

What's Happening at Bethany

April 23, 2020

Sunday's Sermon Title & Scripture

Being Church When the Building is Empty ... On the Road With Jesus

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad.¹ Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread,

blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. (Luke 24:13-35 NRSV)

To keep up with what's going on at Bethany ...

please refer to our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/BethanyUnitedMethodistChurchWeyersCaveVA/>), and our website (www.mybethanyumc.org). Join us for Facebook Live each Sunday morning at 9:30 am for our worship service. Pastor Susan and Cindy are in the office on Mondays, Wednesdays & Thursdays from 9 am - 3 pm and Pastor Susan is in on Tuesdays.

The coronavirus affects each of us in different ways. Some may be working from home, while others have reduced hours or have lost their jobs. Please remember, your church is here for you in your time of need. Please call us if you are in need of financial assistance, food, someone to pick up your groceries or prescriptions, or if you just need someone to talk to. **Please don't hesitate, please call.**



Elvis Has Left the Building

The phrase “Elvis has left the building” was first uttered in 1956 at the Louisiana Hayride show which was held weekly at the Shreveport Fairgrounds. Elvis was hired by the producer of the show, Horace Lee Logan, when he was just 19 and he received exactly \$18.00 a week for his appearances. A few years later, with his career heading for the stratosphere, \$18.00 a show must have seemed like a miniscule sum. He agreed to pay \$10,000 to buy out his contract with Louisiana Hayride and his last show was scheduled for December 5, 1956. For some reason Elvis was scheduled to sing mid-way through the program and while he was singing his teen age fans showed their appreciation by screaming. When his set was finished, they continued to scream and many of them got out of their seats and headed for the door, apparently still screaming.

At this point, Horace Lee Logan took the microphone and pleaded with Elvis’s fans to return to their seats: “Please, young people ... Elvis has left the building. He has gotten in his car and driven away. ... Please take your seats.” Later Al Dvorin was hired as Presley’s announcer who made the phrase famous as he used it as the sign off for Presley’s shows. When someone says Elvis has left the building—the show is really truly over.

We are in the season of Easter now, and we can say with confidence that Jesus has left the tomb. As followers of Jesus Christ, we have confidence that the stone is rolled away and the tomb is empty. However, in this time of COVID-19, can we also say Jesus has left the building? I admit as I come to church during the week and I walk by the deserted sanctuary it crosses my mind—Jesus has left the building.

Right now, the curtains behind the altar are open, leaving the stained-glass window clearly visible. There is Jesus, standing at a door knocking. The image comes from the third chapter of Revelation, “²⁰Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.” It is part of Christ’s words to the church at Laodicea.

I love that image because we often think of getting people into the church and coming to God’s table but here, but Jesus wants to set out and dine with whoever will open the door. It reminds me of God’s prevenient grace- God’s love is at work upon us even before we know God or are aware. Prevenient grace is God’s desire for relationship with all people though many are not conscious of it yet.

We may not be able to leave our homes, the buildings we inhabit, without a particular reason, but I find comfort in two things. First, according to scripture, Jesus Christ is not deterred from coming and being with us. All we need to do is invite him in and he will be present. Second, though we are not in the sanctuary, the message of the good news is still being broadcast. Sometimes it goes out in the form of boxes of groceries, other times it is sent out over the air and by way of cable. Jesus may have left the tomb and even the building but he has not left us. Meanwhile, let’s accept the fact that Church will never be the same again. Now there is a task before us—to continue envisioning new ways of being church and being Christ in the world.

Pastor Susan

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!!!

We are navigating our way through finding new and better ways to provide meaningful Sunday services online. Dale and Pam Roller, Dani Martlock and of course, Pastor Susan, have been working hard each Sunday to record and stream our service to Facebook. We SO appreciate these folks and their dedication to coming to the church building each week to give all of us an opportunity to worship together.

In the coming weeks, stay tuned as the Worship Team is attempting to enhance our worship experience and provide more ways for all of us to stay connected.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BethanyUnitedMethodistChurchWeyersCaveVA/>

Website: www.mybethanyumc.org



Help Wanted

We are in need of a Bereavement Coordinator. Currently we do not have anyone assigned to organize the meals prepared by church members for bereaved families. This would entail calling folks to provide food following a funeral.

Prayer List ...

- Bud Somers, who is now in hospice care
- Barbara Somers, for her pain while waiting on a needed hip replacement
- Tom & Jan Gorden
- Bill Kile
- Peggy Lucas
- Linda Byers at RMH for UTI and kidney infection
- All first responders, those who work in the medical field and all grocery store workers
- Danny Shreckhise - friend of Jerry Sheets
- Grandmother of Beth Metcalfe
- Mother of Susan Meadows
- Joshua & Sharon Huffer - son & daughter-in-law of Lois Huffer
- John Michael - brother of Jean Moyer



*We extend Christian sympathy to Stephen & Beth Metcalfe and family upon the death of Stephen's father, Mark Metcalfe, on Monday, Apr. 20. Please keep their entire family in your prayers. If you would like to send a card, their address is:
773 Leaport Road, Verona, VA 24482.*

Do you love spring and summer? Do you love being outside? Do you love Bethany? If you answered yes to all of these questions, we have an opportunity for you that you just can't turn down!! **After many years of serving Bethany by keeping our lawn beautiful, Sidney Moyer has retired from mowing. We want to send him our sincere thank you and appreciation!**

However, that means we are now looking for volunteers to help mow the church lawn. We have our own lawn mower in the building which you can use. We would love to have enough people volunteer that you would only have one month to mow and then someone else would mow. If you would be willing to take a month during the summer to mow the church lawn, please contact the office at 540-234-8880 or office.bethany@gmail.com. If you have questions, please contact Mark Dunsmore.



Thought for the Day



2019: Stay away from negative people.

2020: Stay away from positive people.

If you took a coloring sheet for our Resurrection collage, please make sure to return the colored pages ASAP. We will start constructing the mosaic next week! Make sure to look for it on our Facebook page and on our website! Questions? Please contact Pastor Susan at reaves.susan.m@gmail.com or 757-653-7830.

**Always believe
that something wonderful is about to happen!**