



July 2008

Dear Pastor or Contact Person,

Greetings to you in this summer season from Bethany Theological Seminary! We hope your congregation is enjoying meaningful moments that are a part of this time of year — church camp, Vacation Bible School, picnics and socials, visiting guests. Yet, before we know it, summertime will end, and autumn will be upon us.

You already may be planning your fall worship schedule. We invite you to include Bethany in your autumn worship plans on September 14, 2008, the designated Bethany Emphasis Sunday for the Church of the Brethren.

A reproducible bulletin insert and worship resources are included in this mailing. You may access these resources electronically in PDF format on the Bethany web site (www.bethanyseminary.edu/files/advancement/bethanysunday08.pdf). You are most welcome to choose another date for celebrating Bethany Emphasis Sunday if another date is more suitable for your congregation.

The Bethany community is deeply grateful for Church of the Brethren congregations who call, send and support persons as they prepare for ministry and leadership in the church. If you have questions about Bethany Emphasis Sunday or suggestions of how we may be a resource to your congregation, please contact me. We look forward to your continued partnership in Bethany's mission through your prayers and financial gifts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcia Shetler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marcia Shetler, Church Relations
enclosures



"September 2008 marks the beginning of Bethany Theological Seminary's 14th year in Richmond, Indiana. The Bethany Board's decision to relocate was rooted in a fresh and bold *Partnership Vision of Theological Education* (adopted in July 1990) that was strongly informed by the Anabaptist and Pietist traditions that shape the Church of the Brethren. The Partnership

turned the locus of ministry preparation toward local congregations and encouraged congregations and districts to share in the opportunities and responsibilities of ministerial leadership. The survival and financial and educational health of Bethany Seminary seventeen years after the creation of the *Partnership Vision* is due to the commitments of many people.

The final point of the *Partnership Vision* document calls for 'flexibility and experimentation that will require us to go back again and again to the basics—our vision and our faith and history, and God's transforming leadership.' Much has changed at Bethany and for our congregations over the past seventeen years. However, this statement, serving as a catalyst for renewal and fresh visioning also provides a bridge from the past to the future. In a time when fear dominates our outward and religious landscapes we call upon the promises uttered throughout the Hebrew and Christian scriptures: Do not be afraid. Lo, I am with you always. Bethany seeks to be faithful to these promises and to bear witness to Christ's Way of love." - Ruthann Knechel Johansen, president

You can be a partner in Bethany's mission. . . .

- **Call.** Establish an intentional plan to identify, nurture, and call persons from your congregation to ministry.
- **Educate.** Congregations know the importance of faithful and effective pastors to lead vital and growing congregations. Bethany recognizes its responsibility to provide educational programs, rooted in the traditions of the Church of the Brethren, to develop these leaders. Encouraged those called to consider a Bethany education.
- **Support.** Gifts from Church of the Brethren congregations provide over 50% of Bethany Fund contributions (for current operations.)
- **Pray.** You are invited to use the Prayer Calendar on the back of this insert in the next year.

Bethany Theological Seminary Prayer Calendar

Please join us in prayer this year for the mission and ministry of Bethany Theological Seminary:

September 2008 - New and returning students as we begin our 104th academic year

October 2008 - Bethany's Board of Trustees, who give their time, talents and resources as advocates for the Seminary

November 2008 - Faculty and staff who daily share their skills and knowledge to support Bethany's mission

December 2008 - Bethany's contribution to the Church of the Brethren peace witness, through courses, seminars and our peace studies degree emphasis

January 2009 - Persons enrolled in January graduate and academy level intensive classes, a place for fellowship and learning

February 2009 - The work of the Institute for Ministry With Youth and Young Adults, in the classroom and through seminars, writing and research

March 2009 - The opportunity for dialog between the Bethany Community, scholars and friends through the Seminary's Presidential Forum *Weaving Wisdom's Tent: The Arts of Peace*

April 2009 - The Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program and its continuing education opportunities for pastors

May 2009 - Our 104th graduating class as they complete their seminary education and enter ministry

June 2009 - Students in summer ministry formation experiences: in congregations, retirement centers, hospitals and more

July 2009 - The more than 2,500 Bethany alumni/ae and their contributions to the church over the past century

August 2009 - Those who are considering enrolling at Bethany in the 2009/2010 academic year

Bethany Theological Seminary
615 National Road W, Richmond, IN 47374
800-287-8822 www.bethanyseminary.edu



Bethany Sunday Worship Resources - 2008

The worship resources on this page were written by Bethany students in this past year's Ministry of Worship class, and used in chapel services throughout the year.

- **Bulletin Meditation**

O great and awesome mystery, you call forth believers of all generations to a journey. The path we walk is unclear. The way ahead is unknown. Show us the Way again today.

-Joseph Tolton, Midland, Michigan

- **Call to Worship**

Leader: The God of David and Israel invites us to participate in the journey.

People: We gather in the name of the One who is our hope and source of life.

Leader: The God of endurance asks us to forgive and live out of compassion.

People: We serve the One whose everlasting love sustains us.

Leader: The God of Abigail calls us to seize opportunity.

People: We worship the One whose amazing grace strengthens us in all circumstances.

-Tracy Stoddart, Grand Junction, Colorado

- **Invocation**

God, will you answer our questions? Will you make clear the path you desire for us? We strive, we fail, we make some progress, then take two steps back. We want to serve you. We want to care for your people. We are here to learn how to do this better. We are here to explore ministry with others, but too often we feel empty, or distracted, or far away. Bring us closer to you. Fill our spirits with your grace, strength, and love. Quench our thirst and soothe our fears, that we may walk with you in serenity and purpose. Amen.

-Anna Lisa Gross, North Manchester, Indiana

- **Offertory Statement**

Growing grapes is complex and time-consuming. It requires considerable attention to the soil and climate. Christ is our caretaker who knows our souls and minds and calls us to produce fruit. What fruit are you to produce? What fruits are we to produce? Strive for humility, obedience, and love so that we may produce fruit for God.

-Lee Saylor, Roaring Spring, Pennsylvania

- **Benediction**

Leader: Go now and choose love instead of fear, responsibility instead of indifference.

People: For God is with us!

Leader: Go forth to act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with our God.

People: For God is with us!

Leader: Go and work for a world in which the rights of all are guaranteed.

People: For God is with us!

-Jessica Bauman, Dayton, Ohio



Bethany Sunday Worship Resources - 2008

This is an adaptation of a scripture jam that was written for this year's commencement worship service by 2008 graduate Elizabeth Keller. It is based on Romans 12:2.

Voice 1: Do not be conformed . . .
 Voice 2: to this world.
 Voice 3: Do not be conformed . . .
 Voice 1: but be transformed.
 Voice 2: BE transformed!
 Voice 3: but be transformed . . .
 Voice 4: by the renewing of your minds,
 Voice 1: so that you may discern
 Voice 2: what is the will of God –
 Voice 3: what is good . . .
 Voice 4: and acceptable . . .
 Voice 1: and perfect.

Voice 2: Do not be conformed –
 Voice 4: but be transformed by the renewing of your minds –
 Voice 1: my mind has been opened to the many ways . . .
 Voice 3: in which the church must engage in an on-going process
 Voice 2: of transformation . . .
 Voice 4: and meaning-making . . .
 Voice 2: in order to be relevant in our emerging,
 Voice 3: post-modern,
 Voice 1: 21st century
 Voice 4: world.

Voice 4: Renew your minds,
 Voice 2: so that you may discern what is the will of God . . .
 Voice 1: transformed through the power of community . . .

Voice 4: Do not be conformed.
 Voice 2: But BE . . .
 Voice 3: transformed through prayer:
 Voice 4: Taizé prayer

Voice 1: labyrinth journeys with feet and fingers
 Voice 2: Lectio Divina-infused sermon writing
 Voice 4: prayer journaling
 Voice 3: breath prayers and so much more –
 Voice 2: sitting quietly in God's presence. . . .
 Voice 1: listening . . .
 Voice 4: listening . . .
 Voice 3: for the Spirit wind softly rustling. . . .
 Voice 2: lifting my face as the Spirit fire caresses it warmly. . . .
 Voice 4: dancing our communion into the church and into the world. . . .
 Voice 2: placing my hand in the hand of Jesus
 Voice 1: who teaches me,
 Voice 4: guides me,
 Voice 3: and empowers me for ministry.
 Voice 1: Bethany has blessed me with the firm conviction
 Voice 2: that Christian spiritual formation gives rise
 Voice 2: to missional lives of discipleship
 Voice 3: on behalf of others and the world.
 Voice 2: Oh all who thirst,
 Voice 1: Come to me.
 Voice 3: Come.
 Voice 4: Let the one who believes in me drink.
 Voice 3: Drink!
 Voice 1: Out of the believer's heart . . .
 Voice 2: Shall flow rivers of living water.
 ALL: and every ONE shall be transformed . . .

[Invite the congregation to sing in a round,
 "Peace Be Still and Know that I am God."]



Bethany Sunday Worship Resources - 2008

This children's story was written by 2008 graduate Paula Ulrich.

Preparations: Prepare a small bag or backpack of things you would take on a trip, such as a toiletries bag (perhaps with travel size toiletries), a book to read, a jacket or sweater, a passport, maps or travel guides, etc.).

Good morning. I am wondering if any of you have ever gone on a trip or vacation or journey somewhere? What kinds of things did you take with you when you went on your trip?

I have some things in this bag that I take with me whenever I go on a trip. (Show the children the items that you brought in the bag, and describe briefly why you need or take those things. You might even pass these items around for the children to look at or hold.)

Today, in worship, we're talking about trips or journeys that God calls us to go on. Has God ever called you or someone you know to go on a special trip or journey?

Our Bible story today is about God calling the Israelites out of Egypt to go back to Israel. Do you remember that story? (Allow the children to tell it if they are able, perhaps just recapping the important parts if needed.) It tells us how the Pharaoh of Egypt changed his mind about letting the Israelites go, and how he went after them. At first, they were really scared and upset and even mad at Moses that this was happening, but then God parted the Red Sea so that they could escape the Pharaoh and his army and continue on their journey. Even though they didn't know what was going to happen, God was with them and was taking care of them.

We also are talking about a special school that has a long name. The school is called Bethany Theological Seminary. Any guesses about what kind of school that is?

Bethany Seminary is a school for people who hear God calling them to ministry. Some people hear God calling them to become a pastor – or a chaplain at a hospital – or a youth minister. Some people hear God calling them to work for peace in their communities or in the world – or to become a writer of, say, Sunday School materials. Going to Bethany and going into ministry is a lot like going on a journey or trip. A person who is called to seminary and ministry doesn't always know what to expect or what will happen when they get there. But they pack up and go because they know that God will be with them just as God was with the Israelites. And taking classes at seminary is a little bit like packing, too, because everything a person learns in seminary is like collecting things that she or he will need for ministry. When a ministry student learns about the Bible, or how to preach a sermon, or how to listen well to people so that he or she can be a good minister, it's a lot like when you collect your toothbrush, or your favorite stuffed animal, or your sunscreen so that you can have a good trip or journey. Those are the things you need. Even then, there can be surprises, and some things might not go very well – like your car might get a flat tire on the trip – or you might realize that you forgot something that is really important to have – but God is with you on the journey just as God was with the Israelites even when they were scared and upset. In the same way, God is with the people who go to seminary to prepare for ministry. Maybe, one day, you will even hear God calling you to the special journey of ministry.

Please pray with me: God, thank you that you are with us every day wherever we go. Help us to hear you when you call us, and to go wherever you lead us. In the name of Jesus, Amen.