

The Herald

November 2009

Bethany Lutheran Church

Portland, Oregon

From Our Pastor –

A Harvest Has Come

[Jesus said to his disciples] Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. ³⁶ The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.’¹ (John 4: 35-36, NRSV)

Harvesting is what farming is all about. When all of the planting, pruning, nurturing, and growing comes together, a harvest of abundant proportions is realized. Succulent fruits and vegetables from the tree and from the vine have been produced. Growers, farmers, and buyers alike all get to participate and enjoy together in what the harvest has brought forth!

The word “harvest” has significant meaning for us at Bethany this particular autumn season. During the Sunday prayers at our first service last month, a worshiper prayed for those who “... helped with the harvest.” During a conversation with her the next day, I found out that the harvest she prayed about was the harvest of fruits and vegetables that was given to the Oregon Food Bank from **Paul** and **Mary Lou Yakymi’s** farm. Bags of vegetables and fruits donated to the food bank would have been just great. But, according to the story, **Paul** just couldn’t let that great produce go to waste. So he donated it to the food bank. Not just a bag or two but ... two and one-half TONS! Just thinking about the passion that **Paul** has for his apple farm and the rejoicing of those who benefit from this harvest brings tears to my eyes. A gathering of fruit ... where sower and reaper rejoice together. Indeed ... a harvest has come!

But another harvest is happening as well. It’s a harvest of God’s planting and it involves each one of us in every part of our lives! It’s a harvest of eternal proportions that God has given to Christ Jesus to share with us and the entire world. Through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection, we know that God’s harvest has begun. God has already sown the seed of faith through Christ in us that will produce the needed harvest. When we put our faith and trust in God, we see God nurturing, planting, and even pruning in and through our lives. Through faith in Christ, nothing in our lives is ever wasted when God is gleaning!

I am reminded, this autumn season especially, of this incredible harvest that God has graced us with: a harvest of food, a harvest of faith, and the harvest of eternal life to come. Through their gifts of sharing at Bethany, I have witnessed how two extraordinary people, **Paul** and **Russel Reese**, each in their own way, have been “gathering fruit” for eternal life. Words cannot express “the reaping” which I have received through the harvest of their lives. One thing I know: I have been touched by Christ through each of them. Indeed ... God’s harvest has come!

Look around you and see! The fields are indeed ripe for harvesting. Both food and lives are gifts to share with one another when God is planting! Sow God’s word and see. A harvest has come!

In Christ,

Pastor Jeff

¹*The New Revised Standard Version*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 1989.

In Memory of Russel Reese

A graveside service for the family of **Russel D. Reese** was held at Rose City Cemetery on October 22 at 3:00pm. A memorial service in thanksgiving to God for the life of **Russel** was held at Bethany at 1:30pm on Saturday, October 24 with a reception following. **Pastor Bethke** presided at both services.

Russel died on Wednesday, October 14, from congestive heart failure. He is survived by his wife, Doris, his five children, their families, along with many families and friends.

Russel's commitment to serving his Lord and the church was immense. Not only was he active and a vibrant part of Bethany for the past fifty years, he was highly active in every church before Bethany. He was a person of steady character, a quiet disposition, and a love for serving God and God's people. He was greatly treasured and will be greatly missed by all! We ask that you keep **Doris** and the **Reese family** in your prayers in the coming time ahead.

May God bless and keep the memory of our departed friend and brother, **Russel!**

November is: Adopt-A-Member Month

November marks the beginning of our new Adopt-a-Member program. In working with our lay communion visitation team, **Edith Aanderud** and **Wanda Joaquin**, we have orchestrated a way for worshiping members to participate in caring for homebound members through a ministry called "Adopt-a-Member" Ministry. How does this work?

There are about a dozen members of our Bethany community who are unable to make our Sunday services. For some, it's a transportation issue. For others, they are dependent upon care facilities for their daily care. These people are a special part of our church family and we rejoice that we have been able to orchestrate a care system so we know that all non-Sunday members are served and are connected with us. **Edith Aanderud**, our council liaison for pastoral care, will serve as our communication receiver as members report their phone calls and/or visits with our homebound members.

Beginning in November, Sunday worshipers at Bethany will have an opportunity to "Adopt a member" for a year. Each "adopter" will make a personal connection with the homebound member, keeping regular contact with them as determined by each individual, and keeping the Pastor informed about our greater church community.

This is a wonderful opportunity for both our homebound members and those who give of themselves to make this special connection.

If you are unable to attend worship on Sunday and want to make sure you are on our "Adopt-a-Member" list, or are interested in supporting our members by adopting someone, please call the church at **503-284-3836**.

If you have any questions, please contact **Edith Aanderud (503-282-2034)** about this wonderful new ministry!



IT'S HOMECOMING TIME AT BETHANY



Autumn is the season for Homecomings. Remember in high school how homecoming was such a celebrated event? There were school assemblies, special “Spirit Days”, a homecoming dance, and of course the big football game. Preparations were made throughout the week for when people of all ages who had once attended the school came back to join others at the football game to cheer on the team.

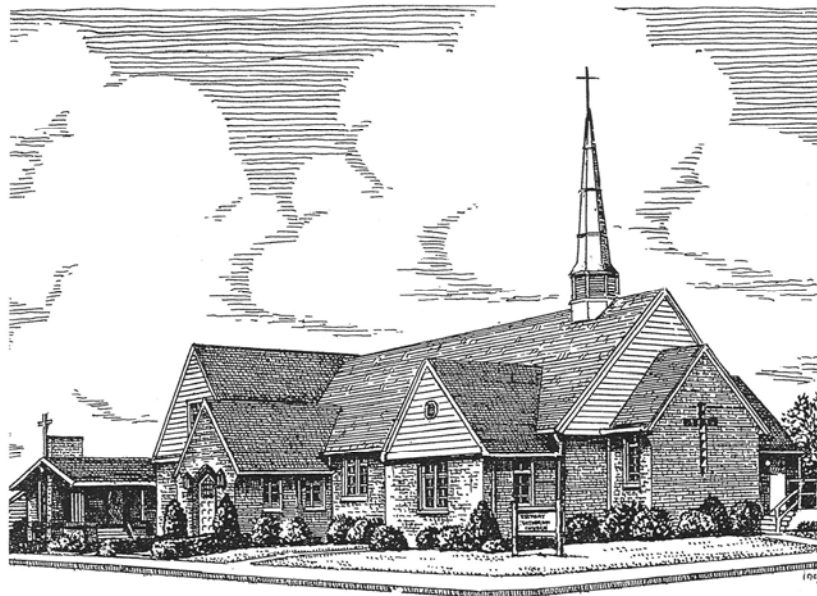
Bethany is planning its own “Homecoming” this fall, with two very special Friendship Sundays: November 15th and 22nd. On these special days, we are inviting new people to visit our church. But Friendship Sundays are not just about new friends – they are about bringing together all of our members and friends who have made Bethany their home in the past.

Preparations are being made, spirits are high, and we are excited to have **everyone** – especially those who have not been back for awhile, come to Bethany to help us celebrate - what we have been - and where we are going.

Imagine coming through the bright red doors on Sunday morning and seeing all the people you have connected with over the years – all back at Bethany for our own Homecoming!

Please join us for our special Friendship Sundays – bring a friend - and come home to Bethany!!

FRIENDSHIP SUNDAYS ARE NOVEMBER 15th & 22nd





YOU ARE INVITED!

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 15TH
SUNDAY NOVEMBER 22ND

FRIENDSHIP SUNDAYS

This is the time to bring EVERYONE together!! Mark your calendars now for these two special Sundays to help us celebrate Community. With **everyone** coming back for these two Sundays – and bringing friends, we will enjoy the wonderful fullness of true community. This will be the perfect time to return to Bethany if you have been gone for awhile – and to bring friends and relatives who you have been wanting to invite. If you have never joined us for one of our services, we extend a special invitation to you to visit during our Friendship Sundays and celebrate community with us.

We have two beautiful services each Sunday morning:-----

9:30 TRADITIONAL SERVICE: This service follows the beautiful Lutheran liturgy and is enriched by exceptional organ music and hymns. Holy Communion is celebrated and childcare is available.

11:00 CONTEMPORARY SERVICE: This service brings together a variety of musicians, including Pastor Jeff who sheds his formal robe to pick up the bass guitar. Members of the congregation are encouraged to join in song and music, playing drums and tambourines in celebration of the Word of God. Children of all ages are included in this service.

10:45 Adult Bible Study: Together we explore the Word of God and its meaning in our lives. Large-print Bibles are provided. Everyone is welcome.

NOVEMBER 15th: Join us for coffee and Morning Munchies in the Community Hall following both services.

NOVEMBER 22nd: Join us for a special **HOME COMING BUFFET** following the second service.

Please Come visit with old friends and make new ones!



I Am Wherever There Is Love – A Letter From God

Our 14 year old dog, Abbey, died last month. The day after she died, my 4 year old daughter Meredith was crying and talking about how much she missed Abbey. She asked if we could write a letter to God so that when Abbey got to heaven, God would recognize her. I told her that I thought we could so she dictated these words:

Dear God,

Will you please take care of my dog? She died yesterday and is with you in heaven. I miss her very much. I am happy that you let me have her as my dog even though she got sick. I hope you will play with her. She likes to play with balls and to swim. I am sending a picture of her so when you see her you will know that she is my dog. I really miss her.

Love, Merideth



We put the letter in an envelope with a picture of Abbey and Meredith and addressed it to God/Heaven. We put our return address on it. Then Meredith pasted several stamps on the front of the envelope because she said it would take lots of stamps to get the letter all the way to heaven. That afternoon she dropped it into the letter box at the post office. A few days later, she asked if God had gotten the letter yet. I told her that I thought He had.

Yesterday, there was a package wrapped in gold paper on our front porch addressed, 'To Meredith' in an unfamiliar hand. Meredith opened it. Inside was a book by Mr. Rogers called, 'When a Pet Dies.' Taped to the inside front cover was the letter we had written to God in its opened envelope. On the opposite page was the picture of Abbey & Meredith and this note:

Dear Meredith,

Abbey arrived safely in heaven. Having the picture was a big help. I recognized Abbey right away. Abbey isn't sick anymore. Her spirit is here with me just like it stays in your heart. Abbey loved being your dog. Since we don't need our bodies in heaven, I don't have any pockets to keep your picture in, so I am sending it back to you in this little book for you to keep and have something to remember Abbey by.

Thank you for the beautiful letter and thank your mother for helping you write it and sending it to me. What a wonderful mother you have. I picked her especially for you. I send my blessings every day and remember that I love you very much.

By the way, I am wherever there is love.

Love, God

THE BAZAAR IS HERE!

NOVEMBER 7TH – 9AM to 3PM



**Incredible Homemade
Crafts
Fabulous "Treasures"
Delicious Baked Goods**



The Craft Ladies have been busy bees for the past several months and are getting ready, once again, for our fabulous annual Holiday Bazaar. Be sure to mark your calendars and bring friends to this special community event.

TREASURES NEEDED: If you have any items that could be sold at the Bazaar (white elephant), please bring them to the church SOON.

BAKED ITEMS: Please bring in your delicious pies and other baked items on Friday, Nov. 6th from 9AM to 2PM (if possible). We will be downstairs setting up between these hours. Please have items wrapped and priced, ready to sell.

This year there will be no lunch served, but there will be coffee and donuts, so we can sit down and enjoy good conversation with friends we seldom see.

VOLUNTEERS: We can use volunteers for setting up on Friday and helping throughout the day on Saturday.

Please call Donna Frey 503-284-6855 if you can help, or have any questions.

Wednesday Activity Night ('WAN')

Did you know?

WAN provides an opportunity for Bethany members **and visitors** to get to know each other in an informal setting every Wednesday night at 7PM. Everyone of all ages is welcome! Refreshments are always served.

We are still a small group but since last year, the number of youth participants has been growing. On a typical evening, there are about eight to ten teenagers who gather for games, visiting, or for a place to do homework or just 'hang-out'. From time to time, we celebrate birthdays and special events. There are typically six or so adult participants. We all mix, young and 'old', and enjoy the time together. Drop in some Wednesday evening and learn how to play 'Zonk'!

Upcoming special, and popular, events include:

1. **WAN Halloween party** with pumpkin decorating contest, costumes (optional), pizza, pies, and candies, etc., on October 28 at **6:30pm**.
2. **Annual Christmas party**, with potluck, and gift exchange on December 16 at 7PM.

You are invited! Bring your friends! Come check us out!



SPECIAL THANKS to our Yard and Garden Team for their dedication and devotion to the grounds at Bethany:

The Schrumm Family: Jack, LeDonna, Jeff & Jim;
Phyllis Parker; Donna Frey; and Rob Ostlind.



The grass withers, the flowers fall, but the Word of God stands forever - Isaiah

Looking ahead...

Christmas Events at Bethany

Christmas Carol Sing Along

Thursday, Dec. 10, 6:30-7:30pm

Lots of good music – light refreshments following.

Cost: Canned food donation (suggested two cans per attendee) to support the Sunshine Division Food Bank of the Portland Police Bureau.

Christmas Party & Potluck

Wednesday, Dec. 16, 7:00-8:30pm

Bring a friend and join others for food and fun! We will have a \$5 gift exchange [optional].

Annual “Lillejuleaften”

Danish Language Service

Wednesday, Dec. 23, 7:30pm

Celebrate Christmas at Bethany Danish-style with people from all over the Portland region!

Christmas Eve Services

Thursday, Dec. 24

7:00pm Family Service

10:30pm Candlelight Service

Come and celebrate the Savior’s birth!

**Do you need a ride to church on Sunday mornings?
Please give the church office a call (503-284-3836)
so that we can make ride arrangements for you!**



NOTES from the GARDEN



In October, five adults and two teens from Bethany attended the annual synod conference held at the Oregon Gardens in Silverton. The theme of the conference was Living Faithfully: Empowering Leadership for Growth

At the Living Faithfully Conference we were asked to select a coffee mug for use throughout the weekend. I chose a white one with a multitude of cats on it. At the end of the conference we were given the opportunity to put in rocks, soil and fertilizer. When everything was prepared, we were given small delicate flower seeds to plant in our mugs.



I brought that mug home and gave it a few drops of water, being careful to not expose the seeds. Placing it on my window ledge, I watered it a little bit each day. Within three days I had a plethora of little green seedlings reaching toward the light.

What a beautiful metaphor for our life here at Bethany. We have each been given our choice of a mug – in this case the choice was Bethany. What we put into this mug is so important if we want life to grow from it! Are we preparing it in the best possible way for all to grow?

People are like the beautiful flowers in the garden – starting as mere seeds. When planted in fertile soil, we will grow and blossom. Together we must prepare the ground so that each seed can grow, and together we must water those seeds. As a church community we are blessed to have a beautiful church building in a lovely setting. But a building alone is not a church. We are a community, a place of love and support – a place where any person, young or old, can come to be nourished and to grow.

Each of us must take part in the cultivation of our church – helping it to be fertile soil for all who come. Whether it is through participating in a service, visiting the homebound, providing hospitality or entering into quiet prayer, everything we do in God's name helps nourish the seeds.

While we, as a church community, prepare to invite new and returning people into our church this month and beyond, we must be certain that our soil is ready: each of us must look within to ask if we are helping prepare the soil for others. And, are we accepting the love and the life that God is offering each one of us through this community – letting the fertile soil of Bethany and the love of its gardeners help us to grow just a little bit each day?

Though now my little seedlings are mere sprouts of green, I am promised that someday they will produce beautiful white flowers. But I must faithfully water them and give them light. I believe in the flowers to come for my little white mug with the cats on it. And I believe in the flowers to come at Bethany. Together let us faithfully prepare the soil and water the seeds. Together, let us believe in the flowers to come.

Deborah Shimkus



Bethany had two teens attend the Living Faithfully Conference. While the adults were in workshops, the teens were very active, and had a “lock in” sleepover at the church in Silverton. Below is a glimpse of their activities while there:

FINDING THE LIGHT

By Emalee Guild – grade 7

To start our day off in Silverton, we played a few games in the meadow at the Oregon Gardens. This went on for about an hour, then we did an hour of community service. We were cutting blackberry bushes so they can make a new garden center. After our community service, we went on a tour of the gardens. We got to see the many different areas of the gardens. We saw roses and lilacs and so many, many more flowers!

After we were done in the gardens we went to the church. We found our sleeping room, then we got cookies. We played more games which was even more fun. Then that night at 9:30 we played FINDING THE LIGHT. We had to find the light, but not get caught or else we went to ‘jail’. We all found the light!!! I did get caught twice, so went to jail twice. It wasn’t fun being in jail, but it was worth it for playing the game.

Overall, I would say I had a LOT of fun at the event, and would love to go there again!



Note: How many of us play the game of Finding the Light? The light is always there, but to find it we often have to go through many travails. As Emalee says, it’s not fun ‘being in jail’, but it is worth it to play the game and find the light!