



# THE COURIER

A Monthly Publication of Bethany Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

**LOVING** *God.*  
**LIVING** *for Christ.*  
**LISTENING** *to God's Spirit.*

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## Arnold's Applications

The COVID – 19 protocols have largely kept us from going and doing and from visiting, blessing and being blessed by others in the ways to which we have been accustomed. They have forced upon us a certain idleness, or at least a need for creativity to know how to fill our time. This situation proves problematic, because “Idle hands and idle minds make the devil’s workshop.” We mean by this pithy proverb that too much idleness breeds spiritually unhelpful and unhealthy thoughts.

In this particular time of forced idleness, much of that spiritual unhealth comes in the form of worry. On a personal level, we worry about relationships that have been distanced by the precautions, about all of the factors involved in cabin fever, and, of course, about getting sick. On a group level, we worry about the continuance of the church and the things of God. Will we emerge weakened as a community of God, because we have been parted from one another so long?

So many scriptures speak to the situation, that I hardly know which ones to include and which ones to leave for another day.

Philippians 4:6-7 – “<sup>6</sup> Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

John 14:1, 27 - “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ...  
<sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 - <sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup> in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Psalms 94:19 - <sup>19</sup> When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy.

Contemplating texts like these and following their advice offer the promise of peace even during difficult times.

They have comforted the saints of God through the centuries and through trials worse than this one.

Ultimately, we want to remember that God and Christ have not stopped working on behalf of those who belong to them. We will always be provided for by the benevolent grace of God, both collectively and individually. Let us rest our hope in these truths.

In Christ,

Bob

### **Bible Study Pause**

Because of Pastor Bob's vacation, the online Bible Study will take a two week pause on Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. The Bible Study currently explores the Book of Acts for insights into contemporary Christian living from the experience of the earliest Christians. If you would like to be included in the e-mailed materials and/or the Zoom session each week, simply notify Samantha or Pastor Bob, and we will get you added to the distribution and invitation list.



02/12 Lucian Aguilar

02/12 Ron Williams

02/13 Jenny Rutherford

02/14 Bob Snelson

02/16 Bodine Porter

02/20 Lola Mae Perry

02/22 Marvin Morris

02/24 Jennifer Howell

### **Blessing Boxes**

Beginning Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, blessing boxes will stand available on the round table in the Narthex. All through the month of February, anytime you feel a blessing drop some change in the blessing box. On February 28<sup>th</sup>, we will all bring our blessing boxes together to participate in the Week of Compassion offering for disaster response and development throughout the suffering communities of this world.

### **Pastor on Vacation**

Pastor Bob and Gia will be taking vacation from Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup> through Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>. We will be blessed to have Pastor Kotter with us to bring the message on February 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. A frequent guest in our pulpit, Pastor Kotter brings biblical inspirational messages for all to hear.

### **Worship Leaders and Worship Preparers**

We have two wonderful opportunities for those of you who participate in our in-person worship each week. First, we are forever looking for people willing to serve as worship leaders. These are the folks who make announcements and lead the Call to Worship and the Invocation from the bulletin. We currently have folks lined up through February 21<sup>st</sup>, but we stand wide open after that. If you are interested let Giovanna Arnold know.

Second, anyone who would like to assist with sanctuary set-up on Sunday morning is invited to volunteer. This job falls to the deacons when we have our full complement of worshipers, but during this period of social distancing, we are taking volunteers. Giovanna Arnold will be glad to help you with learning what is involved in performing this service. It entails, setting the communion table, arranging the paraments (those cloth things on the pulpit, lectern, and communion table), and arranging the communion and other materials on the entry table. Again, if you are interested, let Giovanna Arnold know.

### **Week of Compassion Offering**

Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup> through Sunday, February 28<sup>th</sup> has been designated by our denomination as the Week of Compassion. During the two Sundays of that “week” we encourage the Bethany community to make over and above offerings for the relief and development work of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) throughout the United States and around the world. This offering gives us the chance to show how much Christ’s people care about the suffering of our neighbors.

### **Virtual Ash Wednesday Service**

Ken Blystone and Pastor Bob will be recording a virtual Ash Wednesday service to be available for all who wish to take part in this special observance. Ash Wednesday this year falls on February 17<sup>th</sup>, and the service will be e-mailed to the congregation in advance of that date.

### **Board Meetings**

Some have been asking about board meetings of the congregation. During the COVID-19 disruption we have been handling board matters by e-mail. However, as it stands right now, we plan on having a socially distanced, in person, board meeting in the sanctuary on March 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **New Sermon Series**

On February 7<sup>th</sup> and continuing from February 28<sup>th</sup> through April 11<sup>th</sup>, Pastor Bob will be preaching a series of sermons on having a Rule for Life. The sermons will explore seven regular practices which can enrich our spiritual lives and enable us to walk more in the way of Christ. (Of course, on April 4<sup>th</sup>, for Easter, Pastor Bob will be preaching on the Resurrection!)

### **Thank You Note for Prayers and Cards for Giovanna**

Giovanna Arnold wishes to express thanks to all of you who have been so wonderful to offer your prayers, cards, good wishes, and thoughts during her recent battle with illness. The prayer warriors at Bethany cannot be beat for their dedication and results.

