

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
79 Brooklyn Street PO Box 606 Portville, NY 14770
(716)-933-6699

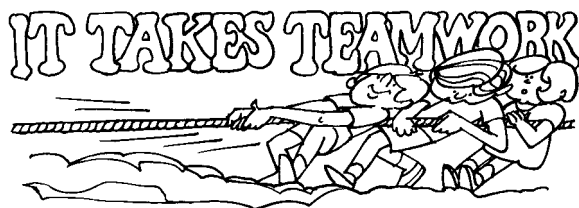
e-mail: bethelportville@gmail.com

Websites: (congregation) www.bethelportvilleny.org; (synod) www.upstatenysynod.org;
(ELCA) www.elca.org

Worship Service - Sundays at 9:00am; Sunday School at 10:15am
God's work. Our hands.

In case of a pastoral emergency, please contact the church at: 716-933-6699 or Pastor Marie Meeks at 716-353-1610. Pastor Derek Cheek cell # 716-307-7963.

FEBRUARY 2016



You've probably heard the expression "Give until it hurts." A previous issue of *Stewardship* suggests, however, that Christians should give until it "helps." Isn't that a more positive thought? After all, if one thinks about the subject for a while, isn't our giving intended to help the church accomplish Christ's mission on earth? It is important for us all to remember that we not only give so that we may have a church in which to worship, but to share our resources and talents to help those suffering in the world. This hymn conveys what stewardship is all about:

Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord to Thee.

Take my moments and my days; Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of Thy love, take my feet, and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing, Always, only for my King.

Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold; Not a mite would I withhold.

Take my intellect, and use every pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine; It shall be no longer mine.

Take my heart, it is Thine own; It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour at Thy feet its treasure-store take myself and I will be ever, only, all for Thee.

Frances R. Havergal

Prayer: Lord, let us not rest until we find rest in doing your will. We pray in Jesus' name. **Amen**





Pray First!

- For all service men and women, and their families, especially *Casey McCarthy, Tyler McCarthy and Kendra Linn*. For Christ to be made known in our companion synods – *Zimbabwe and Zambia*, and our partner synod – *Central/Southern Illinois Synod*. For the Franciscan community at *Mt. Irenaeus* and the *Burkhart Retreat Center for Life* – retreats in our local area. For our Bishops, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton (ELCA) and John Macholz (Upstate New York Synod), Assistants to the Bishop Dave Preisinger, Mary Johnson, and Dean Daniel Rumpfelt. For the mission congregations in our synod—*Organic Faith* in Amherst and *Todos los Hijos de Dios* in Amsterdam. For the pastors and congregations in our Southwestern Conference and for our congregation council leaders – President *Bill Graves*, Secretary *Linda Scott*, Treasurer *Doug Ploetz*, Vice President *Ruth Brewer* and members *Caroline Miller, Donald Linn, Jerry Maerten and Bryan Hatch*. For our sister congregation, *Peace Lutheran* and their ministry in Slidell, LA for the ministry of *ELCMA* – Evangelical Lutheran Coalition for Mission in Appalachia. For area ministries: *Genesis House, Portville Community Food Pantry, and Interfaith Caregivers*.



PLEASE SEE BULLETIN BOARD outside the sanctuary for a COMPLETE SECRETARY'S REPORT.

Council Member

Bill Graves
Ruth Brewer
Linda Scott
Doug Ploetz
Ruth Brewer

Caroline Miller
Jerry Maerten
Bryan Hatch
Don Linn

Committee Assignment

Council President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer
Worship and Music &
Christian Education
Stewardship
Outreach/Evangelism
Fellowship
Property

Notice: When you call the church phone number it will be automatically forwarded to church secretary-Nannette Giberson and she will direct your questions or inquiries to the proper people. Thank you.



Choir practice is held Sunday mornings at 7:45am. All are welcome to join. **No audition necessary**

Prayer Chain:

If you have need of prayer, we have an e-mail prayer chain. Just call Bev Robinson – phone number 814-225-3341 or e-mail at grandmagee7@verizon.net.

We NEED people to sign up as worship servants. We are in need of Lectors, Prayer Leaders, Ushers, Communion assistants and Altar Guild. There are sign-up sheets on the table in Fellowship Hall. Please sign up for one or more of these positions as you feel led. Thank you.

FOR YOUR UPDATE AND INFORMATION

Fundraiser Funds are divided as follows:

- 10% Charity of our choice**
- 10% Benevolence**
- Rest in general fund**

The task ahead of us is never as great as the Power behind us.



**Our next church breakfast will be on Saturday February 6th. Breakfast will be held from 8:00am until 11:00am. Please help if you can but make sure you come to eat and bring your family and friends with you. Also remember that ----
*Pre-sales tickets are available for your use.
 Please see Linda Scott for these. Thanks.***

Notice: Deadline for newsletter articles is the third Sunday of each month. Please send them to me at my home e-mail at Junebug44@frontiernet.net or you can leave written ones in the top basket on the secretary's desk in the office. If you have questions you can call me at 814-698-2648

June

Please keep these members in your prayers and send them a card if you are able.

Jo An Brooks

c/o Toby and Lisa Miller
 112 Rt. 44
 Shinglehouse, Pa 16748

Don Diebler

Strong Memorial Hospital
 601 Elmwood Avenue
 % Unit 8-1400
 Rochester, NY 14642

Please remember our clothing drop box used to collect clothes for people in need. The box is located in the parking lot of the church next to the utility shed. If you have clothing you wish to drop off, please place them in plastic bags and tie them up. Donations are greatly appreciated. Let's make this an even better year than last year. Thank you.



What to Donate:

Used Clothing, shoes, sneakers, belts, purses, linens, pillowcases, blankets, curtains, and stuffed animals.

What Not to Donate:

Furniture, electronics, household items, books, toys, garbage, pillows, rags, and fabric scraps.



Worry is a total waste of time. It doesn't change anything. All it does is steal your joy and keeps you very busy doing nothing.

February 2016



Worship Assistants

Acolyte*Haedyn Brewer*

Communion Assistants.....*Jo Kile*
.....*Ariel Kiel*

Lectors:

Feb. 7th*Doug Ploetz*

Feb. 14th*Pen Yunghans*

Feb 21st *Connie Smith -Matteson*

Feb.28th*Bev Robinson*

Prayer Leaders:

Feb 7th*Ruth Brewer*

Feb 14th*Bev. Robinson*

Feb.21st *Gary Murray*

Feb.28th*Doug Ploetz*

Ushers *Jerry Maerten*

Altar Guild.....*Ruth Brewer*

Bread Bakers*Ron Kile*

Mail Greeter..... *Nannette Giberson*

2—Marilyn Ploetz
—Troy Giberson

3—Annie Blicharz

5—Robert Baughman

9—Mitch Smith

12—Robert MacPherson

14—Kay Anderson

19—Irelynn MacPherson

20—Kevin Hepfer

20—Warner Johnson

21—Skip Robinson

26—Linda Scott



20—Bill & Karen Snow

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH CALENDAR - FEBRUARY 2016

Sunday, Feb 7

TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

7:45am-Choir rehearsal
9:00am- Worship with Fellowship following
10.15am - Sunday school

Wed. Feb 10th

AVAILABLE ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

12:10pm and 6:30pm - Bethany Lutheran
7:00pm- Portville Presbyterian church
7:00pm - River's Edge United Methodist Church
4:30-6:30- Immanuel Lutheran - Fundraiser spaghetti dinner with Ash Wednesday service following at 6:30pm .

AVAILABLE LENTEN STUDIES

Bethany Lutheran Church

12:10pm and 6:30pm - Wednesday

Portville Presbyterian Church

5:30pm - Mondays - Soup and Study

River's Edge United Methodist Church

7:00pm - Wednesdays - Study - *Book of John by Adam Hamilton*

Sunday, Feb 14

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

7:45am- Choir rehearsal
9:00am - Worship with Fellowship following
10:15am - Sunday school

Sunday, Feb 21

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

7:45am- Choir rehearsal
9:00am - Worship with Fellowship following
10:15am - Sunday school

Thursday, Feb 18

7:00pm - Council Meeting

Sunday, Feb 28

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

7:45am-Choir rehearsal
9:00am- Worship with **Congregational Meeting** following
10:15am - Sunday school



HYMN HISTORY

Take My Life and let It Be

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ. Philippians 3:8

Although hymnist Frances Havergal, 36, had served the Lord for years, she felt something was missing in her Christian experience. Then one day in 1873, she received a little book called, "All for Jesus," which stressed the importance of making Christ the King of every corner and cubicle of one's life. Soon thereafter, she made a fresh and complete consecration of herself to Christ.

Years later when asked about it, she replied, "Yes, it was on Advent Sunday, December 2, 1873, I first saw clearly the blessedness of true consecration. I saw it as a flash of electric light, and what you see you can never un-see. There must be full surrender before there can be full blessedness."

Not long afterward, she found herself spending several days with ten people in a house, some of them unconverted. Others were Christians, but not fully surrendered to Christ. "Lord, give me all in this house," she prayed. She went to work witnessing, and before she left, all ten were yielded Christians. On the last night of her visit, Frances---too excited to sleep---wrote this great consecration hymn, "Take My Life....."

In the years that followed, Frances frequently used this hymn in her own devotions, especially every December 2, on the anniversary of her consecration.

On one occasion, as she pondered the words, "Take my voice and let me sing/Always only for my King," she felt she should give up her secular concerts. Her beautiful voice was in demand, and she frequently sang with the Philharmonic. But from that moment, her lips were exclusively devoted to the songs of the Lord.

On another occasion she was praying over the stanza that says, "Take my silver and my gold/Not a mite would I withhold." She had accumulated a great deal of jewelry, but she now felt she should donate it to the Church Missionary Society. Writing to a friend, she said, "I retain only a brooch for daily wear, which is a memorial to my dear parents; also a locket with the holy portrait I have of my niece in heaven. Evelyn, I had no idea I had such a jeweler's shop; nearly fifty articles are being packed off. I don't think I need to tell you I never packed a box with such pleasure"

Have you given your whole life---everything---over to Jesus? Why not make this the date of your own complete consecration?

Abby's Angels

By Jane Kuhn

“Mommy, I want to go home.”

It was heartbreaking to see my seven-year-old like this. “Honey, you *are* home,” I said, stroking her face. “We’ve left the hospital. This is your bed. And I’m right here. You had a really bad fall and need a long rest.”

“I don’t remember falling.” Abby sounded scared—my fearless tomboy was never scared. At least she never had been, until the accident.

“You were climbing the tree next door...” I reminded her.

Even now, a week later, the memory of that day made my chest tighten. I was in the house when I heard Maggie, my nine-year-old, scream. I ran outside to where Abby lay on the sidewalk, lifeless, blood streamed from her ear.

Maggie said Abby had reached for a branch that snapped. I looked to where Maggie was pointing. Abby had fallen 30 feet!

“Maggie go inside and call 911,” I said, barely aware of my own voice. I bent down next to Abby. Was she breathing? I prayed—no, begged—God to keep her alive. *Please, God, save her.*

It seemed forever before the paramedics arrived. They strapped Abby to a backboard and lifted her into the ambulance. I called a friend to take Maggie. Then I called my husband at work.

At the hospital doctors and nurses worked over Abby’s body, their faces grim. “She’s coming to,” I heard one of them finally say.

I stayed by her side for five days at the hospital. Abby had suffered multiple skull fractures and faded in and out of consciousness. Her father and I

told her how much we loved her. But I wasn’t sure she even knew we were there.

I called a national prayer line. Friends and family prayed as well. It had been easy to believe God was watching over her when her every action was full of life. Where were her guardian angels now, while she was quiet, helpless?

The strong, confident daughter I knew was slipping away. After weeks of rest, her brain would begin slowly healing on its own. But she would need therapy to relearn the knowledge and skills she’d lost, and we might see permanent damage. It would take years to know for sure.

“Expect some memory loss,” her doctor said, “headaches, trouble thinking clearly. It will be important to avoid stressful situations. I’m sorry. I wish I had better news.”

Abby was discharged under strict orders to stay in bed for six weeks. How was I going to entertain her?

“I bought you a drawing pad and some pencils,” I told Abby. “For now you just need to take it easy.”

Abby never had much time for drawing. She couldn’t sit still long enough to do more than a few stick figures. But now things were different. I spread the drawing materials out on the bed. “I just want to go home,” Abby said.

I guessed this was the kind of confused thinking the doctor had warned about. “Honey, this is your bed. This is your room,” I said. “I’m going to put in a load of laundry. I’ll be right back.” Abby nodded and I slipped out of her room.

When I looked in on her five minutes later Abby was sitting up, the pad in her lap, busily drawing, intently focused. I thanked God for whatever it was that had captured her imagination and brought her peace. I went to make her lunch.

“Hungry?” I asked when I got back to her room. Abby was still engrossed in her artwork. On the nightstand I noticed a piece of paper she’d torn from the pad: a drawing.

I was astonished when I picked it up. The care, the detail—I never would have taken it for one of Abby’s drawings. This was no stick figure. It was an angel with long flowing hair, her arms open wide with beautiful wings that stretched across the page. “This is really nice,” I said.

Abby looked up from her work and glanced at the completed angel. “That’s Peace,” she said.

“Peace? You did an amazing job of drawing her,” I said. “Very creative.”

“Not really,” Abby said. “That’s what she looks like.” I took comfort in knowing that Abby was using her imagination. That was a good sign.

The next day Abby got back to her drawing. She didn’t seem as afraid and worked with confidence. More like her old self. “You’re busy,” I said, picking up her breakfast dishes. On the nightstand were elaborate drawings of two more angels. *Why this sudden focus on angels?*

Above each of these angels Abby had written names. Ruth and Amy. Names more common than Peace, but still... “I see you are giving the angels names. That is very clever.”

“They told me what their names were. When I saw them.”

“Saw them? You mean in your imagination?”

“No,” Abby said. “In the hospital. The room would get fuzzy and then suddenly there were angels all around me. In a giant circle. Mommy, they were so pretty. And happy. They made me feel happy. And safe. Mary, Jesus’ mommy was there. And her cousin Elizabeth. And behind them, I saw God sitting on a big gold throne.”

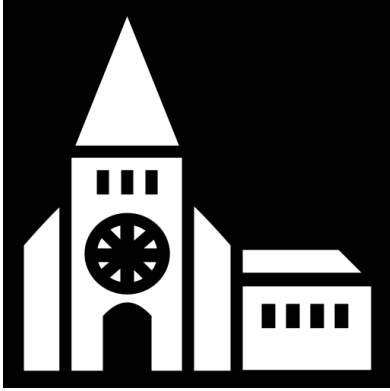
I didn’t know what to say.

“I want to go back there,” Abby said. “I want to go home.” I swept her into my arms and held her close. Instead of sending angels to Abby, God had brought Abby to him for a glimpse of heaven, where the angels live.

“One day you’ll go back there,” I said. “But now God wants you here with Daddy and me and Maggie.” Abby squeezed me tight. In her six weeks of bed rest Abby drew 50 different angels. Each of them unique. Radiant. good company in her recovery.

She stopped drawing them when she was ready to go back to school. Not only that: She went back to drawing stick figures. But I didn’t worry. I felt sure the angels would stay near. After all, Abby knew them by name.





THE PASTOR

A pastor transformed himself into a homeless person and went to the church that he was to be introduced as the head pastor at that morning. He walked around his soon to be church for 30 minutes while it was filling with people for service. Only 3 people said hello to him, most looked the other way. He asked people for change to buy food because he was hungry. Not one gave him anything.

He went into the sanctuary to sit down in the front of the church and was told by the ushers that he would need to get up and go sit in the back of the church. He said hello to people as they walked in but was greeted with cold stares and dirty looks from people looking down on him and judging him.

He sat in the back of the church and listened to the church announcements for the week. He listened as new visitors were welcomed into the church that morning but no one acknowledged that he was new. He watched people around him continue to look his way with stares that said you are not welcome here.

Then the elders of the church went to the podium to make the announcement. They said they were excited to introduce the new pastor of the church to the congregation. "We would like to introduce you to our new Pastor." The congregation stood up and looked around

clapping with joy and anticipation. The homeless man sitting in the back stood up and started walking down the aisle.

That's when all the clapping stopped and the church was silent. With all eyes on him....he walked up the altar and reached for the microphone. He stood there for a moment and then recited so elegantly, a verse from the bible.....

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for the least of my brothers and sisters, you did for me.'

After he recited this, he introduced himself as their new pastor and told the congregation what he had experienced that morning. Many began to cry and bow their heads in shame. "Today I see a gathering of people here but I do not see a church of Jesus. The world has enough people that look the other way. What the world needs is disciples of Jesus that can follow this teachings and live as he did. When will YOU decide to become disciples?"

He then dismissed service until the following Sunday as his sermon had been given.

Bible Verses for the New Year

So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom.—Psalm 90:12 (NAS)

One day, I looked at my life as though it were a clock face. Imagining myself living to 96 years, beginning at 12, and going once around with eight years between numbers, I placed myself smack between seven and eight. I was on the waning edge of time.

This imagery awakened in me a rich awareness of the gift of years already lived and the yet-to-be-explored opportunity in the ones left. I was reminded of a favorite Bible verse: "Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied with life" (Genesis 25:8, NAS).

It's the "satisfied with life" part—not how long I live—that speaks to me in this passage. How did he come to this fullness of feeling? Abraham endured some hard years. He was asked to leave all that was familiar and trek to an unknown land. He experienced family strife. Yet he kept trust with the God Who first spoke to him saying, "And I will bless you, and make your name great" (Genesis 12:2, NAS).

Moses wrote in Psalm 90 (NAS) about "numbering our days"—paying attention to them, growing and learning from them, making them meaningful for ourselves and others—in order to present (literally bring in) to God a "heart of wisdom."

Both Abraham and Moses were able to meet God at the end of their days, knowing they had lived well the gift of their years—trusting Him, becoming wise in Him, fulfilling His purpose for them. Only one phrase describes how that must feel: satisfied with life.

Lord, I so want to "bring in" satisfying years, lived gratefully in Your name.

By Carol Knapp

This devotion is excerpted from [Daily Guideposts](#).

WHICH DOG WINS?

There is a never-ending battle in the life of every believer between the flesh and the Spirit. Have you noticed? Even when we surrender our lives to God, Satan continues to tempt us. We are never given a reprieve from temptation. So how do we wage this life-long battle? And who wins? I believe the answer is revealed in this story.

An Alaskan trapper owned several dogs, two of which he trained to fight. Every month he would bring the dogs—one white and one black—to town to fight. The townspeople would bet on the winner, sometimes betting on the black dog, sometimes on the white one. The owner of the dogs would bet, too... and he always won. One month he'd bet on the black dog, and the black dog would win. Another month he would gamble on the white dog, and the white dog would win. Some folks finally caught on, and asked the man his secret. "How do you know which dog is going to win?" they asked. "You're never wrong." The dog owner shrugged his shoulders, and said, "It's easy, really. The one who wins is the one I feed."

Who's going to win in the battle between the Spirit and the flesh? That's easy, too. The stronger one is the

one we feed. So we must set our minds on the things of God, seeking to please Him and be obedient to Him

in all we do. In that way, we feed the Spirit, and insure victory over sin.

ROMANS 6:11

Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Great Fun at the 9th Annual Fun Fleece Festival



I'M ON
TEAM JESUS
I'M NOT RELIGIOUS
I'M A CHRISTIAN
IMPERFECT AND UNWORTHY
SAVED BY GRACE
SEEKING AFTER GOD