



What's Happening at Bluffton Presbyterian Church

February 2018

Growing in Faith • Sharing God's Love

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, February 4 – Communion

3 Cents a Meal Offering
Special Music: Youth Choir
Organist: Sue Van Eman
Sound: Bob Hursh / Slides: Julia Szabo
Lay Reader: Leslie Freed
Greeters: Tom and Marilyn Edwards
Acolyte: Sarah Gillen

Sunday, February 11

Special Music: Choir
Sound: Jay McCracken / Slides: Diane Winebar
Lay Reader: Sarah Brauen
Greeters: Tanya Best and Helen Hawk
Acolyte: Avery Talavinia

Wednesday, February 14 – Communion

Ash Wednesday Service
Special Music: Choir
Sound: Mike Rhonemus / Slides: Julia Szabo
Lay Reader: TBD
Greeters: Laura From and Cindy Gillen
Acolyte: TBD

Sunday, February 18

Special Music: Praise Team
Sound: Mike Rhonemus / Slides: Leslie Freed
Lay Reader: Tanya Best
Greeters: Mike and Tenna Rhonemus
Acolytes: McVetta Girls

Sunday, February 25

Special Music: Choir
Sound: Jeff Gillen / Slides: Cathy Carroll
Lay Reader: Carole Enneking
Greeters: Dave and Sue Van Eman
Acolyte: Owen

Sunday, March 4

Sound: Bob Hursh / Slides: Julia Szabo
Lay Reader: Lin Rumer

Mark Your Calendars!

- February 4 – BPC Basement Bistro – Hosted by Youth Group – Following Worship
- February 4 – Sharing Communion with our friends at Maple Crest – 1:30 PM
- February 7 – Christian Education Meeting – Following Choir Practice – 7:30 PM
- February 8 – Session Meeting – 7:00 PM
- February 10 – BPC Officers Retreat (for Session and Deacons) – 9:00 to Noon – Church Basement
- February 11 – Share the Spirit Fellowship Hosted by Deacons – Following Worship
- February 14 – Ash Wednesday Service – 7:00 PM
- February 18 – Bowling and Lunch – 12:30 to 2:30 PM
- February 20 – Presbytery Meeting – 10:00 AM – FPC Tiffin
- February 20 – Chili Cook Off – 5:30 to 7:00 PM – Bluffton Middle School Cafetorium
- February 21 – Praise Team – 7:30 PM
- February 21 – Deacons Meeting – 7:30 PM
- February 22 – New Beginnings – 7:00 PM
- February 25 – Newsletter Items Deadline CEGillen@MarathonPetroleum.com
- February 28 – Pastor Relations Committee – 5:30 PM

Small Groups

- Claralice Circle will meet every Tuesday evening 6:30-8:30 PM in the church basement.
- Sister Min Circle will meet the 2nd and 4th Friday afternoons from 2:00-3:00 PM at Maple Crest.

Choir Rehearsal

- Wednesdays at 6:30 PM at Church

Pastor's Letter:

In my letter this month, I want to share with you a devotional piece I submitted to the local newspaper. Do you notice any familiar themes from recent sermons in worship? I hope so!

No matter where you are from, we're glad you're our neighbor.

In one of my sermons last fall, I mentioned the tri-color Welcome Your Neighbors signs that have been popping up in communities across the nation, including here in Bluffton. Shortly thereafter, a member of the congregation placed an order for some of the signs, available for anyone to take for their own yard for a small donation to cover the cost of ordering. This idea originated in a Mennonite congregation in Virginia, yet the demand for sharing the message soon spread far beyond. According to the website for the signs, "From its beginning in a conversation on a Sunday morning, to its global reach today, the movement serves as a tangible signpost encouraging us to reach out to our neighbors, build bridges of connection, and practice hospitality through the open doors of our communities."

It is such a simple gesture to put on display in one's yard, yet it can mean so much to those who come from other places, or look different, or who primarily speak a language other than English. These "outsiders" receive mixed messages from the dominant American culture about the extent of their welcome here. So a small yard sign is a good start to demonstrating welcome, followed by friendly smiles, open conversations, and mutual invitations to share life together.

The need to show welcome in our communities is obvious; the necessity of putting basic signs of welcome in our yards shows that we have a long way to go to overcome fear of differences.

This challenge is also not unique to our time. In the Old Testament, God is repeatedly reminding the Israelites to welcome the stranger in the midst. *When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God. Leviticus 19:33-34 (NIV).* Our own experiences of being outsiders should add to our compassion for those in similar circumstances.

In the New Testament, Jesus encounters this fear of the other when he calls people to be his first disciples. In the Gospel of John, Philip tells his friend Nathaniel that the long awaited Messiah has been found: Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth. Knowing nothing else about Jesus at this point, Nathanael scoffs, *Can anything good come out of Nazareth?* Though he says this only to one person, he might as well be saying it about everyone from there. When we casually toss around the names of other places in the world, we may also be guilty of such thinking, at least subconsciously. Even the president of our country recently made degrading statements toward entire groups of people based on their country of origin. Can anything good come from those _____ countries?

How is it that love for our own people/country/etc. is so often coupled with a fear or hatred directed toward anyone outside of our group? Our fear of the other usually has to do with our lack of knowledge. We are afraid because we cannot see who they really are. They cannot see who we really are. When Philip responds to Nathanael's rude comment, he does not reciprocate with an insult about Nathanael's background. Instead, he says, *Come and see.* Nathanael is given an opportunity to come close, to get to know Jesus as a real person, who will no longer be a stranger, but a friend.

If only we could see that in the end, it is not about "us" against "them." We are all God's children, no matter where we are from. We are all one family. How pleasing it must be for God when we make an effort to turn strangers into friends, to give and receive welcome without fear of those who are different. *No matter where you are from, we're glad you're our neighbor.*

*No importa de dónde eres,
estamos contentos que seas
nuestro vecino.*

No matter where you are
from, we're glad you're
our neighbor.

لا يهم اين ولدتم، و لكننا
سعداء انكم جيراننا.

In Christ,

Pastor Karol

The Christian Calendar: Transfiguration, Ash Wednesday, and Lent

On the calendar of the Christian year, we have come through the seasons of Advent and Christmas, and are back in “Ordinary Time” for just a few weeks until the season of Lent.

The **Transfiguration of the Lord** is **Sunday, February 11**. The Sunday immediately prior to Ash Wednesday is an appropriate time to look at the story of Jesus being “transfigured” up upon a mountain (Mark 9:2-10), because this event marked a transition in Jesus’ ministry: from this point on, he began his final journey to Jerusalem. In celebrating this Sunday, we rejoice in the divine majesty of Christ, whose glory shone even when confronted with the prospect of the cross.

And then we mark the beginning of the season of Lent with Ash Wednesday, which falls on February 14 this year. This day gets its name from the fact that ashes are a symbol in the Bible for reflecting on our behavior and repenting of the things we have done wrong (e.g. Jonah 3:6, Matthew 11:21). Join us on **February 14 at 7:00 PM** for an **Ash Wednesday** devotional service during which we will prepare our hearts and minds to reflect on the coming season, receive the symbol of the ashes, and partake in the sacrament of communion. Let us gather in reflection as we begin our Lenten focus, renew our faith promises, and share the Lord’s Supper.

The whole season of **Lent** is a period of 40 days, occurring this year February 14 through March 31. Sundays are not included in the count, as Sunday is a day of resurrection. Its name is derived from the Middle English “lente,” which means “springtime.” In the early church, Lent was a time for people who wanted to become members to study, pray, fast, and be examined, in order to join the church Easter morning. Later, the season developed into a time for all Christians to prepare themselves for Holy Week, through confession, repentance, and rededicating themselves to Christ.

Highlights of January Session Meeting

- Pastor Karol, Cindy, and Lori met with new deacon Tanya Best for examination prior to ordination. Ordination/Installation of Elders/Deacons will be January 14.
- Light bulb in choir loft replaced. Replaced one bulb in motion detector light – still not working consistently – will need to be checked. Repaired latch on restroom door. Sprayed for ants in the women’s restroom.
- Approved serving Communion on first Sunday of each month and Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday.
- Following reorganizational items were addressed - Elected Lori Schmidt as Clerk. Approved Darin Leugers as Treasurer for 2018. Agreed to continue meeting on the second Thursday at 7:00 PM – no stated meeting in July. Approved Cindy Gillen and Tom Edwards as Co-chairs for Nominating Committee. Elected Lori Schmidt as Presbytery Commissioner. Approved that the Composition of 2018 Session includes four males and five females which is representative of our congregation in terms of age/ gender. Approved nominating the following elders to the congregation to serve as Officers of the Corporation – President – Tenna Rhonemus, Treasurer – Cindy Gillen, and Secretary – Lynda Best.



- Pastor Karol made 7 pastoral care visits plus 5 home communion visits. Congregation activities include: committee meetings, Bluffton Community Meal, Claralice Circle, and hosted College/Young Adult Gathering at the manse with 12 attending (gathering well received and will try to meet couple of times a year), worship services, and Christmas Eve. Pastor Karol has agreed to be on the Worship Planning Team for Presbytery meetings. Community activities include: meeting with 3 local pastors, hosting BAMA meeting, Bluffton Icon article, attended Mennonite Memorial Home worship service in preparation for leading worship soon (have agreed to be worship leader one time each quarter), and attended Allen County Clergy Fellowship meeting. Will be participating in BAMA's pulpit exchange on January 21 – she will preach at English Lutheran and Rev. Kevin Mohr will be preaching at our church. One of goals for 2018 is to spend time with each individual/family within congregation.
- Dick McGarrity will meet with village administrator and ask that we be added to insurance when people contact the village to request/ given permission to use the alley. Thanks to Lynda for selling these items on Bluffton Online Garage Sale – pulpit chair (\$65) and pot rack (\$25). With pending snowstorm, village officials decided to take down Blaze of Lights display early. Mayor Rich Johnson has met with Lynda to discuss project for next year.
- Agreed to have Officers' Retreat on Saturday, February 10 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM in the church basement.

2018 Weekday Christian Ed Walkers

Thursday, March 8
 Friday, March 9
 Tuesday, March 20
 Thursday, April 5
 Friday, April 20
 Friday, April 27

Contact Tenna Rhonemus to volunteer.

Per Capita

You are invited to help cover the per capita cost of your membership by making a special donation through our congregation as part of your discipline of stewardship. The per capita amount is \$30.98 per member in 2018. Thank You!

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.

Reminder

If you have Community Market receipts, please bring them in and place them in the baskets on the bulletin board or the back of the hallway. Thank you to Kay Ziessler for coordinating our congregation's participation in this rewards program.

Paper Recycling

Please note that paper recycling is available in the front and back of the sanctuary. Place any unwanted bulletins, etc. in the blue bins, and all other trash in the trash bins. Thank you!



Deacons Report

At our January meeting, the deacons chose the following positions:

- Mike – Prayer Chain Coordinator
- Tanya – Funeral Dinner Coordinator
- Dave – Community Meal Coordinator
- Marilyn – Nominating Committee
- Helen – Assistant Moderator
- Laura – Moderator

We will be continuing our CARE deacon program this year. To remind everyone, this program was designed to ensure all members have a connection with the church even if they cannot make weekly services. In the coming month you'll be contacted by your CARE deacon, so they may introduce themselves, as well as give more information on this meaningful program.

Share the Spirit! Connect with our Homebound

Stay for a time of fellowship after worship on February 11. While enjoying Valentine's cookies, you'll have the opportunity to draw the name of a homebound member to connect with. Just send a card or encouraging note, make a friendly phone call, or visit the person whose name you draw within the month.



To someone who is homebound, being remembered is important. Family also is important, and isn't our church a family?



This is a wonderful way to reach out to our homebound and offer a sense of connection and belonging. We hope you'll say

"Yes!" to supporting a special someone this Valentine's Day.

Ignite - merging fellowship, families, and service

Mark your calendars for an afternoon of bites, strikes, and Ignite! Join us at Bluffton's Southgate Lanes for lunch and bowling on Sunday, February 18. Bowling starts at 12:30 PM, but stop by any time to order food or watch the BPC bowling pros, or amateurs in action. RSVP to Cathy Carroll, Sarah Brauen, or on the sign-up sheet at the back of church if you are bowling so we can reserve enough lanes. Everyone is invited!

If you would like to purchase a "Welcome Your Neighbors" sign to display in your yard, please see Sarah Brauen. The cost is \$10.

Souper Bowl of Caring

The youth will be hosting a BPC Basement Bistro on Sunday, February 4 immediately following worship for the Souper Bowl of Caring. We will be serving a variety of soups, salad, rolls, and sweet desserts. A free will offering will be collected with proceeds going to the Bluffton Community Assistance Program. We hope you can join us!



Mission Report

Mission will be starting to accept Grace and Gratitude offering from now until February 11; see more info on bulletin board and inserts.

Community Chili Cook-off Volunteers Needed

The Mission committee is planning the 2nd Annual Community Chili Cook-off for Tuesday, February 20 from 5:30 to 7:00 PM at the Middle School cafeteria. Your help is needed to find chili cooks, to assist with the event, and/or to promote attendance. Contact Lynda Best or Carole Enneking if you can help with set-up, concession sales, kitchen/dining room help, greeter or clean-up. Cashiers are needed, too. Last year's event raised over \$1000 for the Bluffton Community Assistance Program.

Bluffton Area Food Pantry

The Bluffton Area Food Pantry thanks you for your continued support. Listed below is a revised list of some items to consider for the pantry:

Canned Meats
Hamburger Helper and similar meals
Tuna and Tuna Helper
Breakfast Cereals and Instant Oatmeal
Chunky Soups and Crackers
Spaghetti and Spaghetti Sauce
Tomato Sauce
Macaroni and Cheese
Mexican Food Products: Tortillas, Sauces
Canned Fruits
Chili Beans and Baked Beans
Peanut Butter
Noodles and Beef Ramen Noodles
Baking Items: Brownies, Cookies, Cakes
Rice and Riceroni Items
Condiments: Catsup, Mustard, Mayo
Paper products: Toilet Paper, Paper Towels, Tissues, Napkins, Paper Plates
Personal Hygiene Products: Deodorant, Shampoo and Hair Care Items, Lotions, Soft Soaps, Toothbrushes, Combs and Brushes

Little Free Pantry

Please do not put canned foods in the Little Free Pantry during the winter months. They can swell and leak. Also no bottles. Safe items you may consider donating: boxed foods (cereal, etc.), dry mixes (soup, etc.), rice, noodles, personal hygiene items, paper towels, Kleenex, baby items (no glass jars).

Thank you for supporting our Little Free Pantry!

Habitat for Humanity

As a Christian organization, Habitat for Humanity not only seeks to provide and advocate for affordable housing, we hope to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ in our work. We count on the generous gift of volunteer time from people like you.

We have two current needs at the Lima Habitat for Humanity ReStore:

1. Once a month continuing commitment for 2-4 hours: This would involve 4-6 people organizing and tidying up the showroom floor. (If we would have four churches do this and each chooses a different week of the month, the ReStore would always be kept in a pristine condition that encourages shoppers to more fully enjoy and support Habitat for Humanity through their purchases.)
2. One time commitment for 2-4 hours: This would involve any number of people or even a Sunday school class to organize and clean the back storage room. (The ReStore is preparing to refurbish its showroom floor in February and space is needed to store numerous items.)

Contact Mark Suderman, Volunteer Coordinator at mark@habitatlima.org or 419-230-5368.

Thank you for your help with this. We appreciate your time and prayers as we all work to bring Christ's Kingdom here on earth.

Conversations with Pastor Karol

One of Pastor Karol's goals for 2018 is to spend time with each individual/ family within our congregation. If you have an idea for a time that would work well for you for conversation – perhaps over a meal – let's make it happen!

Please submit this information to the church office. Thank you!

Name(s): _____

Phone: _____

Suggested time and day of the week: _____

New Church Contact Directory

Our session has approved an update to the contact information section of the church directory—new pages can be inserted into the current binders. It has been a few years since this has been updated, so please help us by providing your complete current contact information above as you would like it listed in the church directory. Please submit this information to the church office by February 6. Thank you!

First and Last Name(s): _____

Street/Mailing Address: _____

Email Address (es): _____

Phone Numbers: (designate home / cell): _____

Aluminum Can Recycling

Remember to save your aluminum cans. The Mission Committee sells recyclable cans and uses the proceeds to support mission causes in our area, most recently for a shelter and feeding ministry in Lima. As you gather the leftover cans from your graduation party or summer barbeque, bring the cans to the church basement and contribute them to a worthy cause.

Lost & Found

Are you missing something that you brought with you to worship some Sunday? Perhaps an umbrella, hat, or sunglasses? Please take a moment to check the Lost & Found box in the back of the church to see if anything belongs to you.



Thank you to the congregation for the generous Christmas gift. It is such a joy to prepare music for the church with the gifted solo musicians and the wonderful choir and praise team.

~ Jayne

Community Chili Cook-off

Tues., February 20, 2018 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Bluffton Middle School Cafetorium

Proceeds benefit:

Bluffton Community Assistance Program

Cost:

\$5 includes chili tastings and drink

Optional concessions:

- Sandwiches
- Baked Goods

Free Entertainment:

Dancers Elite

Krysti's Music Studio

Gift Basket Drawing for those who donate canned/boxed food items for the Food Pantry

People's Choice Award for the best Chili Recipe



Bring the entire family for a meal, entertainment AND to support a valuable community resource. Sponsored by Bluffton Presbyterian Church

For more information, visit the Bluffton Presbyterian Church Facebook page or contact Lynda Best 419-296-2790

IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

Prayer Requests

Prayers of Sympathy with Tom Hursey and family on the recent loss of Tom's Aunt Melvena Lewis.

Prayers of Sympathy with Julia, Jeremy, and Jacob Szabo on the recent loss of Julia's mother Joyce Fisher.

Prayers for safe travel and wonderful adventures for Emily Sycks as she travels to South Africa.

Prayers for our members and friends serving in the armed forces: especially Kyle Begg, Austin Begg, Dave Souders, Andrew Warner, and Lucas Woodward.

Prayers of Healing for Tom Hursey, Michael Lee Bucher, Carl Wolf, Tyler and Laura From, Jenny Bogart, Bob and Jean Braden, Rev. Matthew Zuehlke, Roy Pneuman, Andrew and Dawn Black, Mary Barnett, Dr. Howard Shelly, Alice Schmidt, Walter Schmidt, Brian Megotto, Families of Lance Blackburn and Ken Inbody, and Colletta Mullenhour.

We Lift Our Prayers



Put a prayer request in – take a prayer request out. Look for prayer request slips in the pews and near the prayer box. Or use your own paper. Requests can be as simple as “I’m having back pain,” or “My son is looking for a job.” The slips can be placed in the box or in the offering plates. Prayer requests can be submitted anonymously. Allow someone in your church family to support you in private prayer.

Secretary's Office Hours

Please note that Cathy's office hours have changed to Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM.

BPC Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request, please contact Mike Rhonemus (419-358-8148 / rhonstar@juno.com), or call the church office (419-358-5806) with your prayer request, and they will pass along the information.

If you would like to add someone to the prayer chain other than yourself, 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 Mike or another deacon.



February	1	Dortha Radabaugh
	2	Jodie Parker
	5	John Marshall
	7	Jessica Hough Darin Leugers
	8	Michelle Talavinia
	9	Owen Ziessler Lylah Aguirre
	11	Katie McCracken Blaskay
	12	Samantha Rhonemus
	14	Geraldine Sullivan Clark
	16	Carl Wolf
	18	Jane Sycks Jeanette Warren
	22	Lin Rumer
	23	Toni Aguirre
	24	Louis Best Clair Winebar
	25	Libby McVetta
	28	Jodi Brauen
March	1	Greg Culbertson
	2	Emily Sycks Jane Benroth
	3	Jacob Szabo

Bluffton Presbyterian Church
112 N. Main St., P.O. Box 149
Bluffton, OH 45817
419-358-5806
blufftonpc.org

Sunday School: 9:00 AM
Sunday Worship: 10:15 AM

Pastor: Rev. Karol Farris
Phone: 419-581-9232
Email: pastor@blufftonpc.org
Office Hours: Tues & Wed 10-4,
Thu 9-11; or by appointment

Secretary: Cathy Carroll
Email: bpcbluff@wcoil.com
Office Hours: Tues & Thu 8:30-12:30

Treasurer: Darin Leugers
Email: dleugers8319@yahoo.com

Organist: Jayne McGarrity
Choir Director: Linda Sycks
Youth Choir Director: Sue Van Eman
Youth Group Director: Tenna Rhonemus
Nursery Helpers: Kori Phipps and Shawna Anderson
Custodian: Tony Carmack

2018 Church Officers

Session

Clerk of Session – Lori Schmidt
Buildings & Grounds – Tom Hursey
Christian Education – Tenna Rhonemus
Finance & Stewardship – Dick McGarrity
Mission – Lynda Best
Nominating – Tom Edwards and Cindy Gillen
Personnel – Betsey Angus
Presbytery Commissioner – Lori Schmidt
Worship – Cindy Gillen
Members at Large – Jodi Brauen, Tom Edwards, and
Phil Weisenbarger

Board of Deacons

Moderator: Laura From
Members: Tanya Best, Marilyn Edwards,
Laura From, Helen Hawk, Mike Rhonemus, and
Dave Van Eman