

BETHANY BEACON

Feelings of Relief; a view from the back porch

by Rev. Colleen Samson

Are you feeling relieved that Christmas is over? Maybe you are relieved that the dreaded exam at the doctor's office is over again for another year. Or maybe you are just happy to have something behind you that you were not looking forward to. We all get those feelings of relief from time to time. It is the first Sunday after Christmas, and I have some feelings of relief. The picture you see below is the view from the screened in porch at the Gabriel House where we stay. Today was sunny and 81 degrees; a gorgeous Florida day.

As I sat outside for a couple hours taking in the view, there was a feeling of relief that finally came over me. My mind, arms, legs, and toes relaxed like they had not been able to for months. I said to myself, "It's really over, the bone marrow transplant is over, and David is getting back on his feet." God has carried us all this way and will carry us home again one of these days. I looked at the still water in the lake and the trees without a breeze and thought that not too long ago those waters were rough and the trees were bent, and I remembered that God is there in the quiet and the storm. I thought about God, I thought about you all at church, and I thought about David, and I saw that it was all good. Good for now; knowing all we ever have is the present moment.

Maybe you have a child who has been wandering in the desert, a sibling who seems out of sorts, a parent who is suffering, a co-worker who was fired, or a spouse who has lost interest in life. You want the situation to resolve somehow because our feelings of relief, when a crisis is over, are welcome feelings. They are feelings of cheerfulness or optimism that follow the removal of anxiety, pain, or distress. A time when we can say, "Gee, I'm glad that is finally over."

But, then what? Then, it is time to reflect. What did I learn from my experience? Where did I see God at work? When did I feel God's presence? How did God lead me to these feelings of

relief?

Gail Rodgers in *Feeling Anxious? God's Relief!* points out five things from 1 Peter to remember when you need to feel some relief.

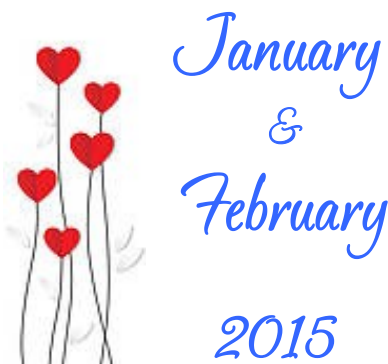
1. Be Clear Minded. Stay focused on God. Look above the circumstances and trust in God's guidance.
2. Be Self-controlled. Pay attention to what is happening within your heart and mind, and choose to dwell on the power of the Holy Spirit to help steady you. The Spirit will give you the power to lean on healthy solutions in uncertain times.
3. Pray. Acknowledge God in every area of your life. Invite God to come into your work, your relationships, your worries, and your stressors.
4. Be Hospitable. How can we provide hospitality to those around us even when we ourselves are burdened? How can we extend welcome, warmth, and generosity in kindness?
5. Use Our Gifts to Serve Others. How can we have a servant's heart in the midst of our struggles?

God's relief is the best kind to find because it lasts. It not only lasts, but it gives us support for our next feelings of anxiety. I am relieved. Relieved that we are beginning to see our way through this health crisis, relieved that you all at the church are being held together, relieved to know that God is always there.

Please see my view from the back porch of the Gabriel House!



BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



**2952 Bethany Church Road
Claremont, NC 28610**

Phone: 828-464-5194

Email
bethanyuccoffice@aol.com

Website
www.BethanyUccClaremont.org

Pastor
Rev. Colleen Samson

Pastor Emeritus
Rev. Nevin Feather

Minister of Faith Formation
Pastor David Samson

Director After School All Stars
Brenda Josey

Youth/Teens Minister
Position Available

Interim Organist
Jane Cadwallader

**Bethany Beacon
Co-Editors**
Vivian Cline
Donna Ervin

Sunday Schedule
Sunday School: 9:30am
Worship: 10:30am

Christmas At Bethany



Sunday Morning Adult Discussion Group

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"Making Moral Decisions"

On January 11, the Sunday Morning Adult Discussion Group will begin a six-session study that touches on some of the most challenging issues Christians face in contemporary society: "Making Moral Decisions."

There are many things that influence the decisions we make every day. We all have certain rules by which we *must* abide, as well as local, state, and federal laws we are required to obey. But many of our daily decisions and interactions with others are driven by less well-defined guidelines.

While most people want to *be* good and to *do* good, their motivations may differ greatly. For example, a member of a church may volunteer at a local soup kitchen out of compassion for the poor while another person may volunteer to enhance his or her image. Still another may have been sentenced to twenty hours of community service for

some legal infraction. They are all serving the community, yet most people would agree that someone who does good works out of compassion is more moral than someone doing the same thing because they have no choice.

Even Christians seem to run the gamut from those who do good things to honor God to those who serve others because they fear God's wrath. And what if our intentions are good but we don't act on them? Are we still "good people?"

The first five sessions of "Making Moral Decisions" is a lead-in to the last session --"The Death Penalty: History and Ethical Considerations"--in which participants can apply their clarified concepts of morality to one of the most divisive issues of our time--the death penalty. How do we, as moral people--as followers of Christ--reconcile "Thou shalt not kill" with doing our civic duty by serving on a jury

in a death penalty case? Participants will use the information and skills gained from the five-session "Making Moral Decisions" to tackle the moral issues inherent in what is truly a life or death decision: Is killing ever justified? And do we as mortal men and women possess the moral authority to kill what God has created?

Come join the discussion. It's best if you can come to all the sessions, but if you can't that's OK. We have a congenial group that loves to hear all points of view of every topic we discuss. Join the discussion, or just sit back and listen to what others have to say...Sunday morning at 9:30 in Fellowship Hall.

by Pastor David Samson



ASH WEDNESDAY

There will be an **Ash Wednesday** service
with other LINC churches on
FEBRUARY 18, 2015, at 7:00 pm

Watch the Sunday bulletin for details.

Pastor David-----A Bone Marrow Transplant Recipient

We have learned more about bone marrow transplants than we ever wanted to know. And, by the time we get back to North Carolina, you will probably know more than you ever wanted to know! Guess a little education in this area makes all of us appreciate what people go through when they have a BMT. When a person has a BMT, it knocks out their entire immune system. David does not, at this point, have an immune system like a healthy person. Since the transplant, his immune system has been very weak. This is caused both by the preparative chemotherapy regimen before his transplant and by the drugs he must take after the transplant. The medications he takes now are used to prevent a complication called graft-versus-host disease (GVHD). GVHD is a common complication of a transplant from an unrelated donor. (See! More than you ever wanted to know!)

Because of a weakened immune system, most infections happen in the first 100 days after transplant, but they remain a risk as long as your immune system is weak. Infections can be very serious and even life-threatening in some cases, so they watch David closely for signs of infections. He receives medications to reduce the risk of infections. His immune system will not be at full strength, even after one to two years, especially if he still has to take medications for GVHD. Does he have GVHD? Yes, he had Acute GVHD. He developed a rash over his entire body which has been controlled with the use of steroids. They determined it was GVHD by taking a biopsy of the rash. He has also developed a couple viruses, one in the liver and one in the kidneys, which many of us have, but these viruses do not bother us. He is being treated for both of them. Sometimes BMT recipients develop Chronic GVHD. **We need your prayers that David does not have any chronic conditions as a result of his transplant. Please pray.** We truly believe that your prayers, Bethany congregation, have made the difference in his outcome so far, so please continue to ask God to heal David in the best way.

Currently, David has a cough and runny nose virus of some kind. He has been swabbed twice to see if it is the flu, and it is not. He has also had a chest x-ray, and they will give him another one if it does not go away soon. His medical team watches over him very closely.

As for when we will be coming home, we don't know for sure. We do know that he will have a bone marrow biopsy at the 100 day post transplant mark. No doubt we will wait for those results and depending on the outcome will travel home as soon as he is given the doctor's okay. Miss you all!

by Pastors Colleen and David





LINC MISSION TRIP APRIL 18-25

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We are looking for mission-minded volunteers! A Mission Trip is scheduled to New Jersey where we will be helping to build and/or refurbish houses for persons still needing help from Hurricane Sandy. The United Church has a project here with Church of the Brethren and provides good accommodations for volunteers. The cost per volunteer for travel and all amenities will be \$200. Please see Lou Grandmaison if you are interested in going with the LINC group!

by Pastor Colleen Samson

News From LINC Gift and Thrift

LINC Gift and Thrift, a not-for-profit resale store in downtown Newton, welcomed Jane Melnyk as the new manager in September, 2014. Gift and Thrift is one of the ministries of LINC, which was formed by several United Church of Christ congregations to provide outreach projects in the community. Income from the store is used for LINC outreach ministries.

Every six months, 15% of profits are directed to the United Church of Christ Foundation to assist United

Church Homes and Services residents who have outlived their assets. The last payment from Gift and Thrift to the Foundation was \$1,000.

LINC Gift and Thrift is staffed by volunteers. Regular volunteers from Bethany are Norma Boggs, Lou Grandmaison, Brenda Josey, and Barbara Wireman. Thank you for your ministry of service to this worthy cause.

by Lou Grandmaison

Your 2014 Church Council

The Bethany Church Council consists of Elders and Deacons. Council members are nominated based on how others view their gifts and talents, as well as their willingness to serve. Both Elders and Deacons should understand that growing spiritually is their number one focus. If our elders and deacons are not in tune with God, then their ability to lead the church is hampered.

The Elders are specifically nominated because of their spiritual leadership and their willingness to visit the elderly and the sick. Deacons are nominated for their knowledge of finances and their ability to manage the church properties. Serving as an Elder or a Deacon is an honorable responsibility in which one is ultimately in covenant with the congregation and with God to discern and oversee the ministry of the body of Christ at Bethany Church.

Last year, our council worked in several areas for the growth of our church:

1. We began 2014 by completing renovations in the lower level of the church in order to accommodate our Before and After School Program.
2. An emphasis for the year was placed on bringing technology into our worship services. With the financial help of our national church, you should see changes this year in how technology is used in worship. Bids were obtained and council will begin to sort through how to begin this major project.

3. With the recommendation of the Board of Christian Education, the council by consensus decided to give the Board of Christian Education the okay to begin a program on "How to Become an Inclusive Church."
4. The Church Council supported the continuing efforts of establishing a youth/teen program. These efforts have proven to be difficult, but hopefully not insurmountable.
5. A church endowment team was initiated and a final policy was put in place at the annual meeting in December, 2014.
6. Maintenance for the church and the parsonage are constantly reviewed and completed as necessary.
7. Your council members prepare monthly communion for the congregation, serve as counters for Sunday morning offerings, prepare devotions for council meetings, and meet regularly to discuss the welfare of the church and the congregation.

Thank you to Eddie Ervin for serving as president, Beth Cline as vice-president, and Louise Setzer as secretary. Also serving in 2014 were Vivian Cline, Lou Grandmaison, and Steve Kale. Well done good and faithful servants!

by Pastor Colleen Samson



Did You Know?



Altar Flowers 2015

The new Flower Calendar for 2015 is posted in the narthex. Please consider providing altar flowers for one month during the year. By keeping our flowers in the refrigerator during the week we are able to use them for the entire month. You may want to choose a month that has a special event for you, your family or a friend. The cost from ABC Florist is about \$20.00 per vase plus the tax. All you have to do is sign the chart and pay the bill mailed to you from the florist. For any questions see Norma Boggs. Thank you for your support.

Fellowship Committee

The committee will be meeting soon to choose the dates and places for our 2015 "Meet & Eat" fellowship time together. If you have a different location that you would like to go to or other suggestions please let a member know. The committee is always looking for new ideas.....Could this be your "talent?"



"Stuff A Stocking" Campaign

Thank you to all those who filled a Salvation Army stocking so many children would have a better Christmas. Bethany filled 15 stockings in December.

Church Council Meeting

On Sunday, January 11 at 5:00 pm, the entire Council, including the outgoing and the incoming members will meet. We thank our outgoing council members, Louise Setzer, Vivian Cline, and president, Eddie Ervin. We are grateful for your service. We also welcome new council members Donna Ervin, Lisa Goins, and Jose DeJesus. Thank you for serving on behalf of the congregation.

Installation will take place in February.

Sunday, January 4 at 1:00 pm

Come help remove and store our Christmas decorations. It's always a "fun time" of Fellowship.

CWS Blanket Sunday

Will be observed on a date in February that is yet to be determined. This is a project of Church World Service that we participate in every year.

Prayer List

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If you want to activate the Prayer Chain, please call Becky Cline at 828-464-4346.
Anyone can activate the Prayer Chain with a prayer request or gratitude for a prayer answered.



Annette	Lyerly Cline (AL Pavillion	Lou Grandmaison	James Lowe
Vicky Allen	210)	Donnie Harris	Steve Moore
Billy Beard	Michael Cline and Family	Louise Harris	Nadine Pennell
Robert Belk	Bertha Crosby	Christy Isenhour	Pastor David Samson
C.J. Brooks	Esther Dollarhide	Lisa Janulewicz	Bill Wahl
Linda Brooks	Sheila Earp	Lori Kelly	Cindy Watson
Bill Cline	Sheila Eisenhour	Donald Laney	Jeannie Willis
Elizabeth Cline (CVL 126)	Beverly Faris	Dorothy Lassinger (CVL	Barbara Wireman
	Lisa Goins	106)	O.D. Witherspoon (CVL
		Kenneth Lockwood	105)



SERVING IN JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2015



Elder of the Month:

January

Steve Kale

February

Carolyn Kale

Liturgists:

January

4	Lynn Brooks
	Isaiah 60: 1-6
11	Jose DeJesus
	Genesis 1: 1-5
18	Carolyn Kale
	1 Samuel 3: 1-10
25	Louise Setzer
	Psalms 62: 5-12

February

1	Beth Cline
	Deuteronomy 18: 15-20
8	Larry Sink
	Isaiah 40: 21-31
15	Brenda Josey
	2 Kings 2: 1-12
22	Norma Boggs
	Mark 1: 9-15

Love Your Neighbor



Ushers:

January

Lynn Brooks	4
Louise Setzer	11

February

Roger Josey	18
John Pope	25

Counting Offerings:

January

Vivian Cline	1
Lou Grandmaison	8

February

To Be Announced	15
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Staff -Parish Relations Committee

Rev. Samson's SPRC members are:

Chris Brooks
(459-4491)

Becky Cline
(464-4346)

Vivian Cline
(464-6471)

Larry Sink
(612-8042)

Acolytes:

January

AJ Ellison	4
Carolyn Kale	9
Zach Stewart	13
Donna Ervin	17

February

Steve Kale	24
Vivian Cline	26
Tommy Little	26
Carolyn Kale	

Childcare

Providers:

January

Vivian Cline	3
Gina Beard	5
Beth Cline	17
Lynn Brooks	

February

Louise Setzer	1
Katie Barrett	8
Vivian Cline	15
Gina Beard	22

Happy Birthday!

January



Tommy Little	4
Joshua Stewart	9
Adam Smith	13
Lynda Wilkinson	17
Colleen Samson	24
Joey Mosteller	26
Zachary Stewart	26

February

Larry Sink	3
Steve Kale	5
Vivian Cline	17

Happy Anniversary!

February



Rick & Lynda Wilkinson	7
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Thank You!

TO ALL WHO SERVE THESE MONTHS....
WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT you!!!!
THERE IS ALWAYS ROOM FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS!

Bethany United Church of Christ
2952 Bethany Church Road
Claremont, North Carolina 28610

Bethany is a
Community of Justice
and Peace serving the
needs of people on
their spiritual journey.

NO MATTER
WHO YOU ARE
OR WHERE
YOU ARE ON
LIFE'S
JOURNEY
YOU ARE
WELCOME
HERE!

Love
Your
Neighbor



Rev. Colleen E. Samson
Pastor, Bethany UCC

Phone: 828-464-5194
E-mail:
BethanyUCCOffice@aol.com

EVERYONE
IS
WELCOME



We Are on The Web

www.BethanyUccClaremont.org

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Church Council Meeting

Sunday, January 11 at 5:00 pm
Deacons will meet at 4:30 pm

Worship Committee

Sunday, January 11 at 3:30 pm



Valentine's Day

Tuesday, February 15



Ash Wednesday Service

February 18, 2015
at 7:00 pm



CWS Blanket Sunday

date in February will be announced.