



DEB HULL, HOLLY HILLGARDNER AND REV SHARON WATKINS

# The Little Harbinger

## Bethany Memorial Church

March 2020

BLESSED EASTER TIDINGS!

## The Pastor's Pen

by Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins

It's no secret that I'm a "city girl." I haven't always lived in the city, though.

My first full-time call to ministry was to Boone Grove Christian Church in Boone Grove, Indiana. Set in the middle of corn and soybean fields, Boone Grove consisted of a church, a school, a post office, a general store and a cluster of houses.

We had barely arrived when a huge snowstorm dumped well over a foot of snow. It pretty much shut us in. The next morning, we were surprised to hear a knock on the door. The store had loaded a snowmobile with gallons of milk – one for each family in the village with a child. We didn't even know they knew we lived there – much less that we had a one year old. (We didn't know small town life very well, yet!) I've never forgotten that simple act of

kindness, that expression of community. That would not have happened in the city where I grew up.

All these many years later (I just celebrated 36 years of ordained ministry last month) it's wonderful to be back in congregational ministry in a village with a church, a school (college!), a post office, a general store and cluster of houses. A place where you don't go unnoticed, and small acts of kindness happen frequently, where people know each other and each other's business – usually in a helpful way. It's good to be in a place where the history runs deep, but where the creative energy of students gives constant hope for a vibrant future.

We had been planning, later this month, to celebrate the formal covenant of our relationship as

congregation and pastor. Unfortunately, the occasion of my installation must now be postponed as part of the effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Nevertheless, I am grateful to be here. It feels like coming full circle in my ministry. At the same time, I'm also excited to see what new things will unfold as we move forward together. We are certainly in a time when the challenges before us will require all our gifts of wisdom, courage, creativity and spiritual insight.

Thanks be to God for calling us to this shared journey now.

# Shrove Tuesday

There were some who had doubts that the men of BMC would be able to pull it off. Oh, they of little faith!

On Shrove Tuesday, the men held a pancake dinner to raise money for Week of Compassion. Pancakes were flipped and juice was poured from 5:00 pm until 7:00 pm. A total of \$287 was raised.

The men are grateful for the gracious assistance of Charlotte Chambers, Cindy Hoffman, and Kerry Shaulis, and would like to thank all those who supported the event.



*Left: Collette, Zeno, Aaron, and Ollie Honsowetz enjoy pancakes, sausage, and scrambled eggs.*

*Right: Joanne Sykes*

*Above: Gerard NeCastro, Herb Weaver, John Rodenberg, BC Student Noah Gill, John Hull, and Tom Miller showcased their culinary talents.*



## Shimenawa

An object bound by “shimenawa” (rope) and festooned with “shide” (the zig-zagged white paper) often indicates a sacred or pure place that wards off evil spirits. To the left, the tree in front of the church, destined to be cut down, is adorned with shimenawa and shide.

BMC member Amy VanHorn commented on Facebook: *“I would have walked by that tree to every baptism, wedding, funeral, and more. Was such a beautiful tree that has been witness to it all.”*



Do you work with wood? We would love to have suggestions on what might be made from the “cookie slices” saved when the tree was removed. One obvious project might be a table, but maybe one of you has a creative idea for the remaining slices. Call the church office (304-829-7138) or email [office@bmcwv.org](mailto:office@bmcwv.org) with your suggestions.



## Ash Wednesday



*The season of Lent is the period prior to Easter. The period, which lasts from Ash Wednesday to Easter, extends for 40 days (excluding Sundays). The observance of Lent varies greatly among Christians, both in denominational participation, and according to personal practice. It is most prominent in the life of the Catholic Church, but it is valued by members of most denominations as well as non-denominational churches. Lent is regarded as an opportunity for reflection, as the time approaches to commemorate the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The contrast of experience and emotion, in recalling these two events is to be expected. It would not be exaggeration to think of Good Friday and Easter as the best and worst events in history. This tension affects the nature of the reflection that believers engage in. Many believe that the compelling theme of Lent should be remorse. We should, according to this school of thought, be considering our collective guilt, which required Christ to lose his life. Others celebrate the coming of Christ as a divine gift, for which they are grateful. Additionally, the theology of redemption and the new covenant between God and humanity occupy much of the consideration of this season. Ultimately, persons will determine for themselves how involved they will be in Lenten observance and how to conduct their observance. Congregations, regions, and special shared gatherings will offer opportunities to choose from.*

(taken from the Disciples Home Missions publication "Lent Resource 2020")

An Ash Wednesday service was held at the Hub on the Bethany College campus. The Rev. Sharon Watkins led the service assisted by Disciples of Christ Bethany students. About 25 BMC members, BC students, and Bethany Community members attended and had their foreheads marked with ashes in the shape of a cross. The response from those present was overwhelmingly positive, and as one BMC member commented: "It felt like a church."

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*Yet even now, Says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Joel 2:12-13 NRSV*

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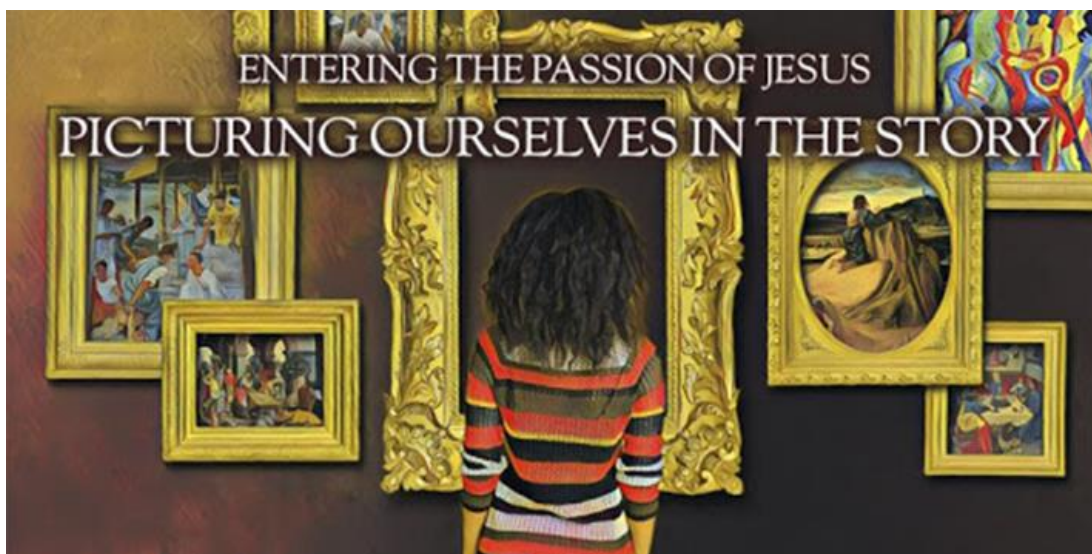


*For you shall go out in joy,  
and be led back in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you  
shall burst into song,  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.*

*Isaiah 55:12*

Beech Bottom Community Christian Church and Bethany Memorial Church had planned to co-sponsor an evening of "Disciples Got Talent" on Saturday, March 21 at 6:00 pm.

Due to concerns over the coronavirus, this event is postponed until further notice. However, watch for updates and if you have a particular talent you'd like to show off, feel free to contact either church.



The events of Christ's Passion, which take place during the last week of Jesus' life, often don't receive enough time in our worship and study. These stories are important to our faith journey and our identity as followers of Jesus. And yet we often move too quickly from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday with little time to take in the dramatic story of that last week. Throughout the six weeks of Lent we will "freeze-frame" moments in Holy Week so we might put ourselves in the picture, thereby "Entering the Passion of Jesus." How might taking a closer look at the ancient story open us to deeper conviction for our role in its ongoing message? Inspired by Amy-Jill Levine's book by the same name. (© Marcia McFee 2020)

Come join us for this unique worship experience. Call the church for additional information.



## Honoring Rev. Watkins

In honor of Rev. Watkins' installation, and in partnership with the Wheeling YWCA, Bethany Memorial Church will be participating in an outreach project to benefit women and children who have experienced violence of human trafficking.

The following is a wish list of items particularly helpful. If you are able to participate, please bring these items to the church on or before March 29.

Your willingness to support this project is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact Deb Hull at [dhull51@gmail.com](mailto:dhull51@gmail.com) or the church office at [office@bmcwv.org](mailto:office@bmcwv.org).

ALTHOUGH THE INSTALLATION OF REV. WATKINS IS POSTPONED, THIS PROJECT WILL CONTINUE AS PLANNED. PLEASE CONTINUE TO DONATE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING.



### REQUESTED ITEMS

- Diapers, especially sizes 3, 4, and 5.
- Hypoallergenic baby wipes.
- Baby Lotion and body wash
- Disposable razors and shaving gel
- Deodorant
- Tampons
- Hairbrushes and hair dryers
- Bath loofas
- Body wash
- Underwear
- Alarm Clocks
- Towels and washcloths
- Blankets
- AA and AAA batteries
- Food storage containers
- Journals or small notebooks
- Adult coloring books and pens/markers
- Cards and games

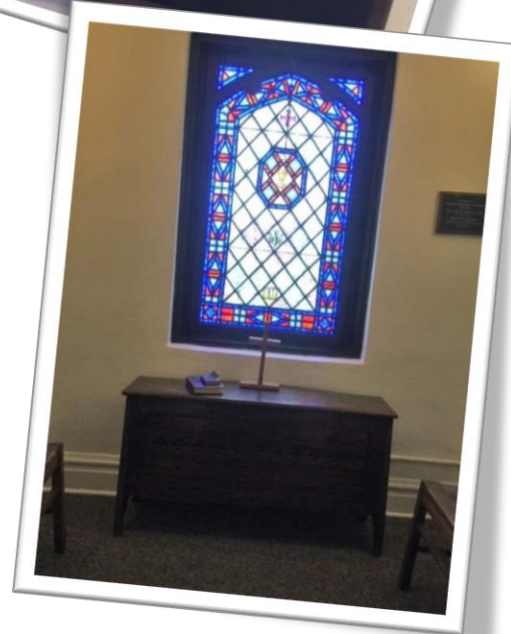
## The "New" Little Chapel

Just in time for the Lenten season, and with thanks to Herb and Anita Weaver, the upstairs little chapel has been renovated for use by anyone seeking a smaller, quieter, more intimate place to pray or worship.

The room has been freshly painted and new carpet put down. A kneeling bench will be purchased soon.

The room was originally dedicated in memory of William Pendleton Campbell, the youngest son of Alexander Campbell by his daughters.

During the Lenten season, the church will be open each day from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm for anyone who wishes to pray.



# The Ratio

by Herb Weaver

Studies have been conducted that suggest there might be a formula for success in all kinds of relationships, and not surprisingly it revolves around the ratio between positivity and negativity. In the workplace, I had an Academic Dean who once stated that “it takes twelve positive interactions to erase one negative encounter.” As it turns out she was overstating a bit, because the research indicates that it’s more like a six-to-one ratio. And of course there are a myriad of other variables that must be factored into the equation but the cold-hard-facts just seem to scream, “be positive!” Accordingly, being more positive leads to greater productivity at work, a more satisfying relationship with friends and family, and for sure... a greater sense of peace within oneself.

Sometimes we tend to absorb negativity from others and cannot “let go” of it. It’s not that we can’t forgive, but rather that we can’t forget. I keep recalling an event, at the age of four years old, when I was playing in the back yard and vigorously kicking a ball around. It was a newly purchased ball that I had somehow talked my mom into buying. Life was good, the sun was shining, and the air was warm. For some reason I was wearing a flannel shirt that was safety-pinned at the top. At

some point I decided to take a break, sat down on the ground, and took off my flannel shirt. I remember thinking that my mom would be so impressed if I hung up the shirt and also didn’t lose the safety pin. I decided to pin the shirt to the ball. Although I was feeling quite accomplished with my critical thinking skills at this early age, of course I missed a significant point,....yes, point! As the ball slowly expired, I too was emotionally deflated, especially after being chastised by my mom. In that traumatic instance, it felt like I lost the respect of my mom AND the ball!

I can assure you that my mom has since offered up some “positivity” along the way but what astounds me is my inability to forget that incident. What it teaches me is to just “play it safe” and try to find the good in every situation because ultimately you don’t want to be responsible for another’s everlasting, deflatable moment.



## AROUND BMC



### Week of Compassion

John Rodenberg gave a “Moment for Mission” based on his experiences in Myanmar.



### Communion by Intinction

During the Lenten season, communion has been by intinction. However, due to concerns surrounding the spread of the coronavirus, BMC will be returning to individual cups and bread.



### Worship

Connie McVicar has done a wonderful job providing backdrops for the worship services thus far this Lenten season. The backdrops reinforce the worship services as we are “entering into the Passion of Jesus.”

## Prayer List

*Beloved, pray for us.*

1 Thessalonians 5:25

- Gary Larson
- Barb Stevenson (mother of Kim Stevenson)
- Linda Jacobs (sister of Jan Forsty)
- Nancy Pietrangelo (sister of Penny Tittle)
- Pam and Alan Clifford (Connie McVicar's sister and brother-in-law)
- Sharon Poyneer (sister of Vonnie Larson)
- Mary Sutherland (sister of Pat Sutherland)
- Della & Ed Rodgers (Parents of Vicki NeCastro)
- Mike Cunningham (Sydma's Dad) and Dottie Hanners
- Shana Hatzopoulos
- Joanne Sykes
- Ellen Sanford
- Nancy Sandercox
- Mary Jane Jackson
- Ruth Tye
- Holly, Frank, and Sharley Hillgardner
- Caden Knisley
- Elizabeth DeJong
- Donna Norman (Becky Ayers' sister)
- Nancy Pietrangelo (sister of Penny Tittle)
- Dottie Smith
- Robert Andrews
- Linda Owens Walters
- Paul Gardner
- Kerry Kerr
- Dara Cobb Lewis and family
- Chib Gratz (friend of Kim Lawless)

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

*For by me your days will be multiplied,  
and years will be added to your life.*

Proverbs 9:11

15 – Millie Ferry (1918)

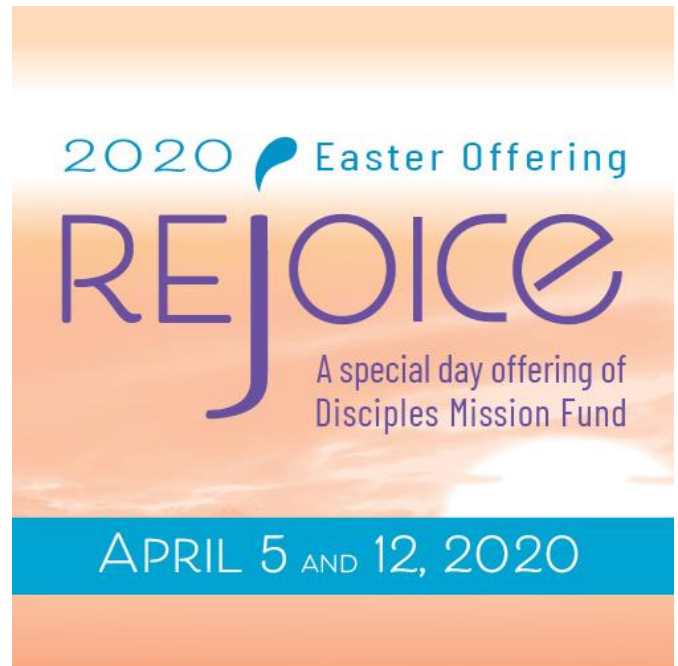
15 – Ruth Tye (1919)

29 – Floyd McFadden

29 – Joanne Sykes

## EASTER LILIES

Bethany Memorial Church is now taking orders for Easter Lilies. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to honor or memorialize a loved one and beautify the sanctuary at the same time. Lilies will be displayed on Easter morning with recognition in the worship bulletin. The cost of each lily is \$13.50. Lilies can be ordered by check or money order sent to BMC, PO Box 149, Bethany, WV 26032. If you prefer, you can also purchase through the BMC web page ([www.bmcwv.org](http://www.bmcwv.org)) using a credit card or money order. Simply click on the "donate" button at the top right of the page. Whichever way you choose to order, please include the name of the individual or individuals you are honoring or memorializing. Orders must be received by April 3.



The  
Little  
Harbinger  
Bethany  
Memorial  
Church

PO Box 149  
Bethany, West Virginia  
26032