



What's Happening at Bluffton Presbyterian Church

October 2020

Growing in Faith • Sharing God's Love

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, October 4 – World Communion

3 Cents a Meal Offering

Liturgist: Lori Schmidt

Hymn Singers: Jayne McGarrity/George Stultz

Sound: Mike Rhonemus / Camera: Ryan Brauen

Slides: Julia Szabo / Ushers: Tenna Rhonemus,

Jana McVetta, Dave Van Eman, Tanya Best

Acolytes: McVettas

Sunday, October 11

Little Free Pantry Offering

Liturgist: Tenna Rhonemus

Hymn Singers: Tanya Best/Tenna Rhonemus

Sound: Bob Hursh / Camera: Tammie Hursh

Slides: Diane Winebar / Ushers: Lori Schmidt,

Lin Rumer

Acolytes: Owen & Clara Brauen

Sunday, October 18

Liturgist: Dave Sycks

Hymn Singers: Julia Szabo/Sue Van Eman

Sound: Jay McCracken / Camera: Tenna Rhonemus

Slides: Talavinias / Ushers: Nick and Jeanie Nichols

Acolytes: Avery Talavinia & Bowen Hochstetler

Sunday, October 25

Liturgist: Phill Talavinia

Hymn Singers: Lori Schmidt/Adam Shanaman

Sound: Jeff Gillen / Camera: Julia Szabo

Slides: Cathy Carroll / Usher: Don and Jodi Brauen

Acolyte: Ethan Friesel

Sunday, November 1 – All Saints' Day

Communion – 3 Cents a Meal Offering

Liturgist: Tammie Hursh

Sound: Jay McCracken / Camera: Ryan Brauen

Slides: Julia Szabo

Mark Your Calendars!

- Oct. 4 – Worship Service 10:15 AM*
- Oct. 5 – Claralice Circle 6:30 PM at church
- Oct. 8 – Session 7:00 PM
- Oct. 9 – Deacon Drive-Thru Fundraiser 4:30 to 6:30 PM at the church
- Oct. 9 – Sister Min Circle 2:00 PM at church
- Oct. 10 – Youth Group to Suter's
- Oct. 10 – Lima Rescue Mission:
Contact Bob Hursh
- Oct. 11 – Worship Service 10:15 AM*
- Oct. 12 – Claralice Circle 6:30 PM at church
- Oct. 15 – Deacons Host Community Meal
Drive-Thru at Senior Center 6:00 PM
- Oct. 15 – Worship Committee 6:45 PM
- Oct. 18 – Worship Service 10:15 AM*
- Oct. 18 – Youth Group Movie Night
- Oct. 19 – Claralice Circle 6:30 PM at church
- Oct. 21 – Mission Committee 7:30 PM
- Oct. 22 – Deacons Meeting 6:30 PM
- Oct. 23 – Sister Min Circle 2:00 PM at church
- Oct. 25 – Worship Service 10:15 AM*
- **Oct. 25 – Newsletter Items Deadline.**
gillen3072@roadrunner.com
- Oct. 26 – Claralice Circle 6:30 PM at church
- **Nov. 1 – DST ends - remember to move
clocks back one hour before you go to bed
Saturday night.**
- Nov. 1 – Worship Service 10:15 AM*

*Weekly worship will be recorded on Sunday mornings at 10:15 AM. We will offer in-person worship when the Ohio Public Health Advisory System determines that Allen County is in Level 1 or 2, Yellow or Orange. Every week, regardless of in-person worship status, online worship will be made available on our [church Facebook page](#) and later posted to our [church website](#).

Pastor's Letter

As we prepare to celebrate Christian unity on World Communion Sunday in the midst of a highly contentious presidential election, here are some thoughts on our current climate from Rev. Kara Hillhouse, Associate Pastor at St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Lincoln, NE:

"Divisions. Accusations. Disgust. Anger. Our country's political climate is the worst I can remember in my 30-year voting history. I despair a lot about what is to come, and I can't help but get pulled into the drama surrounding the election and all it entails. It makes me sick. It feels icky. How can people who profess to be Christians treat each other so poorly? Severe divisions within the church at Corinth were a problem and Paul writes, in what we know as First Corinthians, urging uniformity of belief, *"Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it."*

What can we learn from Paul's letter? Because we desperately need to learn something. Republican, Democrat, Liberal, Conservative...however we label ourselves, we are still a member of the Body of Christ. And, Paul says, we *need* each other. We have to *work together* in order for the Body to function. In order for us to be of one mind, we need to remember what our sole purpose here is: to love and glorify God in all that we do, say, and think, and to love one another. How we express that mission is going to vary – and that's where it gets tricky, because we aren't always going to interpret others' actions and beliefs as "loving." But if we can look at those on the other side of "the aisle" and say to ourselves, "I need them" maybe we'll be more accepting of differences.

We live in a country that has *so many* blessings, but with all of these blessings there comes struggle and conflict. Something's got to give, if we are going to find a way to come together, and as followers of Christ the best thing we could do is remember *we belong to a wondrously diverse body*; and if the body wasn't diverse, we wouldn't have all the pieces we need to function. Let's try to embrace one another (because believe it or not, we need each other) and have grace as we journey forward."

The Presbyterian Mission Agency has decided that this might be a good time to review the document "Seeking to Be Faithful Together: Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement." (see page 14 of this newsletter). A packet on the subject was mailed to each PCUSA congregation; it includes the history of the guidelines, Biblical basis, suggestions for use; and a list of other denominational resources on Christians' civic responsibility. If we can make an effort along these lines, including in our conversations on social media, perhaps the next few weeks can help us live as more faithful disciples and friends in Christ.

In Christ,

Pastor Karol

New Synod Website Unveiled

Be sure to check out synodofthecovenant.org to see an updated version of the Synod's site. Highlights include information on current ministries (such as grants and scholarships, and the Synod worship provided at the end of June), a blog with information to keep you up-to-date, assembly papers, and updated contact information. Please send any feedback or suggestions for improvement to synod.covenant@gmail.com.



Zoom Instructions for All Church Calls:



To Log in *WITH VIDEO ON YOUR COMPUTER, TABLET, OR SMARTPHONE*, Follow These Steps:

Step 1: Click This Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/2693770575>.

Step 2: You will be in the "waiting room" for just a moment until I "accept" you into the meeting.

To Call in *WITH YOUR HOME PHONE OR CELL PHONE*, Follow These Steps:

Step 1: Call in by dialing.

Step 2: When it asks for a meeting ID enter: and then press #.

Step 3: If it asks for a participant ID, just press # to continue.

Step 4: You will be in the "waiting room" for just a moment until I "accept" you into the meeting.

Please contact Pastor Karol or someone else who has used Zoom ahead of time if you have questions about how to connect.

Worship Looks a Little Different Now That We've Returned!

Our goal is to limit personal contact, shorten service length to reduce time spent together, and do things differently as long as necessary to lessen risk of spreading disease and help keep our congregation safe. With these things in mind, the worship committee has put the following procedures into place:

1. Attendance in Sanctuary

- You will be missed, but please do not attend worship in person if you have these or other symptoms: a fever (check your temperature before leaving home), cough

or sore throat, shortness of breath, muscle pain, or if you have come in contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the previous 14 days.

- We will follow distancing guidelines. Wearing of face masks will be required. Masks will be available at the doors for those who don't have one. A few face shields will be available for those unable to wear masks. If you cannot wear a mask for the duration of the service, please continue to worship from home.
- The committee will work on seating configuration before re-opening. Places where seating is allowed will be marked.
- If needed, overflow seating can be made in the fellowship hall, with worshipers watching a live stream of the service.

2. Order of Worship Adjustments

- No bulletins will be printed. This will change if we find they are needed.
- Hymnals, Bibles, prayer request cards, envelopes, and pencils will be removed from the pews. Like bulletins, they will be returned if it's decided they are needed.
- Limited responsive readings.
- No physical passing of the peace.
- Offering plates will be placed by the doors, as will prayer request cards. People can take a prayer request card to fill out while seated in the pews, and the ushers will collect them before Joys and Concerns.
- The roles of greeters and ushers will be combined. Ushers will welcome worshipers, guide them to approved seats, and point out the offering plates and prayer request cards.
- Dismissal will be pew by pew, with ushers assisting. Pulpit side will leave by side door, and organ side will leave by front door. Exceptions made for those needing to use the ramp.
- Names and seating location of worshipers will be noted in the event they need to be contacted about COVID-19 exposure.

3. Young Christians

- No nursery will be provided at this time due to distancing guidelines.
- Children's activity bags will likewise be removed. Individual boxes of crayons will be available for children, and children's bulletins will still be printed each Sunday. Parents are encouraged to bring other items for their children's use during worship.
- For the children's message, children will be able to spread out on the front pews.

4. Communion

- No passing of trays from person to person or intinction (dipping bread into a common cup). Worship committee is working with deacons to implement the best alternative.

5. Music

- Instead of congregational singing, song leaders will "sing for the people." Congregation can listen/follow along with the words, mouth the words, hum.
- Shorten number of hymns to 2 or 3; also shorten each hymn to 2 or 3 verses.
- Occasional special music will consist of solos, duets, trios, instrumental pieces.

6. Live Streaming of Worship Services

- Worship services will continue to be offered on Facebook (with links posted live and remaining available later on our website) for those unable to attend worship due to health factors or are uncomfortable with attending in person. We understand if you're not ready to come back yet, and we fully support your decision to continue worshipping from home.

These decisions were made in a spirit of love. Following these protocols is more than just "obeying the rules." It's how we show that we care for the whole body of Christ. Please contact worship committee chair Diane Winebar (419.957.4046 or dwinebar711@gmail.com) if you have any questions.



Star Word

Here is a star word reflection from one of our members: Tanya Best

When I first received my star word, I actually had to go look it up in the dictionary. I knew the meaning of the word, gracious, but in adding the "-ness" ending, I wasn't quite certain how to even use that in a sentence. So, in starting my research, I tried first to find its roots in connection with Christianity.

John Wesley is primarily known as the founder of the Methodist Church, but maybe less well-known as one of the great theologians. Wesleyan theology is in essence GRACE theology: free grace, prevenient grace, accepting grace, sustaining grace. Wesley felt strongly that God's grace is freely available to you, to me and literally everyone else! In defining prevenient grace, he saw God's grace as coming before or 'preceding' our lives, before we even knew God; stating that without it, we would have no way of getting to know God.

The root idea of *chanaan*, "be gracious," is to bend or stoop to be kind to an inferior. Grace is a kindness or favor. So, the first thing to know about God's graciousness is that it is something that is shown by a superior (God) to an inferior (you or me). Grace is really not an exchange between equals.

In the words of the late Johnny Carson, "I did not know that..."

And, not only is grace a favor or kindness granted to an inferior, but it is typically an *undeserved* favor or kindness. God is kind to us even when we have been presumptuous, stubborn, disobedient, ungrateful, and/or blasphemous.

But, we don't and CAN'T earn grace. Yet, God's supply of grace never runs out; it only runs into us and through us, ideally culminating in our own good works.

This verse below has always been one of my favorite benediction hymns, ever since high school. In fact, it was one of the songs chosen by my husband and me for our own wedding service a few short years ago...note how it makes reference to the root of my star word:

Numbers 6:24-26 (modernization of the King James Version)

24 The LORD bless you, and keep you;

25 The LORD make His face to shine upon you, and **chanan** be gracious unto you;

26 The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Ever heard it said, "He/She didn't want to hear it"?

The things people don't want to hear are usually the things that would be good for them. We rarely have trouble hearing: spend-yourself-happy, get-rich-quick, eat-yourself-thin, five-minute-fitness, gloom-and-doom, me-me-me.

We don't want to hear: save-for-retirement, work-hard, eat-right, exercise daily, things-are-looking up, you-and-God. In fact, God's prophets were told to go away until they had better news

But, it IS good news that God is waiting to be gracious to us! He's actually waiting for us to hear him. I myself know for a fact that I ignore His voice most of the time. I have a habit of thinking that I know what to do; that I don't need any help. That perhaps my years of living experience now supersedes any assistance or wisdom I might alternatively have called upon God to provide. A few times, I may have purposely ignored His message, because I did not particularly like what I was hearing from Him.

Isaiah 30:18 (English Standard Version)

18 Therefore the LORD waits **chanan** to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.

Isn't it comforting to know you can always turn to God, no matter how bad things are in your life?

His grace is free FOR all and IN all. Perhaps this might be a very good time for us all to start appreciating the benefits of such an inherited blessing.

Truly, it doesn't even cost a dime.

(Some quotes above taken from a 2011 writing by Regina L. Hunter, 'The Character of God')

Birthdays

Oct.	5	Rob McGarrity
	7	Anne McCracken
	8	Phil Weisenberger
	9	James Freidenberg
	10	Mariah Pneuman
	13	Cassie Taber
	15	Terry Mullenhour
	18	Amanda Leugers
	20	Don Carroll
	21	Bowen Hochstetler
	23	Ingo Montgomery
	30	Tanya Best
		Tayler Nowak-Valentine
		Phill Talavinia
Nov.	2	Molly McCracken
		Julia Szabo

Anniversaries

Oct.	10	Kevin and Jana McVetta
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Congratulations!!!



Teresa Edelbrock & David Randall married by Pastor Karol on August 2, 2020. Witnesses: Nicole & Kathleen Edelbrock.

Highlights of September Session Meeting

- Month of August Pastoral Care: 6 visits; 16 phone calls; 11 cards sent. Thank you to deacons and elders for calling all members regarding returning to in-person worship. Approved extending use of “Roll On” funds for care/support of From Family in addition to the monthly van payments. Congregational Activities: worship, weekly email with announcements and prayer requests, Youth Group Fruits of the Spirit Workshop Zoom (twice), Faith Formation Intern Check-in Zoom (twice), PC(USA) Week of Action anti-racism daily links shared on Facebook, worship committee sanctuary setup, Jean Szabo Family Graveside Service, and committee meetings. Community Engagement Activities: Community Preschool Board Meeting, BAMA Zoom – elected Treasurer (switched from Secretary) for 2020-21 term, and submitted BAMA Bluffton News Devotional article. Presbytery Activities: Occasional check-in meetings with MVP General Presbyter and pastoral leaders, Commissioned Ruling Elder student liaison Zoom and Discipleship Commission Zoom. Approved the following Continuing Education, Vacation, and Service to Greater Church requests: Continuing Education: Request off October 23-29 (including Sunday, October 25) for Lombard Mennonite Peace Center Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process (online) – \$975 – fee also covers 2 more 3-day training periods in 2021. Vacation: Request off December 25 – January 1 (including Sunday, December 27). Service to the Greater Church: Request off November 9-15 (including Sunday, November 15) for Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary Alum Board Meeting/Reunion (November 11 - 13 online) and MVP Rekindle Youth Retreat (November 13 -15 either in-person or online). Karol’s three-year anniversary was acknowledged and session affirmed her relationship with us thanking her for serving our church family, our community, and our presbytery.
- Little Food Pantry now has 7 stockers on weekly rotation. Sue Van Eman continues to coordinate and shop for additional items. Majority of money donated for this purpose has been used. Now that we are back in person, will be promoting bringing food items in the second Sunday of each month to stock our pantry. Approved that our share (25%) of Peace and Global Witness Offering be given to the Lion and Lamb Peace Arts Center at Bluffton University. Baby shower gifts for Vellengas (Missionary co-workers) will be baby monitor with camera, children’s books, and donation to diaper fund.
- Klausing has completed painting the church trim – about \$300 more than what we planned, but they ended up painting the downspouts and the handrails which we did not plan on, also checking to make sure tax exempt. M + R repaired sanctuary AC – needed Freon and new compressor – AC exterior units at church were cleaned out. Filters changed at church. Wellmann Brothers plan to start sealing masonry on Thursday – expect three days. M +R contacted about replacing AC unit at manse – availability of units will determine if completed this fall or early spring.
- Rotating group of volunteers will run camera for live streaming. We have been looking into increasing our worship music options. A license through Convergence Music Project (\$270 per year) covers newer and more progressive Christian worship music, with choices of audio files (to which we can add images and lyrics to create video), lyrics, and sheet music. (This license would be in addition to our current One License subscription, which is currently \$270/year.) Approved worship committee request to accept \$200 donation for a one-year subscription to Convergence Music Project.
- Approved to accept Jeanette Warren’s resignation as Deacon (1 year term left).

- Approved Faith Formation request for Adult Faith Formation Group to begin meeting in person on Sunday, October 11 in the basement of the church – option of joining via Zoom will also be available. This class will meet for 30 minutes beginning at 9:30 AM. They will begin the year with a 12-week devotional series from Sanctified Art entitled "Unraveled". Youth Faith Formation Group – youth 6th through 12th grade – will meet monthly for Youth Group events and have expressed a desire for a weekly gathering as well. Meeting dates and times may be coordinated with the participants by our Faith Formation Intern Adam Shanaman. May utilize the basement fellowship hall or Zoom. Children's Faith Formation Group – will focus on the faith formation of children preschool through 5th grade. They will start their activities in early September at home and hopefully be able to move to in-person sessions on Sunday morning later this fall – once safe gathering practices are established and working well with the adult and youth classes. Each family has been given "Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible" for use at home. Kits containing a guide and materials for exploring the Bible stories as a family will be delivered to each family. In addition, detailed lessons with links to videos and other on-line resources will be emailed to each family. Same materials will be used when the children are able to gather in person. When it is deemed safe for all the Faith Formation Groups to meet on Sunday mornings, plan to have the adults and youth share the basement fellowship hall space. Children's group will utilize one of the preschool class rooms. This will make it easier for the larger groups to social distance and eliminate the need to bring adult size tables and chairs into the preschool classroom each week. With need to be flexible we tried to choose options that could move back and forth between in-person and virtual participation.
- Approved Stewardship & Finance recommendation to invest \$ in PC(USA) Investment & Loan Program (which provides

loans to churches) in September 2020. Specifics: invested in a PC (USA) five-year note yielding 1.50% annually, maturing Sept. 2025. invested in a PC (USA) three-year note yielding 1.20% annually, maturing Sept. 2023. invested in the PC (USA) mission market fund. initially invested in the PC (USA) mission market fund and gradually reinvested during 2021 in a stock market index fund in the Vanguard account. The Stewardship & Finance Committee will monitor the church's financial condition and expected needs and will also monitor the overall economic and investment environment at a high level. If the Stewardship & Finance Committee determines it would be in the best interest of the church to modify the above plans, it would like to reserve the right to do so. Any material modifications would be discussed with Session.

New Beginnings

New Beginnings is developing a proposal for Session to replace the existing sign in the corner of the church lawn. The proposal is for an electronic sign supported by a faux-brick frame. The sign would be funded through already-received gifts and bequests, and a sign policy has been drafted. The policy would govern church messages and community messages from non-profit organizations. The proposal will also include a potential part-time staff to manage the sign messages. This person may also assist with the weekly email announcements (new since the pandemic) and other adhoc communications, graphics, messaging as agreed; responsibilities of existing staff or volunteers are not anticipated to be transitioned. If you have questions or a passion to be involved, please reach out to Sarah Brauen or any New Beginnings team member.

On September 26, we organized another Pizza Night at Lima Rescue Mission for homeless men. The next outreach is October 10. Please contact Bob Hursh if you are interested in contributing or participating. We are also committed for November 14 and December 26.



Thank you from Samaritan House in Lima
(recipient of our 40% of the Pentecost Offering)

Dear BPC,

Thank you kindly for your encouragement and support as a congregation. We are so grateful for the generosity extended by the community during this difficult time. It has been a pleasure working with Carole Enneking and it was sweet of her to refer us! As you can imagine our work looks different for many reasons right now, but we are hopeful to continue serving and be here to support those in need for many years to come. When things are more settled with COVID-19, you are welcome to come tour.

Blessings!

~ Brandi Schroeder and staff

Church Family:

Thank you so much for the calls, checking, reaching out to me, letting me know you all care!! And the surprise of the “vase of flowers”! What caring people are in our church!

Much love,

Donnas

Youth Group

On September 20, the youth came together for a field day full of wacky Olympic games and challenges followed with a discussion about what Jesus says about equality. In October, the youth will be going to Suter's Corn Maze on Saturday, October 10 and having a movie night on Sunday, October 18. Times to be determined for both events. If you have any questions, please contact Adam Shanaman.

Personnel

It's that time of year for Staff evaluations. Please share with Betsey any comments you may have about how our church is currently running at

Fellowship Opportunity

Bonfire at Carroll's in October will be last minute date due to dryness and crops in the fields to have a fire. We miss you all and hope to do something else. If you have any ideas please let Betsey know.

Active Scam Alert

Once again, some of our church members have been solicited through a fake email address, indicating the message appears to be from me (Pastor Karol) – or from another staff member – requesting money, gift cards, favors, etc., sometimes even asking not to call because “I'm busy.” (*Calling would actually be helpful because then you would learn that I didn't send that message!*) The scammers may use a number of fake addresses. This scam has affected churches around the country (see article: [“New phishing scam uses church pastors' names as bait”](#)).

Please be suspicious of any such unusual messages.

If you receive something and you are unsure if you should open it or respond, first ask me about it by phone or in person.

Please note my correct email addresses are. Be sure to check that any email associated with my name comes from one of those addresses before responding. The same is true of text messages – do not respond if you do not recognize the number.

~ Pastor Karol

August 2020 Financial Report

General Fund Budgeted Items

Balance January 1, 2020	\$
Receipts thru Aug. 31	
Expenses thru Aug. 31	
Balance Aug. 31, 2020	\$

Thank you for financially supporting the church's budget.



Deacons

Your Deacons have provided their cell phone numbers below for the congregation's convenience. Please do not hesitate to call any of us, for needs you may have. The Deacons are planning not only communion, but a few other things in the next couple months. They want to thank all of the members for checking on others.

Hope to see you soon!

Tanya Best

Craig Bowman

Laura From

Helen Hawk

Dave Van Eman

In August, delivered flowers to shut-ins and helped a local family along with Mission Committee.

Deacons are holding a fundraiser October 9, from 4:30 to 6:30 PM behind the church. Half chicken, baked potato, applesauce, roll – \$8.00 or pork chop, baked potato, applesauce, roll – \$8.00. Cash/check ticket sales in front of the church Saturday, October 3, 9:00 to 11:00 AM or online at blufftonpc.org and click on the word "Give", on giving page click on green words "Click Here to Give", type in quantity of choice, type Deacons Aid Fund, follow instructions, review, click Process. A confirmation screen will let you know you were successful. Online orders until October 4.

Bluffton Presbyterian Church will be hosting the Community Meal as a drive-thru on October 15, at 6:00 PM behind the Senior Citizen Center.

Thank you from the Deacons to: Julia Szabo online additions for fundraiser, Lynda Best for making tickets, Diane Winebar for Shannon Theatre ad, Pastor Karol for Facebook ad, and Cathy Carroll for answering questions.

Invest – and Strengthen the Body of Christ at the same time?

PCUSA's Investment and Loan Program enables PCUSA to borrow money from Presbyterian churches and individual members and then lend the money at low interest rates to help build churches, expand ministries, and reshape existing spaces to help make structures more welcoming to visitors and the community around them.

Churches or individuals who wish to invest may purchase term notes from PCUSA and borrowing churches repay the loans with interest – a portion of which is paid to investors. The remainder builds capital for future loans. The term notes pay commercially competitive interest rates and though not guaranteed by a government agency, are backed by PCUSA, which has never defaulted.

Our church has recently decided to invest money in this program, and if you think you may be interested in learning more, please contact Clair Winebar or any other member of the Stewardship Committee. You can also reach PCUSA directly by contacting Catherine Lynch

Faith Formation

What happens when our world falls apart? How do we press onward when our tightly-knit plans unravel into loose threads? What do we become when our identity – or the path we're on – comes undone? What if all of this is not the end we fear it will be? In our unraveling, sometimes life surprises us with unexpected joy, love, and hope – with a new beginning we couldn't have imagined. Sometimes we need God to unravel us, for we long to be changed.

Do these questions hit home? Could you use a new perspective on your unraveling? Then join the Adult Faith Formation class as we explore 12 stories of unraveled shame, identity, fear, grief, dreams, and expectations. Through a variety of activities we will discover how God was at work in ancient times and is still at work today.

For each of the 12 stories of unraveling, we will use the following resources:

- Original visual art inspired by the text
- An artist statement reflecting on how the scripture inspired the art
- Poems written in the summer of 2020 that speak to the turbulence of these times while also pointing us to God's presence in the midst of it all.
- Prompts for visual meditation to engage the art
- Prompts for individual or group reflection on the scripture
- A prompt for journaling in response to the scripture
- A short closing prayer

We may also incorporate poems written in the summer of 2020 that meditate on the heaviness of our collective unraveling. Informed by COVID-19 and the civil rights revolution these poems speak to the turbulence of these times while also pointing us to God's presence in the midst of it all.

The Adult Faith Formation class will begin meeting on October 11. We will meet in the church Basement Fellowship Hall at 9:30 AM. Social distancing and masks will be required for those meeting in person. There will also be a Zoom option for those who want to participate virtually. If you are interested in joining this group, please reach out to Tenna Rhonemus or Jay McCracken.



Preschool Texas Roadhouse Fundraiser

Bluffton Community Preschool is currently holding a Texas Roadhouse Fundraiser. Purchase a \$15, \$25, or \$50 gift card to Texas Roadhouse, and the preschool will receive 10% of the value of the gift card. Order a dozen rolls for \$5, with extra honey cinnamon butter for \$2. Order and money due Monday, October 26; items will arrive the week of December 14. Contact any preschool family, Pastor Karol (Board member), or Tenna Rhonemus (Board president) to place an order.

Mission News

Mission Co-Worker Connections

For more information:

pcusa.org/ian-and-jhan-vellenga



Trusting God in Every Season – Sept. 3, 2020

Dear Friends, we are quickly approaching the autumn months, and it seems like time is running at an accelerated pace now. Like many of our co-workers, we have been in the United States for around six months now. I am not sure how to describe the past months, maybe as a little bit apocalyptic. We started the year with excitement, planning to begin our IA (Interpretation Assignment) church visits at the end of March. We would be traveling, attending church services, meeting people, and reuniting with longtime friends. We spent months exchanging emails, planning flights, and even road routes to visit as many churches as possible to talk about our work in Nicaragua and with CEPAD. We were looking forward to our first-time doing church visitation on a large scale, so coming to the U.S. in the middle of March didn't seem like a big deal at that time, or at least that's what we thought.

At that time, coming to the U.S. earlier simply meant being in quarantine for 14 days and possibly rescheduling some of our visits. We were aware of the rapid spread of the virus, but never in our minds did we think that the world would have to stop the way it has. Death tolls quickly rose, fear spread, and stay-at-home orders were put in place for what seemed just a couple of weeks. Still, a lot of people didn't seem to understand why we couldn't sit in restaurants anymore or meet in large gatherings with family or friends (some people still don't understand it today). The first few weeks were hard for a lot of people. The first weeks were hard for us too.

It was not easy to adapt to a new routine and try to figure out the best way to do our work, being limited to just emails and video calls. Yes, technology now feels like a God-sent tool for us, but at the beginning, it felt like we could not really do much, or even connect with people at the level we would have liked through a computer with an internet connection. We started questioning if coming back to the U.S. was a good idea. We wanted to be in Nicaragua at our home, supporting our colleagues and friends the best we could.

The truth is that our work looked a lot like what we do nowadays, but it felt like we were abandoning our post in the beginning. Not only were we unable to physically visit churches and connect with people in person, but we were also not allowed to travel back to Nicaragua. We felt a little displaced and uprooted. We were glad to be safe and comfortable with family here in the United States during these uncertain times. However, we are concerned and saddened by the idea of not being able to go back to the place we had called home for the past year for a good while.

All these mixed feeling made us remember the passages in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8: “For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.”

It feels like we are going through a lot of these seasons and changes all at once, but for every season of sadness or troubles, it reminds us that there would also be a season of restoration, renewal, rebuilding, and healing. I know that for many people, the good seasons feel out of reach right now, and as humans, we cannot determine or

control these times, but we can focus on doing what is good and right, not just for ourselves but also for others.

We are still in the adaptation process, but now instead of just feeling lost, misplaced, and unproductive, we focus on doing the best we can when we can and reshaping our idea of contributions to our work and connection to people and churches. Yes, it is not ideal, but it is doable, and even pleasing and rewarding at some level to know we can still share our work and connect with people. We are grateful for being in the company of those whom we love as we patiently and hopefully wait for the seasons of betterment and mending to start. We see glimpses of hope every day and encourage all of you to search for those glimpses too while we wait together for better times. *We are grateful for your support of our work and ministry with CEPAD and the people of Nicaragua every season. Be well and be safe.*

Blessings, Jhan and Ian

Marcella Tesni Vellenga, born 9/9/20,
daughter of Mission Co-Workers
Jhan Dotel-Vellenga & Ian Vellenga



Mission Co-workers Welcome Addition to their Family

Congratulations to Jhan and Ian Dotel-Vellenga on the birth of their daughter Marcell Tesni Vellenga. Thanks to the generous gifts to the baby shower campaign, our congregation provided a baby monitor with camera, several children's books, and a donation to their diaper fund. The family is still in North Carolina; they plan to share another video message for a Sunday worship soon.



PCUSA Peace & Global Witness Offering - Collection continues through October

Peace is active, not passive; peace is doing, not waiting. In this Season of Peace, your gifts will help more people experience the freedom and dignity that Christ wants for everyone. Let us offer the peace of Christ in all times and all ways.

A gift to the Peace & Global Witness Offering enables the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of conflict and injustice across the world. Our congregation has designated 25% of the Offering to support Bluffton University's Lion and Lamb Peace Arts Center. Our Synod will retain 25% for ministries of peace and reconciliation within our region. The remaining 50% will be used by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate for peace and justice in cultures of violence, including our own, through collaborative projects of education and Christian witness.

Gifts can be made by check (in the offering basket or mailed to the church office) or online (church website or PCUSA.org).

Little Food Pantry

The community continues to benefit from our 24/7 emergency food pantry, but we are running low on supplies and donations. Donations of money or food items are welcome at any time, as well as on the 2nd Sunday collection day. Sue Van Eman continues to organize the pantry donations and volunteers fill daily:

Sept. 28-Oct. 4 – Jayne McGarrity;
Oct. 5-11 – Pastor Karol;
Oct. 12-18 – Carole Enneking;
Oct. 19-25 – Sue Van Eman;
Oct. 26-Nov. 1 – Sarah Brauen

If you wish to donate items, please leave them on the tables in the basement (church is open Tues. Wed. and Thurs. from 9:00 AM until noon). Popular items include: boxed Macaroni & Cheese, breakfast cereal (smaller size), canned fruit, bar soap, shampoo, peanut butter, and canned tuna and meats are always needed.

**The 3-Cents-a-Meal Donation continues to support the Bluffton Community Assistance Food Pantry and the Presbyterian Hunger Program. Thank you for your support of that monthly offering, as well.

3 Cents A Meal Offering

Three Cents a Meal invites every member of our congregation to prayerfully contribute a few cents at each meal to help alleviate hunger and poverty. Ideally, contributions come from “living more simply so that others may simply live.” Participation in Three Cents a Meal is also a commitment to share with others in response to Jesus’ command, “You give them something to eat.” Daily participation is a reminder of the reality of hunger for millions of our sisters and brothers in the world. As the money accumulates, those participating become aware that small, regular acts can result in significant responses to hunger and that there is great strength in working together with other Christians. We collect this offering on the first Sunday of each month.

Community Assistance Program

The Community Assistance program has restarted their monthly food pantry hours. The congregation is invited to donate any of the following: cereals, chunky soups, canned fruits, canned meats (tuna, beef, pork, chicken), spaghetti, beans, spaghetti, sauces, macaroni and cheese, vegetables, hamburger helper of any kind, Mexican foods, salsas, creams, lotions, soaps, deodorants.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

1st Thessalonians 5:17 encourages us to pray continually. Following a disaster, our best response is first to seek God's presence on behalf of those in need. If you feel moved to provide financial support for those hit by Hurricane Sally, Hurricane Laura, and Pacific Northwest Wildfires, your gifts can be made through the PCUSA by visiting <https://pda.pcusa.org/page/active-accounts/>.

BPC Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request, please contact Craig Bowman (). PLEASE leave a message if no answer. Or call the church office () with your prayer request, and we will pass along the information. If you would like to add someone else to the prayer chain, please be sure to get their permission first. Names and circumstances can be kept confidential, if desired. God knows for whom we pray. If you would like to be part of the chain or would like more information, please contact Craig or another deacon.



Prayers of Joy for Lin Rumer's granddaughter Ashlin Gable who married William Kelly Freimark on September 12.

Prayers of Sympathy for Lin Rumer whose cat, Boston, died unexpectedly on August 31.

Prayers for those who live alone or in care facilities and are unable to engage in meaningful connections with family members and friends, including Dorothy Hursey, Marilyn Bullock, and Hazel Rodabaugh at Maple Crest, Dortha Radabaugh at Mennonite Memorial Home, Peggy Hursey at Putnam Heritage Assisted Living, Sally Reeder at the Springs of Lima, and Jeanette Warren at Good Samaritan in Arlington.

Prayers for Sheila Hurlburt who has returned home from the hospital following a short stay after she fell.

Prayers for Kay Szymanowski (neighbor of Lori's parents in Fremont and the great-grandmother of a newborn hospitalized with heart/lung problems) who has been admitted to the hospital due to COVID-19.

Prayers for Laura and Tyler From: Tyler is receiving palliative care due to respiratory issues. Laura appreciates everyone's support, but asks that you direct your calls and inquiries to Pastor Karol at this time, so that Laura can focus on caring for Tyler and for herself.

Prayers for Judy Miracle who is at St. Catherine's Manor in Findlay and hopes to return home in the next week.

Prayers for Diane Winebar's sister Sylvia Morman who had open heart surgery on Monday, September 28.

Prayers for Nancy (Lori Schmidt's sister) who had a heart procedure at OSU on September 22.

Prayers for Dave (Helen Hawk's coworker's husband) who had open heart surgery and may need another surgery.

Prayers for Mary Jean Miller (Marilyn Edwards' friend) who had surgery on September 8.

Prayers for those affected by, or at risk from, the devastating wildfires on the West Coast, including Laura Edwards Leeper and Melissa Bogart Campbell.

Prayers for those who have lost lives, electricity, and homes in the recent hurricane in the Gulf Coast.

Prayers for those in our congregation and community who have tested positive for COVID-19.



SEEKING TO BE FAITHFUL TOGETHER: *Guidelines for Presbyterians in Times of Disagreement*

In a spirit of trust and love, we promise we will...

*Give them a hearing...
listen before we answer*

(John 7:51 and Proverbs 18:13)

1. Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus the Christ;
 - we will keep our conversations and communications open for candid and forthright exchange,
 - we will not ask questions or make statements in a way that will intimidate or judge others.
2. Learn about various positions on the topic of disagreement.
3. State what we think we heard and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to be sure we understand each other.

Speak the truth in love

(Ephesians 4:15)

4. Share our concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom we have disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus' teachings.
5. Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people's motives, intelligence or integrity;
 - we will not engage in name-calling or labeling of others prior to, during or following the discussion.
6. Share our personal experiences about the subject of disagreement so that others may more fully understand our concerns.

*Maintain the unity of the
spirit in the bond of peace*

(Ephesians 4:3)

7. Indicate where we agree with those of other viewpoints as well as where we disagree.
8. Seek to stay in community with each other though the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension;
 - we will be ready to forgive and be forgiven.
9. Follow these additional guidelines when we meet in decision-making bodies
 - urge people of various points of view to speak and promise to listen to these positions seriously
 - seek conclusions informed by our points of agreement;
 - be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of those who do not agree with the majority and respect their rights of conscience;
 - abide by the decision of the majority, and if we disagree with it and wish to change it, work for that change in ways that are consistent with these Guidelines.
10. Include our disagreement in our prayers, not praying for the triumph of our viewpoints, but seeking God's grace to listen attentively, to speak clearly and to remain open to the vision God holds for us all.

"Hello! How are you this week?"

"I'm sharing a safety tip. Would you like to hear it?"

**"How can I pray
for you?"**

These words are shared weekly with people who are isolated or facing crime-related challenges in Allen & Putnam Counties by Crime Victim Services' "Are You OK?" Volunteers.

One additional volunteer is needed.

Contact Elysia Bush, 419-302-2857 or
ebush@crimevictimservices.org.

Are You OK? Volunteers check on the well-being of elders and persons with special needs who live alone and have been a victim of crime. They are a critical connection for many isolated people, putting into practice Jesus' love for our neighbors. Participants are offered friendship, visits, help with problems, safety tips, referrals to other agencies, as well as prayer and inspirational messages tailored to his or her needs and faith beliefs.

When a regular contact is missed, follow-up procedures are followed to assure the person's well-being. A Victim Advocate coordinates the volunteers and program. A background check is required. Paid mileage and trainings are provided.



Are You OK? Program



REKINDLE

MVP YOUTH RETREAT

Due to Covid-19, we have decided to move Rekindle to a hybrid model this year. We will be meeting on Zoom a few times, and the other times we recommend youth meet at their home churches and/or on their own at home. We will send kits with all the supplies you need.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13th - SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15th, 2020

7:30PM (FRI.) - 11:30AM (SUN.) | ONLINE & @ HOME/CHURCHES

Registration Deadline: Friday, October 30th at 5PM!

Register TODAY on the MVP website! (www.maumeevp.org)

\$15 Early Bird Registration by October 7th

\$25 Registration after October 8th

**A fun, inspiring, faith-filled weekend
for all youth (grades 7-12) in the
Maumee Valley Presbytery!**

Sponsored by the MVP Discipleship Commission
Contact Rev. Lanie Sipes at laniecptoledo@gmail.com



Bluffton Presbyterian Church
112 N. Main St., P.O. Box 149
Bluffton, OH 45817

blufftonpc.org

Sunday Worship: 10:15 AM

OFFICE HOURS

Pastor: Rev. Karol Farris Schilling

Phone:

Email:

Office Hours: Tues 1-4; Wed 10-1

Primary Work Days: Tuesday – Friday

Secretary: Cathy Carroll

Email:

Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 9-12

Treasurer: Julia Szabo

Email:

Faith Formation Intern: Adam Shanaman

Email:

Organists: Jayne McGarrity and Sue Van Eman

Choir Director: Linda Sycks

Nursery Helpers: Kori Phipps and Shawna Anderson

Custodian: Roger Brodman

2020 Church Officers

Session

Clerk of Session – Lori Schmidt

Buildings & Grounds – Lynda Best

Faith Formation – Tenna Rhonemus

Fellowship – Jodi Brauen

Finance & Stewardship – Clair Winebar

Mission – Carole Enneking

New Beginnings – Sarah Brauen

Nominating – Lynda Best and Tenna Rhonemus

Personnel – Betsey Angus

Presbytery Commissioner – Lori Schmidt

Worship – Diane Winebar

Members at Large – Sarah Brauen and Lori Schmidt

Board of Deacons

Moderator: Helen Hawk

Assistant Moderator: Laura From

Members: Tanya Best, Craig Bowman,

Dave Van Eman