

October 2023 - A Thanksgiving Letter to Bethany United Church



To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae: Grace to you and peace. We thank God for your community. In our prayers for you we always thank God. We give thanks for the fruits you bear in Christ's name. This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister. May you be made strong with all strength that comes from God's glory, so you may have endurance and patience, joyfully giving thanks to God. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 1

[Photo by Karen Finley]

Friends

I give thanks for-to you. Why? As you may know, I am not nostalgic, you will never hear me say, “given the state of the world today” or “what is the world coming to”. There was never a time when suffering and evil was absent from the world. Tragically, genocides have occurred through human history. We have actually made wonderful progress on many challenges our forebears were either unwilling or unable to address, namely racism, sexism, heterosexism. In the “good old days” of Halifax Catholics and Protestants were not to be married and Jews and African Nova Scotians were not welcome in most institutions. I give thanks to those witnesses, many of them Christian activists, who endured persecution to bring us this better tomorrow.

One social challenge we hear little about in the media but is very real to those of us who engage the communities where we live, is loneliness. Often, I am called upon by local Community Health Boards to visit a person, living alone, with no social contacts (think of the Beatles song, “Eleanor Rigby”). No church I have served has done more to offer space, community and support to those in our area who search for a place to call “home”. As I re-read Paul's letter to the Colossians, I was struck by how he used *Epaphras* as an example, an inspiring witness for others to follow. Here at Bethany, I think of Pam Carter. Pam frequently will tell me of someone who has been absent, someone who looks lonely, someone who needs our community. I give thanks for Pam.

On the other side of this letter is a list of events; some educational, some spiritual, some social, some just plain fun, all designed by staff to build up community, with a particular eye to being as inclusive as possible. Please read these over carefully. To you and yours I wish you a most blessed Happy Thanksgiving. Peace, Kevin

Sunday Services to Note:

Worldwide Communion - October 1st

Thanksgiving Sunday - October 8th

Anniversary Sunday - October 29th*

Guest Preacher Lisa Harrison, Executive Director at the Brunswick Street Mission.

Remembrance Sunday - November 5th



2023 Fall Events that Build Community at Bethany

Sunday School - Sunday mornings at 10:30am in the Gym we are excited to welcome children and their families to our spirit-filled weekly ministry and life-giving learning space. Register with Louisa Duck (*Sunday School is for children ages 3 to grade 9.*)

Youth Group: Sunday evenings from 7:00 - 8:30pm in our Fellowship Hall for youth in grades 7 - 12. Join Ann and Dana for fun community building games and activities as well as outreach initiatives and other events throughout the year. Bring a friend!

JOY Lunch: Tuesday October 3rd at Noon. A noon hour program, on the first Tuesday of each month, where you are invited to gather for lunch, prepared by our in-house chef Tim Cormier, and listen to an engaging guest speaker. Suggested donation \$10. (Gluten Free option available upon request.)

Guided Meditation: Wednesdays 12 Noon - 12:50 PM, October 11th - December 13th at 12 in the McKinnon Chapel with Yvonne Macor. Mind full or mindful? Come and experience a contemplative session that will rejuvenate your mind. All welcome. No previous experience necessary.

Bethany's Affirming Working Group presents a two-part series with Tamsin Robson, Wednesday October 18th and 25th, 7:00 - 9:00pm, Fellowship Hall. Tamsin, is a recent graduate of Atlantic School of Theology (M.Div., May 2023), currently pursuing ordination with the UCC. Facilitating Affirming education sessions with churches that are seeking a deeper understanding of their 2SLGBTQ+ neighbours are a particular passion of Tamsin's. Please join us.

Walk & Talk - Wednesdays 10-11:30 November 1st - December 13th Drop in for coffee and conversation and also walk our meandering hallways for safe indoor exercise.

ISANS Conversation Circle at Bethany: Mondays 1:45 - 3pm October 23rd - December 11th. If interested in volunteering to support newcomers with basic English language skills facilitated by teacher, Julie MacDonald, contact Ann Bradley.

Ukulele Fall Session - Tuesday Evenings: Oct 10/17/24/Nov. 7/14/21 Have you ever wanted to learn to play the ukulele or improve your playing? Offered in 6-week programs, the Ukulele Group Sessions are open to everyone with an interest in playing the ukulele. Contact Shawn Whynot to learn more.

Faith Study based on the book, Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians by author Austen Hartke, six weeks, Wednesday nights at 7 pm in the Chapel, also available on ZOOM, Nov 1 - Dec 6.

Silent Movie Night - Friday Nov. 3rd at 7:00 PM is back at Bethany featuring the classic comedy film, The Kid Brother, starring Harold Lloyd. This 1927 classic is a not to be missed hilarious story of adventure and excitement filled with some of the most original and physical slapstick comedy of all time. The movie will be enhanced with a live soundtrack provided by organist Shawn Whynot. The movie will be presented on a super large screen for viewing pleasure. Tickets \$15 Regular and \$10 Student will be available in early October through Eventbrite.ca or through the Bethany Church Office.

