







The Banner

Every person feels, knows and shares God's love

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Pondering Peace

In 2008 a new group, Peace Fellowship, was formed at Bethany based on feelings of concern about the amount of violence and hatred in the world. The idea was for a group that could:

-  Be in fellowship with others who share these feelings and concerns
-  Learn about peace and justice issues and peacemaking skills
-  Connect with other peace communities and organizations
-  Participate in actions which promote peace and justice

How has the formation of this group at Bethany spoken to peace over these 13 years? Among the accomplishments to be noted are annual Peace Sundays as an emphasis in Sunday worship, "Peace Pondering" items in the newsletter, promoting attendance to a talk by a United Methodist leader, helping sponsor a peace study trip to Northern Ireland, promoting a book study on racism, and conducting peace related forums.

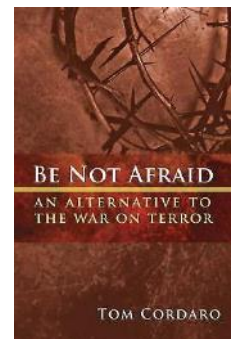
A book in the Bethany library, *Be Not Afraid, an Alternative to the War on Terror*, by Tom Cordaro, presents two visions for peace in the world:

-  Peace as Enforced Order: the conviction that peace is only the absence of open conflict. It is characterized by addictive consumerism.
-  Peace as the Enterprise of Justice: a vision that combats racism, militarism, poverty, and environmental degradation.

The author suggests the first is the dominant one in our society. The more you have the more powerful you are. The second is offered as a path from acquisition to mindfulness. This path, he suggests, is a life-long, spiritual quest involving compassion, solidarity, humility, and freedom. An important principle cited by the author is the common good - social conditions that allow people to develop to their fullest human potentials.

A final suggestion by the author is that we don't have to make this journey alone. Finding communities of support and accountability is important.

Peace Fellowship can be that support group. Gathering together and promoting the peace and justice lifestyle can provide a positive outlook on life and could also provide some meaningful results in our community. Call the church office if YOU would like to participate in Bethany's Peace Fellowship.





PASTOR'S COLUMN



What Are the Plans for Reopening the Church Building?

As more and more of you have gotten vaccinated, and as the infection rates have started to look less threatening, I'm starting to hear questions about our plans for reopening the church building. It is appealing to think about returning, isn't it? Visiting and laughing with people in the hallways. Experiencing the sights and sounds of worship in the sanctuary, instead of being restricted to a virtual screen. Supporting each other, and caring for each other, and catching up on the lives of those we haven't seen in over a year.



We dream of the day when that all will be possible. And that day is starting to look much closer now. Bethany's Board will soon release a detailed plan for how we will reopen. Of course we can't instantly return to "normal" – it will need to take place in phases. We don't know the exact timeline yet, but below is generally what will happen.

We will start by allowing outdoor activities, and that will probably take place quite soon. We already have groups who are ready for this. The youth are planning outdoor training sessions in preparation for their Appalachia Service Project mission trip in July. Activities for families with children are being planned. Our Cub Scouts are eager to have group activities and service projects on the church grounds. And we are starting to plan for outdoor activities for the whole church family.

If infection rates continue to drop, then next we can allow

small and medium-sized groups to meet in the building. That also could happen fairly soon. People will need to follow some basic health precautions obviously, in order to protect those who haven't been vaccinated yet. And you should know that we have been working to equip the building for this. For instance, the air filtration has been significantly upgraded in the sanctuary, fellowship hall, library, narthex, offices, chapel, and youth room. The education wing lacks a filtered ventilation system, and so we will have to wait longer before reopening the classrooms (we have investigated purchasing portable air purifiers for the classrooms if the pandemic lingers).

The last step will be reopening for larger groups, including for worship. The Wisconsin Council of Churches has developed metrics for when this will be safest. At the moment, it looks like we could return by early summer. But it could be earlier, or later – the situation is constantly evolving. People will need to follow basic health precautions. And, for probably a few months at least, we will need to limit attendance in the sanctuary to about 50 people (pre-registration will likely be required). But we might use the Fellowship Hall for overflow, and we will offer a simulcast of worship on Zoom.

So that's a rough plan of where we are heading. A far more detailed plan will be published by our Board in the near future. If you have any questions or suggestions, please let us know. Take care!

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Greg

Worship Tech Staff Position

As we prepare to return to in-person worship in the sanctuary, we plan to add a staff position of "Worship Tech." In the past, several volunteers have taken turns operating the sound board and video displays in the sanctuary. While we still need the service of these dedicated volunteers, the technical responsibilities are expanding substantially. Additional tasks include hosting the simulcast of worship on Zoom, interfacing the sanctuary and Zoom sound systems, controlling a video camera, and more. This paid position will be about 4-5 hours per week. If you or someone you know is interested in this position, please contact Pastor Greg.

Simple Gifts for April — “The Graners: Global Mission Partner”

Simple Gift offerings made during April are going to support Bethany United Methodist Church’s Global Mission Partners, Ardell and Gordon Graner.

Bethany has supported the Graner’s important work for many years, and our relationship continues with their current assignment in the Dominican Republic.

Ardell Graner is a missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) of the United Methodist Church and serves with the Dominican Evangelical Church. Gordon had similarly served with GBGM until his retirement in September 2020. He now works with Ardell as a volunteer in the Dominican Republic.



On March 1st, the Graners announced in a blog post that Ardell will similarly be retiring in September of 2021. Overall, the Graners have spent the past 32 years conducting mission work — the first 23 in Bolivia and the past decade in the Dominican Republic.

The Graners write in that blog post: “We are eternally grateful to the Bolivian and Dominican people for receiving us in their lives, for their friendships, for sharing their worldviews with us, and for the opportunity to be together as partners-in-mission.”

Just more than a year ago, in February 2020, the Graners helped host seven church members from Bethany and an interpreter that traveled to the Dominican Republic on a mission trip.

Although Bethany is not currently holding in-person services due to the COVID-19 pandemic, your offerings remain important so Bethany’s mission can continue. Please either mail in your offering or give online at BethanyMadison.org (click on We Serve and, from the drop-down menu, select Giving Financially).

To learn much more about the Graners and their important work, visit the Graner Family website and blog: <https://granerfamily.org/>

Up next: Simple Gifts for May go to support our partners at The Playing Field.

Easter: Good Samaritan Fund

GOOD SAMARITAN FUND

Because others passed them by . . .



In addition to the regular Simple Gifts collection, there will be a special collection on Easter Sunday, April 4, to support the Good Samaritan Fund. This fund is administered by Pastor Greg and helps people in our church and community who are in immediate need of support. These needs can range from bus fare and food, to help with paying a medical or electric bill. Your generosity in supporting the Good Samaritan Fund is always appreciated and makes a difference. Please give generously, as your support will make a difference in real and relevant ways.

Native American Ministries Sunday

April 18



Over the course of each year, Bethany participates in several special offering Sundays sponsored by the broader United Methodist Church. On April 18 is a collection for Native American Ministries Sunday, which nurtures mission with Native Americans and provides scholarships for United Methodist Native American seminarians.



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES



ZOOM LINKS

Zoom links for all classes and groups are listed on the Bethany website on the Upcoming Events page. From the home page, click on the "Groups and Classes" box at the bottom right of the page. Links are listed by the day of the week they occur on.

SUSANNA CIRCLE

The next meeting of the Susanna Circle UMW is Wednesday, April 7th at 1:00 pm on Zoom. The speaker for our program is JoAn Brock. All women are welcome. NOTE: the May meeting will be at noon on May 5th at the home of Judy Loveless. SAVE THE DATE!

LYDIA FELLOWSHIP

On Monday, April 12th, Lydia Fellowship will be meeting on Zoom at 1:00 pm. Judy Loveless is the hostess. Judy will share the life story and career challenges of Elizabeth Blackwell who, in 1849, became the first woman to get a medical doctorate. Judy will cover the status of medicine from the 1820's to the 1860's. Everyone is welcome to join the meeting. Please email Eileen Rech (jim.eileen@yahoo.com) if you will be attending the Zoom meeting.

BOOK BROWSERS

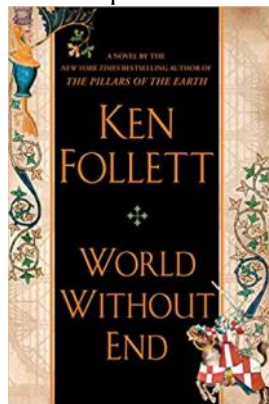
Book Browsers will meet on Monday, April 19, at 2:00 pm via Zoom. Vada Mayfield will present a review of the book, *The Book Collectors*, by Delphine Minoui. Please join us.

REFLECTIONS BOOK STUDY

Reflections Book Discussion meets Monday, April 26 at 1:00 pm via Zoom. See the church website for the connection link. Be sure to choose Monday and Reflections Book Discussion. The April book is *World Without End* by Ken Follett.

Ken Follett's masterful epic *The Pillars of the Earth* enchanted millions of readers with its compelling drama of war, passion and family conflict set around the building of a cathedral. Now *World Without End* takes readers back to medieval Kingsbridge two centuries later, as the men, women and children of the city once again grapple with the devastating sweep of historical change.

Join in for a lively discussion whether you have read the book or not.



UNITED METHODIST WOMEN INVITATIONS

Participate in Prayer and Self Denial

It's long been a tradition at Bethany to begin the season of Lent on Ash Wednesday with a program to observe the UMW Call for Prayer and Self Denial, sharing a simple meal and making a gift for UMW missions.

Although we can't gather now, we're invited to pray and give if possible.

Each year, our national UMW leaders choose an area of mission to receive extra funding. This year our offerings will benefit leadership development programs for women in three African countries and the work of UMW's eight regional missionaries. To contribute, write a check to Bethany UMW with Prayer and Self Denial in the memo line and send it to treasurer Beverly Klump, 241 S. Segoe Road, Madison 53703.

Prayer: Gracious God, we give out of our abundance, and pray that our gift will help to transform communities by empowering women who are so often overlooked, to shine as leaders...and also help our regional missionaries continue to focus on issues of health, gender equality, elimination of violence and support for the marginalized. Amen

Attend a Spring Spiritual Retreat

S. W. DISTRICT SPIRITUAL GROWTH RETREAT

A Virtual Event on Saturday April 17th, 9:30 am to Noon

Spiritual Leader: Michele Hopp

Theme: *Finding Peace in an Anxious World*

Michele is a licensed local pastor serving Arlington and the Poyette Inch congregations. She is on a new journey of widowhood, but looks forward to sharing spiritual and practical ways to find more peace in our personal lives and in our world.

To register, email Laura Pfeffler (pfeffer.umw@gmail.com) by April 15th. She will send a link to the Zoom site. There is no registration fee.





HOLY WEEK AT BETHANY



Palm Sunday -- March 28 -- 10:00 a.m.

We will recall Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, with crowds waving palm branches. Be prepared with greenery of your own to wave in celebration or you can download a palm frond coloring sheet from our website (the link is on our Upcoming Events page). Our musicians have festive Palm Sunday music planned, and Pastor Brad will be sharing the Palm Sunday message.



Maundy Thursday -- April 1 -- 6:45 p.m.

An organ prelude concert begins at 6:45 p.m., with the welcome and opening prayer at 7:00 p.m. In our Zoom-connected homes, we will reenact Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, gathering at our tables to share in Holy Communion. We will then be invited to darken our rooms as we recall the events leading to Jesus' crucifixion. Music includes the 15-minute organ prelude concert by Sue Poullette, a handbell anthem "Via Dolorosa" by Nick Bonaccio, and Holy Week hymns led by Taras Nahiriak.

Good Friday -- April 2

On the day of Jesus' crucifixion, most of the followers of Jesus fled from the dangers and threats around them. As Jesus hung on the cross from 12:00 noon until 3:00 p.m., the disciples felt forced to watch from a distance, in isolation. We invite you to find a quiet place sometime on this day, and spend time in prayer. A meditation guide can be downloaded from our website (the link is on our Upcoming Events page).

Easter Sunday -- April 4 -- 10:00 a.m.

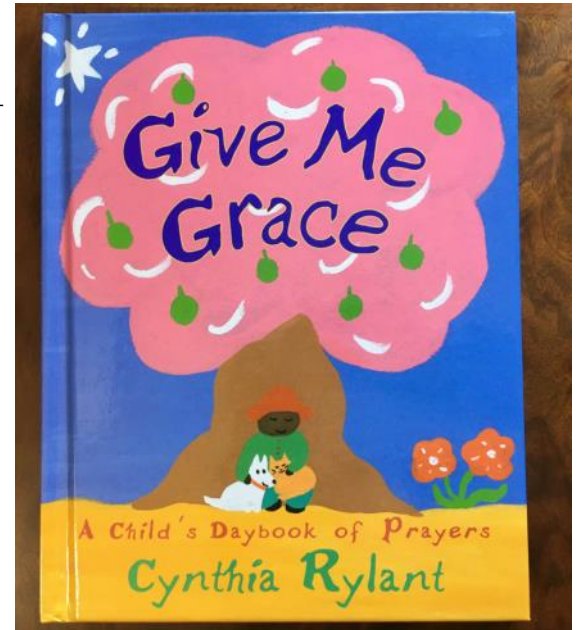
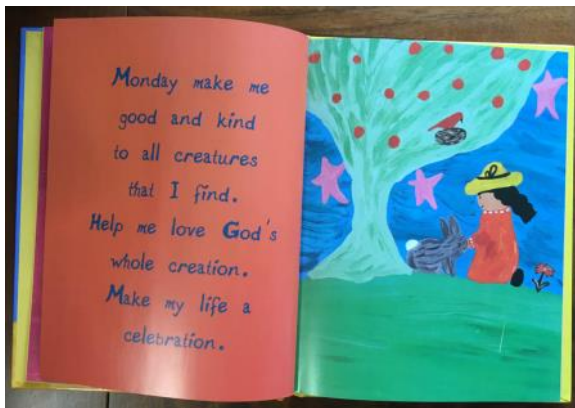
Our Easter celebration will include lots of special music, including a Combined Choirs video with brass instruments, handbells with brass, and an extended organ prelude and postlude. If you have flowers blooming, we would love for you to share them on camera. Pastor Greg will be sharing the Easter message.



For Children's Ministry information, contact Lisa Weaver, Director of Children's Ministries
Phone: (608) 238-6381 / Email: childrensministries@bethanymadison.org

"Give Me Grace: A Child's Daybook of Prayers"

This delightfully illustrated picture book by Cynthia Rylant offers one brief prayer for each day of the week. Consider setting aside a time each day to say a prayer with your family -- perhaps at bedtime or before a meal. You may choose to recite the Lord's Prayer, or another favorite blessing. Another option is to give each person in the family a turn to share a joy and concern from the day, followed by "Lord, hear our prayer." Extending some of these practices from Sunday morning worship into daily family life is one way to support faith development -- for all ages!



Sunday School stories

Each week in Zoom Sunday School the children hear a story or scripture passage from the Bible. This past month included the story of Zacchaeus, who climbs a tree so that he can see Jesus. Ms. Lori taught the children a song about Zacchaeus, and Ms. Lisa led the children in making trees.



Psalm Cards

Hooray for the Bethany children and youth who contributed original artwork and photos for the Psalm Cards. Many thanks to Katie Haack who assembled the printed cards into sets of five, and labeled them with names of recipients. Thank you to Charlie Yuroff who helped with delivery, and to Carl in the Bethany office who coordinated pickup times from a table by the front door of the church. Lisa ordered a few extra sets of Psalm Cards -- if you did not get your request in but would still like a packet, contact Lisa to see if there are any left! The Psalm Cards came without charge, but donations to The Playing Field were warmly accepted in honor of this project.

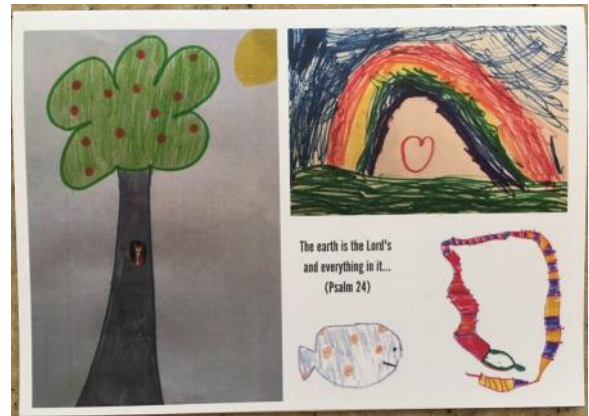
To date, \$235 has been donated!



"Praying" by Maggie M.



"Family" by Kerala O.



A LOOK AT OUR FAITHFULNESS

Sunday, Feb. 28	Sunday, March 7	Sunday, March 14	Sunday, March 21	Sunday, March 28
Total 163	Total..... 174	Total.....148	Total..... 144	Total 154

