



What's Happening at Bluffton Presbyterian Church

September 2013

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, September 1 – Communion

3 Cents a Meal Offering

Lay Reader: Diane Winebar

Greeters: Szabo Family

Acolytes: Sarah Gillen and Molly McCracken

Sunday, September 8

Food Pantry

Choir

Lay Reader: Dick McGarrity

Greeters: Beth Buist and Lori Schmidt

Acolytes: Megan Sycks and Patrick Rhonemus

Sunday, September 15

Guest Organist: Sue Van Eman

Special Music: Julia Szabo

Lay Reader: Tammie Hursh

Greeters: Hursh Family

Acolytes: Will and Tucker Neff

Sunday, September 22

Choir

Lay Reader: Dave Kisor

Greeters: Gillen Family

Acolytes: Jacob Szabo and Wyatt Marshall

Sunday, September 29

Praise Team

Lay Reader: Dave Sycks

Greeters: Talavinia Family

Acolytes: Avery Talavinia and Sarah Gillen

Sunday, October 6 – World Communion

3 Cents a Meal Offering

Lay Reader: Marilyn Edwards

Mark Your Calendars!

- September 8 – Sunday School Kick-Off – 9:00 – 10:00 AM – Church Sanctuary
- September 19 – Community Meal – 6:00 PM – Bluffton Senior Center
- September 22 – Potluck Following Worship
- September 29 – Newsletter Deadline – CEGillen@MarathonPetroleum.com
- October 3 – Daily Bread Soup Kitchen – 9:40 AM – Church Parking Lot
- October 6 – Church AD – 5:00 – 7:00 PM



Announcement Procedure

If you have an announcement to present in church during the month of September, get it to the church office and it will be announced by our Worship Leader for the month.

September Worship Leader – Julia Szabo



**Finance
Update**

June/July Financial Report

Beginning Balance	\$ 18,379.01
Receipts	20,225.32
Expenses	(19,711.87)
Balance	18,892.46

Pastor's Letter

How do you feel on your first day?

First days at school are interesting times. They are not all good. And, they are not all bad. They really aren't in the middle either. First days are a swirling mix of good and bad; excitement and apprehension; elation and fright. And it doesn't seem to matter much how old you are either. These feelings come to every age. Whether you have kids still at home or long since grown, I'm sure that you can remember a time when you've had to take your kid to school for the first time. Maybe you remember your first time. There are a bunch of first days: everywhere from that first day of kindergarten, to the first day of high school, all the way to the dreaded first day of college (or maybe even grad school) where you have to leave your child, not for the day, but for a month or more! In every instance there is the miasma of feelings about what the first day is going to be like. Questions about making friends, liking teachers / professors, finding rooms, and taking care of themselves all fly around in student and parent's minds alike (and sometimes even grandparents).

And these feeling are not found only in the first day of school, but many other first days that we all experience. Remember the first day of being married? If that is not a time of a wonderful combination of emotions, I'm not sure what is. How about the first day at a new job? Or even the feeling when you've just bought a new house or car and you're trying to convince yourself that you've done the right thing. Clearly, there are many, many first days in our lives.

Perhaps we can feel for Joshua then, when we look at the first chapter of the book of the same name. The book opens with the death of Moses. Moses had been the People's great prophet who lead them out of Egypt and to the very boarder of the promised land. Moses who stood up to pharaoh and his armies. Moses who brought the Ten Commandments and taught the people how to worship. Moses who actually spoke to God! Now, can you imagine trying to follow an act like that? But that is what poor Joshua has to do.

Up to this point, it appears that Joshua has been Moses' aide. Throughout the Books of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, we can hear of Joshua taking care of and instruction from Moses. Sometimes he is great at his job, and sometimes he is hiding in a tent. Yet, through it all, I believe we can hear a real heart of ministry in Joshua. But he has not been front and center – until now!

Have you ever felt like that? Times of your life when you walk in the room and feel that everyone's eyes are upon you, waiting for what you might say or do next? It's a tense time. Hear then the comfort that comes from God to this young leader, pushed beyond his comfort zone:

“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:7-9)

Basically God is reaffirming Joshua's call. God is encouraging him by saying. *“Remember, as you walk with me, so too do I walk with you.”* Who can ask for stronger words of support than that? Knowing that God is walking with you, caring for you, watching out for you can be an incredible comfort as well as encouragement in your first day (and the day's beyond). It's little surprise than that after receiving God's words, Joshua is able to launch into his job. He starts to work with the people to accomplish Moses' dream and God's will.

In our first days, God is speaking to us also. Let us remember from the Word that God loves us as God's own children (1 John 3:1). As such, we can stand with Joshua when we hear *“Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”* Truly, we are never alone. Wherever you are looking at a new doorway or path in your life, I pray that you hear the support of our loving God today.

In the Peace of Christ
~Rev. Dr. Matthew Zuehlke



Praise Team will be resuming in September. The group participates in worship one Sunday per month, with a short rehearsal the Wednesday before (7:30 to 8:00 PM) and another (9:50 to 10:05 PM) on that Sunday. If you are interested in singing or playing an instrument, please see Jayne McGarrity.

Fall Schedule:

- September 29 (rehearse 25)
- October 20 (rehearse 16)
- November 17 (rehearse 13)
- December 15 (rehearse 11)

Highlights of August Session Meeting

- Stephen Eslich from Global Builders guided Session on an exterior/interior tour of the church to show numerous areas of water damage, as well as the sources for the damage. To waterproof the church he suggested tuck pointing brick/stone, sealing masonry, removing chimney and capping, sealing around large stain glass windows, repairing areas damaged by water (interior/exterior), replacing half of rubber roof above CE unit, and replacing the three front doors. Session will need to decide how to proceed on the "Building Restoration Project".
- CE plans to offer Alternative Devotions for fall on a trial basis – would meet first Sunday of each month from 5:00 to 7:00 PM to include meal and Communion. Youth Group would also coordinate with this date/time. Approved serving Communion during Alternative Devotions on the first Sunday of each month. Approved hiring two people to cover nursery on Sunday mornings from 9:00 to 11:30 AM at \$10 per hour – subject to background checks. Money in CE budget would cover the remainder of this year, but additional money would need to be included in next year's budget.

- Approval was given to Sycks to use tent and Edwards to use tables/chairs.

Sunday School Kickoff

Sunday school will begin on Sunday, September 8. We will meet from 9:00 - 10:00 AM each morning. This year, we are inviting all ages to study "The Story", an abridged chronicle of the Bible. Each group, children through adults, will be studying the same lessons each Sunday in age appropriate ways. The hope is that studying the Bible as one ongoing story will enrich everyone's appreciation of its wonder. By studying it as a church family we want to encourage further growth in knowledge and understanding through discussions outside the classroom, such as coffee hours and family dinners.

To further encourage the idea of the connection between the different age groups, we will be starting each Sunday as one large group, meeting in the Sanctuary for a brief opening and snack before separating into our classes. Please make plans to join us for this special church-wide Sunday School Program. This is THE story! This is OUR story! We need to KNOW and LOVE it, so that we can SHARE it with others!



Mission Series I

The Mission Committee would like to present a series of discussions to Bluffton Presbyterian Church's congregation on just what "mission" is, why we do it, and how we can foster a "mission mindset" among ourselves to more effectively and creatively venture forth into the world to do God's work. This is the first of this series, and we will be offering other topics in the newsletter and elsewhere in the coming months that will hopefully spark meaningful discussions and actions on our part.

What happens when a disaster strikes somewhere in our area, our state, our country, or in the world? How do we as caring human beings, as Presbyterians and Christians, respond? How can we “witness to the healing love of Christ” in the face of hurricanes, tornados, floods, and tidal waves, fires, explosions, or other acts of war or terrorism that cause human suffering?

The responses to these types of situations form a large part of mission and in the Presbyterian Church, they are answered in large part by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, our agency tasked with disaster response and the creation of refugee programs. The mission of PDA is “to care for families and communities impacted by disasters, and to help them achieve long-term physical, psychological and spiritual recovery as a witness to the healing love of Christ”. It commits itself to equip Presbyterians worldwide to “effectively and efficiently serve disaster survivors in Christ’s name so that out of the chaos of disaster they will find hope”. The instant gift of \$1 million to Haiti in the wake of the devastating earthquake two years ago and the dispatch of a “Rapid Response Team” to Tucson, Arizona, after the shootings at a political rally there last year are two examples that come immediately to mind.

A little bit more about PDA: It is funded entirely through One Great Hour of Sharing, one of the four special offerings PCUSA collects annually (this one on Easter Sunday), and through individually designated gifts. It receives no federal funding. The PDA works nationally through PCUSA’s local presbyteries and synods. A specialized volunteer disaster team provides consultation and assistance at these regional offices to design and implement local responses. It is a member of the ACT (Action by Churches Together) alliance, and NOVAD (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster); adheres to the International Red Cross Code of Conduct; and does not discriminate based on ethnicity, religion or political opinion and does not promote any of those as well.

Internationally, PDA works through local partners including Presbyterian and Reformed partner churches, ecumenical partners, and other faith-

based or non-governmental organizations. It responds to approximately 20 U.S. and 30 international disasters annually. In another program, PDA cooperates with World Church Services to resettle refugees in the U.S.

What does all this mean to our congregation in a small Midwest town in Ohio? If we want to, how can we become involved in PDA ministries? PDA tells its churches that we can “stand in the GAP” to help disaster survivors.

G = Give. Support the OGHS offering; give by text on your cell phone to 20222, each text providing \$10 to support disaster response where it’s needed most; designate a gift. To help you in this endeavor we have placed special PDA offering envelopes in the front and back of the sanctuary and posted them on the “Mission Bulletin Board” in the back of the church. Provide material aid, such as Gifts of the Heart kits (more on these at a later date).

A = Act. Stay informed. Sign up to receive PDA Rapid Information Network (RIN) emails to be aware of current PDA responses and urgent needs. Volunteer for work teams or assemble Gift of the Heart kits. Information about all of these can be found on PCUSA’s website under “mission”.

And most of all, P = Pray. As 1 Thessalonians tells us, we should pray without ceasing. Pray for the people whose lives are directly affected by a disaster. Pray for the first responders and relief workers. And pray for hope to be found amidst the chaos of disaster. Your prayers are requested above all else.

On another note, please remember that on October 6, World Communion Day, we will be taking up a special Peacemaking Offering. Twenty-five percent of the money we collect is designated to our congregation to use for our local peacemaking and mission outreach. Please mark your calendars and give as generously as you are called.

In Christ’s love and peace,
The Mission Committee

New ChurchAD / Youth Group

Starting on October 6, we will be re-starting our ChurchAD evening services, except this time we will be combining the evening with Youth Group! Also, this will become a second chance to share Communion if you were unable to attend the morning Communion service. Just as before, everyone is welcome, independent if you have children or not.

So, on the first Sunday of each month, we will have ChurchAD starting at 5:00 until 7:00 PM. We will celebrate a short worship and Communion service first until about 5:45 PM. We will then join together for a common theme meal for about the next 30 minutes. Starting at 6:15 PM there will be a youth group meeting, as well as a devotion group for parents and other adults, wrapping up at 7:00 PM. That way, everyone will have the chance for worship, devotion, and dinner, but still home before too late on a school night. We hope that everyone in the church joins us for one of the First Sunday evening services.

The theme for our first meal is Simple Foods. So for our meal, each family is asked to bring one dish that costs no more than \$2 total! That's it, only \$2.00 – no more. So get creative and think about what your family could make that would be in budget. If you have any questions, please feel free to seek out a Christian Education member or contact the church office. Hope to see you then.



Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen

The next opportunity to serve at Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen is Thursday, October 3. Volunteers interested in carpooling, meet at the church parking lot at 9:40 AM. Please contact Shirley Kisor (419) 358-0085, if you are able to participate.

Deacons

The deacons are asking for your help in making sure that the church office has everyone's birthdays and anniversary dates. Please fill out the form in this issue of *What's Happening*, and return it to the office or put it in the offering plate. Thank you for your help!



Coffee Talk with Pastor Matthew

Coffee talk with Pastor Matthew at McDonalds will start up again on Monday, September 9 at 8:00 AM.

Community Meal – September 19

The Bluffton Presbyterian Church will host the Community Meal at the Bluffton Senior Center at 6:00 PM on Thursday, September 19. Deacons will be serving chicken spaghetti, cucumber salad, sliced tomatoes, garlic bread, and pie. If anyone is willing or able to donate a pie, the Deacons would greatly appreciate your help. A sign-up sheet will be at the back of the church (or you may contact a deacon). All are welcome to join us!

Potluck Lunch for ISP - Sept. 22

Bluffton University senior, Tamara Al-Sammarraie, will join us for worship on Sunday, September 22. Please stay for lunch after the service to hear this young woman's amazing story of running for her life as a child in Baghdad, to Syria, to earning a place at a university in a calm, safe community called Bluffton, Ohio. The Iraqi Student Project (ISP) is a non-profit organization that supports the needs (medical expenses, etc.) of university students from Iraq. If you feel inspired to help ISP or Tamara, you can make a tax-deductible cash or check donation on Sunday, September 22, or at any time throughout the academic year. But just COME to hear this amazing and uplifting story!

Nursery Worker

The Christian Education Committee will be interviewing candidates for the position of nursery worker. Session has approved this to be a paid position and the hope is to find an adult from the community with child care training and experience. A detailed application and interview process is being developed. The successful candidate will have child care experience and training, including first aid and safety training. We will also require background screenings to be completed prior to beginning work. We also felt that the candidate should demonstrate a strong and growing faith.

There are multiple benefits to hiring a person for this position:

- Create consistency:
 - Being greeted by the same friendly person each week will hopefully make leaving Mommy and Daddy a little easier for the youngest members of our church family.
 - Having a person trained in child care will create a safe, nurturing, and positive experience for the children each time they are in the nursery.
 - We want to hire someone who has a strong faith, that will share this with the children in appropriate ways through games, stories, crafts, and play. Hopefully, this will make the children's time in our nursery a joyful start to their faith journey.
 - Our child protection policies and procedures will be implemented consistently.
- Lighten the burden to families and volunteers:
 - This would allow more members of our church family to participate in worship consistently.
 - This would eliminate the need to constantly request volunteers, thereby allowing members to offer their time and talents to other areas of need.

Until this position is filled we will continue to rely on volunteers to staff the nursery. If you are willing to help, please sign up in the back of the sanctuary. If you have questions or concerns regarding the nursery worker position or interview process, please see Pastor Matthew or a member of the CE committee.



Small Groups to Launch Fifth Year

The Small Group Ministry will begin its fifth year the week of September 8. The initial sign-up meeting was held after worship on Sunday August 25, but if you missed it there are additional opportunities to become a member.

You have heard enthusiastic members speak of the richness of the small group experience, yet many of you could not find the time in your busy lives to participate. We hope that this year, you might find the time in your schedule.

In addition, a second group will meet on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 PM in the church library, beginning on Tuesday, September 10.

A third group will meet on Thursday afternoons from 1:30 to 3:30 PM in the church library, beginning on Thursday, September 12.

All groups will remain open for membership until the end of September and you may sit in and be a participant/observer for a meeting or two before deciding whether or not to join. We hope many of you who haven't tried a small group will do so. No one can tell you adequately what the experience is like. You may find a new depth to your life and faith journey as many others have.

If you have interest in any group, please contact Jeanette Warren, Beth Buist, Jayne McGarrity, or Mariah or Roy Pneuman.



Triennium – One person's perspective

First, I would like to thank the entire congregation for all of the support they gave me and the youth attending this year's Triennium. It was a wonderful experience! I will do my best to give you an idea of what PYT 2013 was like, but as the youth will attest, it is very hard to put the Triennium experience into words.

This year over 5,000 Presbyterian youth gathered at Purdue University to gain a new understanding and appreciation of the **I AM**. Through worship with 5,000+ people, games, and activities involving 100s of participants, small groups of 25-30 strangers, evening discussions with 6-7 floor mates, and individual reflection and prayer; each delegate explored their relationship with God. We were encouraged to listen closely for God's call in our lives and to answer that call with enthusiasm, knowing we are connected to the **I AM** in a very special way.

Each worship and small group discussion was built around the "I Am" statements that Christ used to illustrate His purpose on earth, His love for us, the redemption He brings, and His everlasting presence in our lives. Through different worship leaders, music, drama, craft, and electronic media projects, we were shown over and over how we are connected to God and each other. We even watched a documentary from Tom Shadyac, director of "Bruce Almighty", "Evan Almighty", and "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective", titled "I Am". The movie sought the answers to two big questions: "What's wrong with the world?" and "How do we fix it?". The answer: nothing is wrong with the world, we just tend to forget how connected we are to everyone and everything in it. (Sorry if I spoiled the ending for anyone.)

For me the idea of being connected was very powerful and very comforting. We are connected to an all powerful, ever present God! The love that is extended to us is unending and the redemption that we receive is unconditional. God has called us to be His children and through His grace we receive forgiveness, strength, and comfort. We are also connected to each other and if we are receiving all of these wonderful things from our God, how can we not share them with one another.

The "I Am" statement that I felt illustrated this idea of being connected particularly well came from John 15: 1-12: "I am the vine, you are the branches". The worship leader reminded us that for a branch to grow it must have a healthy vine supporting it. Jesus Christ declared Himself our vine, we have **THE PERFECT** support system. If we truly rely on Him, we will grow in ways we could never anticipate! But, it doesn't end with the branch. Each branch produces many leaves, beautiful flowers, and delicious fruit by passing on the goodness that comes from the vine. We are the branches! We must share Jesus Christ, Our God, with others.

We each have been given special and different gifts to help us share the Good News of Jesus Christ and God expects us to use them. But remember, we are connected to the **I AM** and we will never be alone in this task. We are also connected to each other and by combining our gifts and efforts we can become even more than is possible alone. Is a single grape as satisfying as a vineyard, each branch heavy with delicious grapes? Is a single flower as beautiful as a garden full of colorful blooms? It is our connections to God and each other that make us all that we were designed to be.

This is what I brought home from Triennium. Each of the youth will be sharing their experiences at Triennium as part of the opening to Sunday school in October. I hope you will join us to hear their thoughts on those Sundays, or seek them out and talk one-on-one.

Thank you again for all your support!
Tenna



Happy Birthday!!



Prayers for our members and friends serving in the armed forces: especially Lucas Woodward, and Andrew Warner.

Prayers for Peace in our lives and in our World.

Prayers of Healing for Karen Long, Dusty Klingler, Gordan Diller, Min Lindsey, Brenda Anderson, Rebecca Hursey, Harold Sponseller, Sheila Hurlburt, Kyle Schmidt, and Michael Lee Bucher.

Min Lindsey is in Room #21 at Richland Manor if anyone would like to visit.

- September 4 Jeremy Szabo
5 Jay McCracken
13 Julianna Hotmire
16 Lindsey Sneary
20 Dave Kisor
23 Roy Pneuman
Rhonda Moor
24 Jayne McGarrity
25 Devin Kisor
26 Sue Mathewson
Amanda Rhonemus
Dan Sneary
29 Cindy Gillen
30 Andrea Zechman
Wyatt Gossard
October 3 Owen Scoles
5 Mary Emma Triplett
7 Olivia Sneary

Journeying through Grief

If you have experienced the loss of a loved one in the past year, a series of short books, Journeying through Grief, is now available. Each book describes the issues and feelings that people tend to encounter at various points during their grief and offers suggestions on how to handle them. The Deacons have a number of copies available, so please contact your Care Deacon or Pastor Matthew at any time if this series may be of help to you.



BPC Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request, please contact Diane Winebar (419-957-4046 or dwinebar711@gmail.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 be part of the chain or would like more information, please contact Diane or another deacon.

Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for my Amazon gift card and book to help me celebrate graduating from BGSU! I am now off to Wayne State University in Detroit to obtain my MBA with a focus on management. Thank you again for a great gift, it will get put to good use!

Katie

Youth Pool Party





Share Your Birth Date & Anniversary Date

Please help your deacons by sharing the following information. Place the completed form in the offering plate or send to the church office.

Thank you!

Name: _____

Birthday: ____/____/____
Month Day Year

Spouse: _____

Birthday: ____/____/____
Month Day Year

Anniversary Date: _____

Children (Through college-age. Please use back if more room needed.)

Name: _____

Birthday: ____/____/____
Month Day Year

Name: _____

Birthday: ____/____/____
Month Day Year

Name: _____

Birthday: ____/____/____
Month Day Year

Name: _____

Birthday: ____/____/____
Month Day Year



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Birthday: ____/____/____
Month Day Year

Name: _____

Birthday: ____/____/____
Month Day Year

Name: _____

Birthday: ____/____/____
Month Day Year

Name: _____

Birthday: ____/____/____
Month Day Year



Bluffton Presbyterian Church
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419-358-5806

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Matthew Zuehlke
Email: revdrmz@gmail.com
Cell Phone: 567-825-3973
Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 9:30-1:00

Secretary: Cathy Carroll
Email: bpclubuff@wcoil.com
Office Hours: Tues & Wed 9:00-12:30
Website: blufftonpc.org

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

2013 Church Officers

Session

Clerk of Session – Lori Schmidt
Buildings & Grounds – Owen Ziessler
Christian Education – Jay McCracken
Finance – Clair Winebar
Mission – Beth Buist
Nominating – Kay Ziessler and Tom Edwards
Personnel – Kay Ziessler
Presbytery Commissioner – Darlene Hey
Worship – Jeanette Warren
Members at Large – Tom Edwards, Rhonda Moor, and Donnas Stone

Board of Deacons

Moderator: Shirley Kisor
Members: Don Carroll, Laura From, Darlene Hey, Lin Rumer, and Diane Winebar.