

BETHANY BEACON

Life Is Too Short--Lent and Beyond *by Rev. Colleen Samson*

While searching for Lenten studies, I came across a book by James W. Moore entitled *Give Up Something Bad for Lent*. It is a different take on how we can observe the season of Lent. My take is that it applies to our lives in general, and Lent is a good time to take on some of the book's concepts and carry them beyond Lent. To give you an idea of what the author means by "giving up something bad," here are some titles of some of the chapters: Give Up Harsh, Condemning Judgments for Lent; Give Up the Enemies Within for Lent; and Give Up Running Away for Lent. In this article, I will talk about the chapter called, Give Up Pettiness for Lent.

"A woman went to her doctor one day with a catalog of complaints about her health. The physician examined her and became convinced that there was nothing physically wrong with her. He suspected that her problem was her negative outlook on life, her bitterness, her resentment, her grudges, and her self-pity. Every day for her was a 'woe-is-me pity party,' another day to nurse her grievances, to feel sorry for herself and to become more and more angry over how, in her mind, she had been mistreated by people and by life in general.

The wise physician took her into a back room in his office where he kept empty bottles. He said to her, 'See those bottles, notice that they are all empty.

They are shaped differently from one another, but basically they are all alike. Most importantly, they have nothing in them.' He continued, 'I can take one of these bottles and fill it with poison to kill a human being, or I could take the same bottle and fill it with enough medicine to bring down a fever, ease a throbbing headache, or fight bacteria in the body. I make the choice. I can fill it with whatever I choose. I can fill it with poison that will hurt or with medicine that will heal.'

Then, the doctor looked the woman straight in the eye and said, 'Each day that God gives us is basically like one of these empty bottles. We can choose to fill it with love and life-affirming

thoughts and attitudes that lift us and other people up, or we can fill it with destructive poisonous thoughts that pull us—and everyone we meet—down. The choice is ours.'

All of us are "containers." When we choose to fill ourselves with pettiness, hurt feelings, and/or bitterness, we choose to fill our containers with "bad stuff," or "good stuff."

Spending time with those who need life-saving transplants brought this concept to me in a way that it never has before. Pettiness has no place in the life of someone who is fighting for their very being. It is a waste of time and energy. Life is too short. Pettiness can cut us off from God and others. It just is not worth filling ourselves with negative resentments.

Hurt feelings are real, but dwelling on them hurts our soul. Let it go. I know a person who still carries hurt feelings after 45 years about how her church didn't meet her expectations when her husband past away. People feel slighted because of this and that, but I say we should give people the benefit of the doubt and believe they are doing the best they can. It is better to fill our "container" with good thoughts about people.

Bitterness can contaminate your soul. James Moore says he remembers a couple who became upset with their church back in the early 1990's because of a decision the church made about a social issue. The couple became sick with bitterness and hostility. It was all they could talk about. At every meal, they fussed, they harshly criticized the church and its leaders, they wrote angry letters, and they looked constantly for materials to use against their church. They carried their bitterness for years and finally drove their own children away from the Church. Life is too short.

All of us have some form of pettiness, hurt feelings, and bitterness that seems to go on and on. This Lenten season, consider giving up those bad things and making room for "good stuff." *Life is too short.*

BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



March
&
April
2015

**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

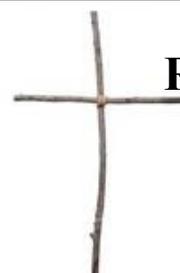
Director After School All Stars
Brenda Josey

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



RE-THINK

LENT

THE RUGGED ROAD
A LENTEN SERIES REV. COLLEEN SAMSON



Youth Easter Party

Saturday, April 4

1:00pm - 3:00pm

Rain or Shine



SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Who Are You?

3/1

Exodus 17: 1-7, John 4: 1-42

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Eyes to See

3/8

Isaiah 25: 4-7a, John 9: 1-41

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Arise and Live

3/15

Ezekiel 37: 1-14, John 11: 1-46

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Faithful Disciple

3/22

1Kings17: 8-16, John12: 1-1

SIXTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Bring Your Branches

3/29

1Samuel 16: 1-13, John 13: 1-17

MAUNDY THURSDAY

LINC Service at Bethany

4-1

7:00 p.m.

EASTER SUNDAY

Easter Sunrise

4/5

7:00 a.m.

Easter Breakfast

7:30 a.m.

Easter Worship

10:30 a.m.

Celebrate Life

Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24,

Mark 16: 1-8



MAUNDY THURSDAY

Bethany United Church of Christ

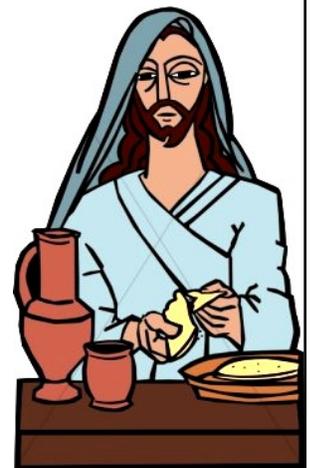
2952 Bethany Church Road, Claremont, NC 828-464-5194

LINC Maundy Thursday Service

April 2, 2015 7:00 p.m.

Before the Passover meal, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. By performing this lowly act of service, Jesus showed them the full extent of his love. By his example, Jesus demonstrated how Christians are to love one another through humble service.

During the Passover meal, Jesus took bread and wine and asked God to bless it. He broke the bread into pieces, giving it to his disciples and said, "This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying "This is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."



Offerings Did You Know?

Your offerings support the work of the church and are missed if you don't consistently give.

Please remember to make your offerings to the church even if you are not at worship.

Thank you!

Celebration Time

Page 3



Sadly, we had to say good-bye to Pastor Elizabeth Horton but happily celebrated the time she spent with us while Pastors Colleen and David were away. Thank you, Elizabeth. You did a wonderful job!



Easter Party



(for youth grades 7 and younger)

Bethany United Church of Christ

April 4, 2015 1-3 p.m.

**Bring your baskets for the
EGG HUNT**

*Crafts, refreshments, and lots of fun!
Party to be held Rain or Shine*



Lenten School Kit Project



**Bethany
Missions**



in cooperation
with the our LINC
partners support
this Church World
Service Project.

Each Kit Should Include:

- One pair of blunt metal scissors (rounded tip)
- Three 70-count spiral notebooks or notebooks totaling 200 -210 pages. **(No loose-leaf or filler paper.)**
- One 30-centimeter ruler (12")
- One hand-held pencil sharpener
- One large eraser
- Six new pencils with erasers
- One box of 24 crayons (only 24)

CWS School Kits give children in impoverished schools, refugee camps, or other difficult settings some of the basic tools for learning.

Please donate to our **Lenten School Kit Project by April 5.** Items needed are listed above. The collection box will be outside Fellowship Hall. *Kits will be assembled at a time and place to be determined. Watch the Sunday bulletin for further information.*

Adult Sunday Morning Faith Formation

Jesus Arose From the Dead....

During March, the Sunday Morning Adult Discussion Group will continue to discover (or rediscover) the rebel Jesus by discussing Mike Slaughter's *Renegade Gospel*. Central to the Christian faith is a man who denies all our pre-conceived notions about what God should look like. Joining his movement will mean coming to terms with the real Jesus, the rebel Jesus. Jesus didn't come to start a religion. The rebel Jesus came with a renegade gospel to start a revolution. In *Renegade Gospel*, pastor and author Mike Slaughter presents Jesus and his challenging message to inspire us during Lent, Easter, and through the year.

....And After Jesus' Resurrection

The message of and about Jesus spread across the world. There were many apostles and missionaries involved in the spread of the Christian faith, but there is one person who has had a long-lasting impact. Religion professors sometimes like to stump their students with

a trick question. Who was the founder of Christianity? The students say "Jesus," and the professors respond, "No. It was Paul." The point is that Jesus was a Jewish peasant, but by the time of his resurrection, there was nothing remotely resembling Christianity. It was Paul who took the message of and about Jesus to the world.

Just who was Paul, and how should we think of him? Were some of his thirteen letters more important than others? Which churches did he found? How do we understand some of his apparently contradictory statements? Was he in favor or not of women's leadership in the early church? Beginning on April 12, we will begin a three-phase discussion about Paul's Life and Thought, Paul's Journeys, and Paul and the Role of Women in the Church. Join us to learn more about this man whom some have called the most influential leader and writer of the early Christian movement.

Come on Sundays at 9:30 in Fellowship Hall, and bring a friend or two. There is always space and a warm welcome for guests.

by Pastor David Samson



What Type of Follower Attends Our Church?

From The Parish Paper

As Jesus prepared to go to Jerusalem during his third year of ministry, his followers increased dramatically. As the crowds grew, what percentage followed because their deepest desire was to respond to God's call?

Research psychologists Mark van Vugt and Anjana Ahuja suggest that there are multiple reasons that an individual will choose to follow a certain person, group, or movement. They identify five different motivations that propel people to follow a leader and stay with a group. How might an understanding of these motives help congregational leaders increase member participation and engagement?

The Five Motivations

Type 1: The Subordinate. The individual's primary motive is "to stay within the hierarchy or stick with the herd." This member feels obligated to be a part of the group. In many family-size congregations (fewer than 50 active members), a large percentage of the members may have been drawn there by family and friends. Although this pattern is common in all sizes of congregations, persons attending church due to a subordinate motive may feel more comfortable submitting to a hierarchical leader (sometimes this is a church matriarch or patriarch rather than the pastor). The challenge in

deepening subordinates' church connection and faith development is to tap into their own passions, interests, and spiritual gifts. Subordinates can experience internal conflict over valuing their own faith development rather than the leader's agenda. However, such struggles can act as a gateway to a more healthy relationship with the congregation.

Type 2: The Supporter. These members participate because of personal attraction to a charismatic leader or the leader's objectives. Many attendees of congregations, especially those who attend megachurches, come because they feel a connection to the leadership's core ideals. Unlike the subordinate category, these participants already feel a strong alignment between their beliefs and organizational values. For these members to mature, church leaders need to continue building those core values in a consistent manner even when the key leadership changes. Ideally, the congregation also continues to mature in its decision-making, strategizing, and engagement with the outside world. When a significant percentage of followers fall in this category, it puts an extra burden on the leader. To the extent that leaders unswervingly point followers to Christ rather than to themselves, the greater the likelihood that both

leaders and followers will be pleased with the long-term results. These leaders must learn to relish the empowerment of members and release personal ambition.

Type 3: The Loyalist. This member is motivated to create cohesion and avoid ridicule. While a number of people probably still attend church drawing upon this motivation, the number was probably even higher when congregations and denominations fell in the mainstream. For many years, attending church just seemed like the right thing to do. A recent survey within one mainline denomination revealed that approximately one-third of their pastors attend national conferences out of loyalty to the denomination. That statistic may be a clue to the loyalty that resides in the pews. Discovering together what God is up to outside the walls of the congregation may be one way to deepen the faith of loyalists.

Type 4: The Apprentice. These members are motivated to combat uncertainty and aspire to learn new skills. Businesspersons who seek out mentors and devour the business literature fall into this category. In the corporate context, the motivation of these apprentices often comes from a desire to accrue the same benefits as the mentor or other professionals. Congregations that promise financial prosperity may indeed attract apprentices as well, but so can congregations whose leaders display a deep sense of joy and satisfaction with life. In other congregations, apprentices may simply want to follow similar pathways of persons that they have grown to admire. In this instance, the difference between an apprentice and a supporter is that the supporter is committed to the values of the leader while the apprentice has developed an additional trust for the leader's processes. Such followers are obviously well on their way to becoming leaders within the organization. Congregations that encourage apprentices to forge their own pathways based on their own personality and leadership styles benefit more than those who encourage the mere mimicking of esteemed leaders.

Type 5: The Disciple. This group of members' motivation to emulate the leader arises out of the longing for a new identity. They seek wisdom and guidance about how to live. This is the reason we hope motivates most of the persons attending our church. Unfortunately, new identities are seldom formed within passive attendees. People hollow out new identities by trying new things, reaching beyond their comfort zones, and finding that sweet spot balance of challenge and support. Too many discipleship programs teach discipleship through traditional educational processes. While Jesus certainly taught others, the New Testament disciples emerged by being their neighbors. Upon their return, the disciples then turned their reflections into new identities.

What Motivates Members in Your Church?

There are no statistics on how many people fall into each motivation category and the profile of members differs greatly by congregation. An increasing number of persons in the U.S. indicate that they have no religious preference—a trend described as the “rise of the nones.” Many church attendees, particularly in motivation types 1, 2, and 3, have become nones over the past few decades. People are and will continue to attend church with motivations born out of each of these five categories well into the future. Church size is limited by the number of lay leaders who are spiritually mature disciples. If a congregation grows to 150 or more members (a program church), lay leaders must be willing and able to have their spiritual direction needs met by someone other than their ordained leader. In the program church, many volunteers carry out the congregation's ministries.

What Creates Disciples?

As leaders continue to help members pursue discipleship, it is important to realize that people choose to be part of a congregation for a variety of reasons. Many may be there for some other reason than to become a disciple of Jesus Christ—at least at the outset. Further research suggests that it is possible for members in any motivation category to move toward the disciple category. Two proven methods include (1) encouraging the group to engage in common activities, and (2) helping participants reflect on those activities.

Common activities. Invite people to participate in a single-day ministry project (such as a Habitat for Humanity workday or a CROP walk to raise funds to fight hunger). Take a group field trip to experience an alternative ministry or organize a mission trip. Interview community leaders about neighborhood strengths and challenges or canvas the neighborhood to ask residents about their concerns and dreams. Engaging in common activities plants the seeds to grow disciples.

Reflecting on our common purpose. Because every group experience is potentially spiritually formative, talking about common experiences helps members articulate their faith. Discussion and reflection helps members find their spiritual gifts and celebrate their congregation's mission.

Leaders recognize the calling of followers. Paul wrote, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” Building up the church always means building on followers who are motivated to be disciples of Jesus Christ.



What Is Going On Downstairs?

Brenda Josey/Program Director
Jeannine Poole /Assistant Director

We are so proud of our sign on the entrance door. This is a huge help for new parents and grandparents as well as first time visitors. It really looks great and is very useful. It is the little things that make us so happy!

You will also see nice white dry erase boards replacing the old green chalk boards. This was a donation from Cornerstone International in Hickory, NC. Along with the boards came nice office chairs for all of our rooms. We want to thank them for remembering us when they moved into a new facility. We also want to thank Mr. Roger Josey for installing the dry erase boards.

On one of our full days here at school, we had the opportunity after a movie to visit the new facilities of Cornerstone International. This was a great history lesson for the children. The facility is the old Piedmont Wagon building that was used in the 1890s. What a wonderful thing to see technology in a building where the floors are 100 years old. Mr. Richard Swartzel, owner and president, took the children all the way to the top into the cupolas on the outside floor. The tour guide was Pamela Pope, vice president and friend of our group.

We are also implementing Casey Life Style Program with our older children. This is serving as a link between the child and the parent on issues concerning maturity and life style advancement. Our children are ready for the next step academically, and we want to make certain that they have the life skills needed.

I have also been working on funding for 2016. My pre RFP is in the hands of Catawba County United Way, and I am awaiting the next step of budgeting and presentation. The United Way monies must be applied for each and every year. Hopefully, we will also receive some funds for next year.

We have such a wonderful group of children in our program. They are advancing academically and socially. Most of them have been in the program for several years and are a complete part of our family. We have wonderful parents who support us in everything we do. After all these years, the parents are our friends. Thanks be to God for all He is doing in this environment.

We have several things in the works for the future.

Four of our computers can be upgraded for the use of all. These newer ones are also from Cornerstone International. We are talking to some IT people about having a wireless router installed so that most of our rooms will have wireless access. The children can then use their tablets. Hopefully the school can purchase 2 or 3 tablets for Mobie Math (Elementary School) and Carnegie Math (Middle School).

If you know of anyone who has a laptop that they are replacing, please let us know, or ask them about donation to our program. Technology changes so quickly that it is a full time job staying up on things. I am not a "techie," but I do know people who are.

Our children are also part of extracurricular activities. We have Joshua in robotics, Madison in basketball, Marlea in volleyball, Valeria, Atley, and Aries in Running Club, and Hope on the yearbook staff. Twice a week, the van goes back to Balls Creek for a second pick up. These are exceptional children, on the A honor roll, who could not participate unless they have transportation. We are so very proud of them!

Nothing could be accomplished without an absolutely wonderful staff! Ms Jeannine runs our Before School Program and does a wonderful job. Every morning she gets around ten children to four different schools. We need another morning counselor, and I have asked United Way for the funds to make it happen. Ms Jessica Shook took over our older students and is doing a fantastic job. She relates and interacts with them so well. Let me assure you that she is in total control! We love her, and they do, too. Ms Jessica Eggers has our K-2 class. She has eleven in that room every day. She wants to own a daycare in the future and is getting some valuable experience. I could not ask for a more dedicated young lady. Jeannine and I take the rest of the students. I generally help with reading and math, regardless of the age group. Oh, by the way, did I tell you we have 30 children?

There is a lot of love downstairs. There is a lot of work going on. There is a lot of maturing going on. There is a lot of drama going on. There are a lot of successes and sometimes small failures. All of us work together to make this a life changing experience for each and every one of these young people.

P.S. Summer Camp is on its way!!!!





Prayer List

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.

Vicky Allen	Michael Cline's Family	David Hasson	Pastor David Samson
Faye Beard	Bertha Crosby	Kay Ikerd	Steve Sigmon
Robert Belk	Sheila Earp	Donald Laney	Jim Sowell
C.J. Brooks	Karma Eckard and baby	Dorothy Lassinger (CVL	Lynnette Stokes
Linda Brooks	Sheila Eisenhour	106)	Bill Wahl
Bill Cline	Rodney Franklin	Darrell Little	Linda Wyke
Elizabeth Cline (CVL 126)	Lisa Goins	Kenneth Lockwood	Barbara Wireman
Lyerly Cline (AL Pavillion	Edith Grimes	James Lowe	O.D. Witherspoon (CVL
248)	Donnie Harris	Steve Moore	105)
	Louise Harris (AL 504)	Nadine Pennell	Ann Young



SERVING IN MARCH AND APRIL 2015



Elder of the Month:

March

Donna Ervin

April

Louise Setzer

Liturgists:

March

- 1 John Pope
Exodus 17: 1-7
- 8 Vivian Cline
Isaiah 25: 4-7a
- 15 Lou Grandmaison
Ezekiel 37: 1-14
- 22 Linda Anghilante
1 Kings 7: 8-16
- 29 Pamela Pope
1 Samuel 16: 1-13

April

- 5 Lynn Brooks
Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24
- 12 Jose DeJesus
Psalm 133
- 19 Carolyn Kale
Psalm 4
- 26 Louise Setzer
Psalm 23

Ushers:

March

Linda Anghilante

Fred Shields

April

Aris DeJesus

Jose DeJesus

Counting Offerings:

March

Beth Cline
Lou Grandmaison

April

Eddie Ervin
Jose DeJesus

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)

- 1
- 8
- 15
- 22
- 29
- 5
- 12
- 19
- 26

Acolytes:

March

Donna Ervin
A.J. Ellison
Zach Stewart
Steve Kale
Vivian Cline

April

Tommy Little
Carolyn Kale
Donna Ervin
A.J. Ellison

Happy Birthday!



March

- 20 Gina Beard
- 23 Chris Brooks
- 27 Jerry Pope
- 29 Beth Cline

April

- 2 Brenda Josey
- 2 Louise Setzer
- 7 Linda Witherspoon
- 13 David Samson
- 28 A. J. Ellison



Happy Anniversary!

April

- 3 David & Colleen Samson

Childcare Providers:

March

- 1 Beth Cline
- 8 Lynn Brooks
- 15 Louise Setzer
- 22 Katie Barrett
- 29 Vivian Cline

April

- 5 Gina Beard
- 12 Beth Cline
- 19 Lynn Brook
- 26 Louise Setzer

HAPPY EASTER

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!



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

March 15, at 5:00 p.m.

Deacons will meet at 4:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday Service

April 2, at 7:00 p.m. at Bethany UCC



Youth Easter Party

Saturday, April 4

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.



Easter Sunday April 5, 2015

Easter Sunrise 7:00 a.m.

Easter Breakfast 7:30 a.m.

Easter Worship 10:30 a.m.