



UKRAINIAN FUNDRAISER DINNER

The Little Harbinger

Bethany Memorial Church

June 2022

The Pastor's Pen

by Rev. Dr. Sharon E. Watkin

Suddenly, summer is almost here. Though the winter tried hard to hold on, spring finally prevailed, as it does eventually every year. Everything that comes with the end of the school year – awards ceremonies and comps and finals and commencement – are behind us. We watched Geoffrey Foster and Keith Hardt, Jen Oberthur and Matt Hausafus and Ben Fedoush graduate with a smile and a tear. We'll miss them even as we expect great things from the next phase of their life's journey.

We are seeing other changes at BMC as well. On April 26, Sydma Hatzopoulos, along with Otis, the Great Dane, two cats, and a coterie of supporting Bethany friends, drove out of Bethany toward Sydma's new home in North Carolina. How we already miss her! She has been the communication hub here at BMC for some time: newsletter, web site,

social media, contact between church and college, church and vendors, members and visitors, "digital deacon" bringing a cheerful "voice" to Sunday morning online worshippers. Her care for the community has helped our local benevolence ministries stay strong. She's been a wise colleague to help me think through questions and concerns – and to remind me of what our own rules and history are, so we all stay on track. Our prayers and best wishes go with you, Sydma. Remember, those gas cards are not only to help you on your journey away, but also to bring you back – from time to time, at least.

Even as we wondered who could possibly follow Sydma in this role, we were blessed that Connie McVicar applied! She will be establishing and posting office hours and will bring her own

personality to the work. Welcome Connie!

Being in a college community means we experience lots of change. Students come and go in quick succession. I don't think we ever "get used to it." We do, however, accept it as reality, and we know that the next generation will arrive with gifts just as sweet.

As a Christian community we remember that the foundational mark of our faith is resurrection, new beginning. Even as we say "good bye" we know that we are connected to each other in Christ. No "good bye" is final. So when we say "good bye," we can think of it in its original meaning, "God be with you." We can remember the old hymn, "God be with you till we meet again."

OMH: Mending a Treasure

By John Cole, Trustee

In 1851, as Alexander Campbell lobbied Congress to fund the construction of a national church, he led the Bethany congregation in “raising a house equal to our needs.” By 1852 Old Bethany Church, also known as Old Bethany Church of Christ, but commonly called Old Meeting House, dominated the corner of Main and Church Streets. Recognizing the significance of this historic building, the Bethany Memorial Church Congregation has voted to spend \$63,700 of Kirkpatrick Trust invested funds for the restoration project, awarding the contract to Buffalo Creek Woodworks, LLC.

The Old Meeting House is used frequently for weddings, sorority initiations, Pentecost services, and meetings. For many years the BMC would hold summer Sunday services there. Scores of Disciples on pilgrimages to Bethany have toured the structure. In the last century, it is said over 800 graduating students entering the ministry were ordained in morning services on Commencement Day.

Contractor Will Haizlitt has begun work on the interior of the building, peeling back liner, scraping and sealing plaster surfaces underneath, then reapplying liner with heavy-duty adhesive. The liner on interior walls was applied in the 1980’s when the OMH was restored by Mr. and Mrs. Roundtree in honor of her parents, Rev. and Mrs.

Benjamin H. Harman. Moisture from inadequate heating during the harsh winters loosened the liner.

The heating issue was resolved in 2020 when two energy-efficient gas furnaces were installed. That same year gutters and downspouts were replaced and the OMH was made handicap accessible with the addition of sidewalks and railings. Haizlitt also cleaned the cluttered basement area and restored the decaying basement door. Donations from the Beta Alumni Association were used on these projects as well as invested funds.

The OMH is a long rectangular block with a two-bay façade and five-bay side walls. It has identical doors leading to a narrow vestibule opening through two doorways to the main room. The pulpit is center front facing rows of pews divided in the middle for females to sit to the left of the pulpit and males to the right (a custom no longer observed). The structure has large, double hung, 12 over 12 windows along each side.

A major aspect of the restoration is the removal, repair, and painting of the 24 windows and eight of the sashes. All interior walls and trim will be painted. The contract also includes calking and painting of the exterior, repairing a crumbling rear gable peak, and repointing/ re-laying four arched chimney caps. The project is expected to take several months to complete.

Photos from top down. 1) New sidewalk, patio and steps to street provide easier access to the Old Meeting House; 2) the new back door, 3) 2nd sidewalk has resulted in the building being handicap accessible; and 4) Contractor Will Haizlitt beginning inside renovation.



Pastoral Search Committee Update

by Jan Forsty, Moderator

The search for a new minister for Bethany Memorial Church continues.

The Search Committee met with our Regional Minister, Rev. Thad Allen, who advised us on the proper procedures to conduct the search for a new minister. Our first task was to create a Congregational Profile. This is used to inform possible applicants exactly who we are and what we are looking for. We had to identify several important criteria, such as the size of our congregation, the governance of our church, committees of the church, and much more. This took us several weeks to make sure this information was as accurate as possible.

Rev. Thad Allen then used an application called, “Basecamp” to advertise and collect applicants’

information. At this point, we have received 17 applicants for our minister position. The Search Committee divided up the applicants, where each member had 2 applicants to do a “deeper dive” into their information and references. (I had 3) Each committee member was asked to comment on the applicant’s strengths/weaknesses and other important/relevant comments and make a judgement if the candidate should be kept in the search or omitted from the search.

At our next meeting this week, we will determine how many applicants are still in the race. We will then do a “deeper dive” on those candidates, such as social media and or other references. Rev. Allen will hopefully add to the discussion at this time also.

Once we have selected a few applicants, I believe the next step is to attempt to contact those applicants for additional information and more discussion on our part about items such as salary, housing, etc.

I hope this explains where we are in this very difficult search to find a new pastor. As the committee chair, I ask for 2 things from the congregation: patience as the search will take some time to find the “right” pastor; and prayers.....lots of prayers and guidance to find the “right” one .

If you have questions, please reach out to me and I will answer as best I can.



Pentecost 2022

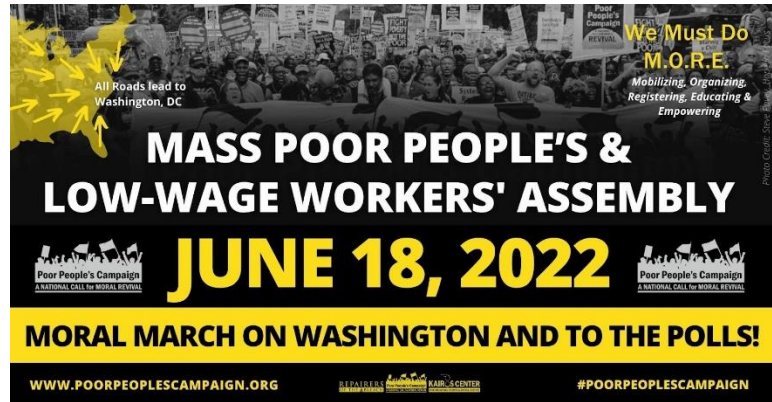
Tradition has it that the congregation of Bethany Memorial Church joins with those of Beech Bottom Community Christian Church and the Chapel Hill Church for a shared Pentecost service at the Old Meeting House. This year, because of the work going on there, the service was held at the Labyrinth at the Campbell Museum. Rev. Dan Harry of the BBCCC and Rev. Sharon Watkins presided over the service. The weather cooperated, it was a beautiful service, and everyone headed down to Bethany Park for the traditional covered dish dinner.

THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN: A NATIONAL CALL TO MORAL REVIVAL

POOR PEOPLE AND LOW
WAGE WORKERS
ASSEMBLY

JUNE 18, 2022

3RD & PENNSYLVANIA AVE.,
WASHINGTON DC



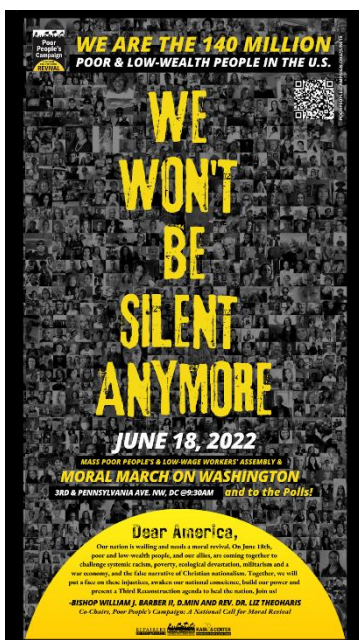
Will you join Pastor Sharon and thousands of other Disciples and people of faith in Washington, DC on June 18? We will be marching to summon the political will to ... “ALTER THE DIRECTION of our nation towards a moral agenda of love, truth, justice, and equal protection under the law.”*

According to Bishop William J. Barber II, co-leader of the Poor People’s Campaign (PPC), “(Poverty) doesn’t have to exist. (Poverty) is our creation, not God’s. The truth is, we shouldn’t be asking, ‘How much does it cost?’ to address poverty, but how much is it costing us NOT to? The truth is: moral policies are also good economic policy.”

Before the pandemic, 140 million Americans “were poor or one emergency away from economic ruin.” The situation has gotten worse for many. The Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call to Moral Revival “seeks to address these injustices and revive the heart and soul of our democracy, with an agenda rooted in the needs and priorities of the 140 million, as well as our deepest Constitutional and moral values.”

On June 18, people from all over the country will gather in Washington, DC because “any nation that ignores nearly half of its citizens is in a moral, economic and political crisis ... There are abundant resources to meet our needs, and we march to summon the political will to do so...”

If you are interested in learning more or know anyone who would like to go, please contact Pastor Sharon. swatkins@bethanywv.edu.



“It is not just a day of action. It is a declaration of an ongoing, committed moral movement to 1) Shift the moral narrative; 2) Build power; and 3) Make real policies to fully address poverty and low wealth from the bottom up.”

-Bishop William J Barber II and Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis

For additional information, follow the Poor People’s campaign on Facebook. There is a possibility you can join in the march online. [Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival | Facebook](#).

“Happy are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times.”
Proverbs 106:3 NRSV

BENEFIT DINNER HELD TO SUPPORT UKRAINE

A Benefit Dinner to raise funds for Ukrainian Relief was held at Bethany Memorial Church on April 21, 2022. This event was an effort to raise funds for the people of Ukraine, through **Week of Compassion**, “the relief, refugee and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.”

Much enjoyment was had by all. JD Events prepared and served a delicious lasagna dinner for all who attended. Bethany College students provided musical entertainment; Joe Lavano, Professor at Bethany College, entertained the participants with LPs of traditional Ukrainian folk/pop music. Gift baskets were raffled off, with donated gifts obtained by the Sororities and Fraternities of Bethany College. Many, many thanks to the volunteers and sponsors who helped prepare for the Benefit and to those who attended and gave so generously to help the Ukrainian people.



Channel 7 News also came to the Benefit to report on the event and interview participants; one of them being our own Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins. You can view the entire article at <https://www.wtrf.com/brooke-county/bethany-memorial-holds-benefit-for-ukraine/>

Donations received from the benefit itself and from many generous donors in our community and beyond, totaled \$7,492.48. These funds were given to Week of Compassion, designated for Ukrainian Relief.

You can learn more about what Week of Compassion is doing to help Ukraine by going to their website at <https://www.weekofcompassion.org/stories/category/ukraine>



“Week of Compassion is responding through partners to support Ukrainians all along their arduous journey - welcoming and hosting refugees as they flee, getting them safely to where they need to be, and preparing to provide trauma care as they rebuild their lives.”

“Disciples have already asked how to help, and we are grateful to serve together.

Contributions can be [made online](#) or by check, designated for International Emergency Response
where 100% of your gift will go to people who are impacted by this crisis.”

“Week of Compassion is more than a week. It is a ministry of the whole Church, reaching those in need "around the world, around the year." Any time we respond to a need in the world, we bear witness to the unity of our table, faithfully sharing the gifts that we have as an expression of Christ's love. In working together with partners, we represent the Disciples of Christ commitment to unity, making our resources reach farther and growing our impact on a global scale.”

WE ALL GRIEVE AND PRAY

As part of our commemoration of Gun Violence Awareness Weekend, members of Bethany Memorial Church gathered to pray, and to discuss ways we could take the next steps towards reducing gun violence—suicide, homicide, and mass killings. Together we pledged to support financially efforts of groups organized to address this catastrophe in our country, to work for greater (required) gun safety education, to explore ways we might understand the lure of assault weapons for so many, to research the gun safety statutes in our own village, to bring visual awareness to the emptiness in the hearts of so many, and to contact our senators, urging them to work for greater gun safety as supported by 67-90% of US adults.

It is natural to grieve. We believe God listens when we pray. But let me share a statement issued by the National Council on Churches:



“It is sinful to offer thoughts and prayers without taking decisive action to reform gun legislation.” *

In the photo above, the empty chairs represent the children and teachers killed in the mass shooting in Uvalde, TX.

**NCC Agonizes After the Elementary School Shooting in Texas*
[*\(nationalcouncilofchurches.us\)*](http://nationalcouncilofchurches.us)

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