 11a.m. Fellowship	4	5	6	7	8	9 10 a.m. Un-decorating
10 10 a.m. Worship & Sunday School 11a.m. Fellowship	11	12	13 7 p.m. Bible Study	14	15	16
17 10 a.m. Worship & Sunday School 11a.m. Fellowship	18	19	20 7 p.m. Bible Study	21 12 p.m. Third Thursday	22	23
24 10 a.m. Worship & Sunday School 11a.m. Fellowship	25	26	27 7 p.m. Bible Study	28	29	30 31 10 a.m. Worship & Sunday School 11a.m. Fellowship