

BETHESDA BUGLE

Blow up the trumpet in the new moon!

Bethesda United Methodist Church • P.O. Box 147 * Preston, MD • 410-673-7538 • Volume 1, Issue 2 • April 2010

Pastor's Message

The Easter Season, also known as the Great Fifty Days, begins at sunset on Easter Eve and continues through the Day of Pentecost. It is the most joyous and celebrative season of the Christian year. It focuses on Christ's Resurrection and Ascension and the giving of the Holy Spirit on the first Easter (*John 20:22-23*) and on the Day of Pentecost (*Acts 2*). (UM Book of Worship)

To the Church, Christ's Resurrection is essential to the life of faith. To disregard the Resurrection as necessary in faith is to turn our backs on God's power to defeat sin and death. God's power, and especially

the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, is more than able to accomplish all that He purposes. Resurrection is the raising to life beyond physical death which leads to eternal life for believers. Jesus' Resurrection fulfilled prophecy in Scripture and identified Him as the true Savior. His Resurrection is our proof of God's promise of life eternal, and that promise becomes reality for us when we receive Jesus' death and resurrection as necessary for our salvation.

There is an old story of a man who bought a very expensive refrigerator for his wife but failed to plug it in to the electrical outlet. Of course, all the food

spoiled within a few days. It could not function properly without being plugged in to the power source. The same is true for us. We cannot be spiritually alive now and for eternity unless we are connected to Jesus Christ. This Easter Season, let us plug in to the source of life and resurrection power.

Rev. Jean C. Wolff

**"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation to all who believe."
*Romans 1:16***

Dinner at Six

Our first evening-meal-and-program, on April 8, was a great success! About thirty folks came out to enjoy a covered-dish supper, followed by a hymn sing lasting until 8:45 pm. With the sultry weather we were having, the event recalled the great Methodist camp meetings that used to take place all over Delmarva!

The program started with a recitation of John Wesley's "rules for singing," which are printed in the front of the United Methodist Hymnal. If you aren't familiar with them, we encourage you to take a look. Wesley demands that we sing "lustily and with a good courage," and we believe we did so. With the windows open due to the heat, it's likely our voices were heard up and down Main Street!

Among the hymns we sang were Methodist standards like "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" and "O

God Our Help in Ages Past"; and all-time favorites such as "In the Garden," "Softly and Tenderly," "Amazing Grace," "How Great Thou Art," and "The Old Rugged Cross." Requests were also entertained.

Many of the hymns evoked personal reflections and funny anecdotes from those present (ask Rev. Wolff about her Auntie when you have a chance!). Interspersed between several of the hymns were historical notes on their composition. Did you know, for instance, that Horatio Spafford penned the text of "It Is Well With My Soul" in response to the deaths of his four daughters aboard an ocean liner in 1873?

Special thanks are due to Kari Farnell, who provided accompaniment for us, and to everyone who brought food and helped with set-up and breakdown.

Planning is already afoot for the next few Dinners at Six, which we hope will become a fixture of the social calendar at Bethesda. After dinner each month we will examine some broad aspect of our faith or our history, through performance, a lecture, or another medium. Do YOU have an idea for a program after dinner? If so, please drop us a line at the newsletter's email address.

Bethesda History Commission

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A Word from the Lay Pulpit

We're In This Together!

There are two verses in the book of Titus that seem insignificant but say alot--Titus 3:12-13 names co-workers of Paul. Paul, who wrote most of the New Testament, needed help in his ministry. He couldn't do everything himself. We as a church need to rely on and help each other to ensure that the ministry

of Jesus Christ through Bethesda is accomplished.

The Holy Spirit directs us in our ministry. As congregants at Bethesda, we work in a practical way to sustain that ministry through our time, talent, and tithes. Let us all join together and become co-workers of Paul!

Chris Farnell

My Bethesda Memories

Since Doug and I have been going to Bethesda U.M. Church we have had a special connection with each of the three pastors.

We started coming to Bethesda when Charlie Wise began his ministry here. He had belonged to our church in Wilmington, DE, St. Paul's U.M.C., and was also a part of the interdenominational Christian group known as the "Walk to Emmaus" Community. We were not fully active in Bethesda at this time (1997-2000), however, since we were not living in Maryland.

Our next pastor was Mark Farnell, who was just beginning his schooling to become a minister. He, too, was a member of the Emmaus Community, and we were able to share some of our religious experiences with him, and he with us. Mark was a very energetic young man, and had a lot of good ideas to help a church grow. While pastoring at Bethesda, Mark performed a "House Blessing" for us at our home, and we joined Bethesda by a transfer of membership from St. Paul's on April 8, 2001.

We had been welcomed with open arms by the Bethesda family of

News Briefs

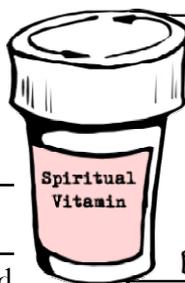
• The annual Peach Festival will be held again this year at the Preston Fire House on Saturday, August 14. Please volunteer where ever you are needed and please bake something "peachy" for the bake table. More info will follow in another newsletter, but we wanted you to save the date and make plans to help, so it can be a success.

believers. But, for us to really feel at home, we had to do more than take up space in a pew. We needed to interact with the people, get involved in church activities, and learn about the people – where we were alike and where we were different – and then learn to work in harmony.

It was then time for Bethesda to receive a new pastor: Joan C. Wolff. Joan and I had gone to school together, and Joan's husband, Rod, and his family, had been friends of my family, and we had attended the same church in Easton. We have also been in several Bible studies with Joan and Rod, and feel that we have grown in our faith under their instruction.

As we continue on our faith journey we want to forget who we think we are, and concentrate on being who God wants us to be. Thank you to the Bethesda family for inviting us to walk in faith with you.

Wanda & Doug Prothero



"I am the vine, you are the branches; for all who abide in Me, and I in them, they shall bear much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing."

John 15:5

• The yard sale is 5/8 in the parking lot from 7 until. Please bring gently used items to church on Friday 5/7. It would be a great help if they could be already priced. We will be selling hot dogs on the grill. Come support the Women of Bethesda in this fund raiser as all the money goes to the General Fund.

My Testimony

Faithfulness by Debbie Weems

God is always faithful and as Christians, and in every aspect of our lives, we should be faithful to God in return. God is faithful (reliable, trustworthy, and therefore ever true to His promise, and He can be depended on); by Him you were called into companionship and participation with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *1 Corinthians 1:9*

Our faithfulness in following Christ Jesus has not only earthly rewards, but eternal ones as well for us and our loved ones. "Know therefore that the LORD your God is God: He is the faithful God, keeping His covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments." *Deuteronomy 7:9*

A Daily Prayer: O Lord, let faithfulness grow ever stronger in us each day that we are alive. We pray our faithfulness will strengthen not only us, but everyone we touch, and inspire others to greater faithfulness too. In the name of Christ Jesus we make this prayer. Amen.

From the Choir

As we learned this month at the Dinner at Six Hymn Sing, John Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism, encourages us to "sing lustily and with a great courage."

Additionally, scriptures encourage us to sing praises to the Lord, and to make a joyful noise to the Lord. In fact, God tells us that if we refuse to sing His praises, the very rocks of the earth will praise Him instead!

The ministry of the choir at Bethesda strives to fulfill these directives. We gather together weekly to practice so that we can be the instruments of His praise. It is our goal to show the love of God to the congregation, through the praises we sing and the joyful noises we make. We also minister to each other and to the community during weekly practices, with the sharing of devotions and prayers.

Want to join the chorus – literally and figuratively? Drop us a line, or just come on out to the next choir rehearsal!

Kari Farnell

Bethesda Memories

In this installment of transcriptions from 1870s trustee meeting minutes, we find Bethesda struggling both to finance its imminent construction of a new building, and to keep its old facility operating in the meantime. It is not clear why the trustees could not agree on a suitable amount of money to devote to repairs. Clearly women in this era had much social, if not political, authority. Of particular interest is the fact that the job of soliciting subscriptions was given to prominent churchwomen.

Readers will notice immediately the large number of notes associated with these minutes. There are two reasons for this, one editorial, the other substantive. On the former point: this set of minutes was particularly difficult to transcribe; the handwriting is poor, with many phrases struck out or garbled. In these cases, I have noted where I have made assumptions based on context and the closest possible reading of the document. On the latter point: I have provided descriptions

of each person mentioned, where possible, and a short thumbnail of their lives and place in the community of the time. One thing should be immediately evident from these annotations: Bethesda was an influential and wealthy church in the 1870s. Through these minutes we have a snapshot of the congregation's desire to improve church facilities to ensure they kept pace with members' own status in Preston life.

Preston Apr. 27. 1874

The Trustees of Bethesda church meeting ¹

Members Present – Rev. O'Neil,² Dr. H.J. Willis,³ D.R. Wright,⁴ Jos. W. Noble,⁵ Elijah Todd,⁶ T.S. Noble,⁷ J. L. Perry.⁸

The meeting then⁹ proceed[ed] to business as follows. After some discussion the following resolution was offered: that there be the sum of one thousand dollars raised by subscription and expend[ed] on repairing the old church – The resolution was lost. The sum of fifteen hundred was then voted upon¹⁰ and lost.

A motion [was] then made and carried, that there be a committee of five ladies appointed to solicit subscriptions. The following ladies were appointed: Mrs. Fletcher,¹¹ Mrs. Dr. Willis,¹² Mrs. Sallie Willis,¹³ Mrs. E.T. Moore,¹⁴ [Mrs.] Emma Douglass.¹⁵

A motion was then made tha[t] the[y] [be] instructed to proceed at once, and solicit subscriptions, and report on the coming Monday. A committee was then appointed for the purpose of securing [the] Best Plan for building or repairing: the bros.¹⁶ Dr. Willis, J.W. Bradley,¹⁷ and D.R. Wright. The meeting then adjourned and will¹⁸ meet on the next Monday, May 3d inst.¹⁹ at 2 o'clock pm.

J.W. Bradley, Scty²⁰

(Union Temperance Society Ledger, Barratt's Chapel (Frederica, DE) P# DSC06067)

1 This word is illegible; I believe this transcription is close to correct.

2 W.J. O'Neill – note the misspelling in the minutes – served as Bethesda's minister from 1874 to 1875; during this period, Bethesda seems to have shared its charge with Federalsburg.

3 Dr. Henry Fisher Willis (b. April 22, 1831, d. April 27, 1890) was born at Friendship and as a young man taught school. After finishing his medical training Willis lived in Millsboro, Delaware. He married Emily R. Patton, of Grove, in April 1856. Around 1860, lower Delaware experienced a malaria outbreak, and Willis, afflicted with the disease, moved to Preston in 1862 to recuperate. There, he took over the practice of Dr. E.E. Atkinson during the latter's stint in the Civil War. The Willises had four children, and lived on the tract of land that now comprises the Preston School grounds and Noble Ave. Willis was something of a polymath, and in addition to serving on the Board of Trustees at Bethesda, was an Orphan's Court judge, delegate to the National Medical Association, a farmer, Granger, and small-time land speculator. The Willises and two of their daughters, Cora and Emma, are buried in the Bethesda cemetery. See Dora Mitchell, *A History of the Preston*

Area in Lower Caroline County, Maryland (Caroline County Historical Society, 2005; Reprinted 2006), 196-98 [hereafter cited as *PH*: pp]. Willis was received into probationary membership at Bethesda on November 13, 1868.

4 Daniel R. Wright was a deacon in several Methodist churches in the Preston area. One of his sons, Henry Hynson Wright, was probably named after Rev. Edwin Harmon Hynson, minister at Bethesda in 1871. The village of Hynson, just east of Preston, gained its name from Daniel Wright, who offered his son's name as a suggestion when the Post Office was established in the village. Daniel's father, Jesse Alfred Wright, is regarded as "the person most responsible for the development of the town of Chop-tank" (*PH*: 65, 209).

5 Not much is known about Joseph W. Noble, despite regular appearances in these and later minutes.

6 Elijah Todd (b. 1831, d. November 14, 1903) was the son of David and Elizabeth Todd. David Todd had been a trustee at Bethesda in 1835, and was the church treasurer in 1850; he is buried in the Bethesda cemetery (*PH*: 97). Elijah married Melissa

Harris in 1852, and they lived on one of David's many properties on Payne Road – in the house where Eric Cheezum now lives. At David's death, Elijah bought this farm and its two neighbors from the estate. In 1879, Elijah sold these properties to James E. Douglass, a fellow Bethesda trustee whom we will encounter in future meeting minutes. Like his father Elijah Todd was buried in the Bethesda cemetery, along with his first wife, Melissa (*PH*: 85, 100).

7 Twiford S. Noble (b. 1820, d. January 1882) lived near Linchester, and was the penultimate child born into the local sect of Quakers known as Nicholites. Noble was a delegate for Caroline County to Maryland's 1864 constitutional convention. He was a member of Bethesda by 1864, at least. At his death, the *Friends' Intelligencer*, a Quaker newspaper, noted that Noble "never connected himself with Friends, but was for many years a member of the Methodist Church. He always entertained a warm regard for Friends, and many of our Ministers who traveled in that section will remember his hospitality and his kindness in spreading notices of meetings and assisting them in their jour-

neys," *Friends' Intelligencerv*38 (Philadelphia: John Comly, 1881-82), 809.

8 This name is almost certainly incorrect. The original is illegible, and so far I have been unable to locate a match in the church's records, or in other sources, for any permutation of the apparent letters. If anyone would like to have a go at deciphering the name, let me know!

9 It is uncertain whether this word is correct.

10 This phrase is difficult to read in the original, as it is partially affected by a handwriting error. "Voted upon" seem to be the correct words.

11 Presumably Sally Fletcher, wife of Jeremiah B. Fletcher. The Fetters were the grandparents of the late Theodore E. Fletcher, Jr, and owned a significant amount of land in the Preston area. Their seventh child, Theodore E. Fletcher, Sr., was born in 1895 and named for Bethesda's minister at the time. J.B. Fletcher served as the town postmaster, and was a trustee at Bethesda; he will feature in later meeting minutes. The Fetters lived on Maple Avenue. Although J.B. died in 1910, Sally

lived until 1938 and was known around town as "Ma Fletcher." She apparently kept an extensive vegetable garden. Both of the Fetters are buried in the Bethesda cemetery, *PH* 159.

12 See note #3, above.

13 Sarah Elmer Hubbard (b. October 17, 1844) married Francis Asbury (Frank) Willis in February 1864. They briefly owned the property that is now an empty lot next to Pam's place. They sold this property to James E. Douglass in 1870, and moved to Easton, but remained active in Bethesda nonetheless. Sallie's father, Lemuel Hubbard, was a Bethesda trustee from 1835 to 1853, *PH* 53, 57.

14 Presumably Emma Moore, wife of E.T. (Edward Thomas) Moore, another trustee who features prominently in future meeting minutes. Emma Moore died in 1931, and is buried in Bethesda cemetery with her husband. According to Dora Mitchell, E.T. Moore "donated a large sum toward the remodeling of the church at one time as a token of thanksgiving for his wife's recovery from a serious illness." Dora speculates that this might have taken place in 1875, during the construction of

the new church, but I have found no evidence in the minutes to support this theory. It is not clear, either, from what records Dora drew this information in the first place, *PH* 145.

15 Emma Douglass was the second wife of James E. Douglass. They were married November 27, 1867, and had one child, S.E. Douglass, an important farmer, lumber merchant, and manufacturer, whose business was once located on Mill Street, where Hunting Creek Storage is now located. She died in 1912, *PH* 190, 194.

16 "The bros." is a stab in the dark. This phrase is illegible.

17 John Wesley Bradley (b. 1834), called Wes, married Sarah Emma Medford, and had two daughters: Rose and Lillian, *PH* 188.

18 "And will" is an approximation. The one-word phrase is illegible.

19 This is an abbreviation of "instant," a term that often accompanied dates when scheduling.

20 This is an abbreviation for Secretary.

Church Calendar

May 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5 Choir Rehearsal 7 p.m.	6	7 Yard Sale Items Due	8 Yard Sale 7 a.m. until
9 Mother's Day	10	11	12 Choir Rehearsal 7 p.m.	13	14	15 May Newsletter Submissions Due
16	17	18	19 Choir Rehearsal 7 p.m.	20 History Commission Meeting 6 p.m.	21	22
23	24	25	26 Choir Rehearsal 7 p.m.	27	28	29
30	31 Memorial Day					