

NEW BETHEL NEWS

OCTOBER 2026

New Bethel Church
135 New Bethel Church Road
Kempton, PA 19529



Office and church: 610-756-6589
Email: NBCKempton@gmail.com
Newsletter: bondart@ptd.net
nbchurchkempton.org

SUNDAY WORSHIP 9:00am

SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:15am



Progress Report

**SCHOOLHOUSE UPGRADES
FOR SUPPORT GROUPS AND
OUR YOUTH MINISTRY**

NEW BETHEL STORY PROJECT

PURPOSE | Equip our youth to record and preserve the personal, family, church, and faith stories of senior members of New Bethel.

The **New Bethel Story Project** will be carried out through our young people. They will interview senior members of the congregation and preserve their stories in their own voices. The project will teach interviewing, careful listening, field recording, and basic audio editing while creating a growing congregational oral-history archive for New Bethel.

MARK YOUR
PET'S
CALENDAR



New Bethel Church

135 New Bethel Church Road, Kempton, PA

Pet-Fest

Saturday, October 3
11:00am - 2:00pm

Rain Date
October 4
11:00am - 2:00pm

A Joyful Community Celebration of Gratitude
for the Love, Comfort, and Companionship of Pets

- **Petting Zoo**
- **Pet Photo Booth**
- **Paw Print Station**
- **Individual Pet Blessings**
- **Rainbow Bridge Memorial**
- **Pet Vendors, Trainers and Rescue Organizations**
- **Educational Table Staffed by Hawk Mountain Sanctuary**
- **Pet Food Donations Welcome to Benefit Friend, Inc. Pet Pantry**

Cat Carriers Encouraged

NO
Retractable Leashes

More Info:
Call/Text Tim @610-533-1369
Cronrath2017@gmail.com

Inspired by St. Francis and his reverence for all living creatures, this joyful event embodies New Bethel's mission of welcoming the whole community



Dear Friends at New Bethel,

I've spent most of my life thinking about Christianity.

That's hardly surprising. I'm a theologian by training. I've spent decades studying Scripture, teaching theology, and trying to understand what Christians believe and why we believe it. I've devoted a considerable portion of my life to what we sometimes call the **life of the mind**.

So there's more than a little irony in what I increasingly find myself wanting to say: **Christianity is, finally, a religion of the heart.**

I don't mean that the mind is unimportant. History matters. Doctrine matters. Careful thinking matters. But none of these is the destination. They're meant to lead us somewhere beyond themselves—to a life transformed by the grace and love of God. The first Christians seem to have understood this. Luke tells us that they gathered, prayed, and broke bread

"with glad and generous hearts."

—Acts 2:46

Maybe that's one of the simplest and most beautiful descriptions of the Church ever written: **people gathered together around the Lord's Table with glad and generous hearts.**

Seventeen centuries later, John Wesley discovered something similar on Aldersgate Street. Wesley was already an Anglican priest. He knew his Bible; he knew his theology; he practiced his religion with extraordinary discipline. Yet on May 24, 1738, while someone was reading from Luther's Preface to the Romans, something happened that Wesley could describe only in the language of the heart:

"I felt my heart strangely warmed."

That sentence has echoed across nearly three centuries because it describes something deeper than acquiring another religious idea. Wesley didn't simply understand grace differently that evening.

He experienced it.

A generation later, John Newton reached for the same language when he wrote *Amazing Grace*:

"'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear (and grace my fears relieved)."

Notice that grace taught not simply Newton's mind, but his heart.

[Those of you who know me well know that sooner or later I'm going to find theology in a rock song. So let me add U2 to Luke, Wesley, and Newton. In One, Bono sings:

"Love is a temple, love the higher law."

There it is again. Christianity finally leads us beyond knowing things about God to loving God (and, by extension, loving one another).]

Parker Palmer helps me understand what "heart" means here. For Palmer, the heart is much more than the place where we keep our feelings. It's the deep center of the person—the place where intellect and emotion, spirit and will, knowledge and experience come together. It's where the scattered pieces of our selves become whole.

That distinction matters.

To say that Christianity is a religion of the heart isn't to say that Christianity is anti-intellectual. It's simply to say that the intellect alone isn't enough.

The mind can understand grace.

Only the heart can receive it

.

The mind can contemplate forgiveness

.

Only the heart can extend it.

The mind can define love.

Only the heart can offer it.

The mind can explain the Gospel.

But only the heart can be strangely warmed by it.

And so it is that the Christian faith isn't about passing a theology exam. It's not about getting every doctrine right. (And it certainly isn't about winning arguments, theological or otherwise).

It's about what grace does to us.

Does grace make our hearts warmer?

Does it make them gladder?

Does it make them more generous?

Does it make us more capable of seeing the person beside us—not as a problem to solve, an opinion to correct, or an outsider to exclude, but as another human being loved by God?

I've spent much of my life trying to understand Christianity with my mind. I don't regret that for a moment. The life of the mind has been one of God's great gifts to me. But increasingly I suspect that all our studying, thinking, and theologizing must finally make a journey:

from the head to the heart.

The first Christians gathered together with glad and generous hearts. Wesley's heart was strangely warmed. Newton's heart was taught by grace. Maybe, after a lifetime spent studying Christianity, **I'm discovering something wonderfully simple all over again—as if for the first time.**

Because, in a strange way, I knew this before I became a theologian. I first discovered it as a teenager, sitting at a keyboard and playing in a youth production of Ralph Carmichael and Kurt Kaiser's Tell It Like It Is. The musical closed with Kurt Kaiser's Pass It On. I can still hear its simple, unsophisticated testimony:

“That's how it is with God's love / Once you've experienced it / You spread his love to everyone / You want to pass it on.”

I understood something then that I'd spend much of the rest of my life analyzing, studying, and teaching—making it much more complicated than it needed to be. Christianity isn't finally about knowing the right things about God.

It's about experiencing the love of God.

Maybe that teenage keyboard player understood something his older theologian self has needed a lifetime to rediscover. The Gospel is something we can understand with our minds. But it only becomes Good News when grace reaches our hearts. And when it does, we do what Kaiser's song encouraged me to do so many years ago:

We pass it on.

With affection,

Bob

IRON TALON FARM
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH —
NEW BETHEL CHURCH



GOOD FOOD.
STRONG COMMUNITY.
A BRIGHTER
TOMORROW.



CHILI COOK-OFF

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2026 • 3-7 PM

PARTY IN THE BARN

Gather, give back, and honor those who serve.



WINNER GETS A
\$250 DONATION
TO A FIRST RESPONDER
CHARITY OF THEIR CHOICE.



CHILI COOK-OFF
SIDES & DRINKS



CORNHOLE



OUTDOOR &
INDOOR FUN

RSVP BY OCT 10TH

RSVP TO IRONTALONFARM@GMAIL.COM OR 610-709-7341



NEW BETHEL ENDOWMENT FUND

Endowment Fund Update: As of July 31 our Church Endowment Fund is valued at \$146,259.00. Thanks to your generosity and substantial gains in the financial market, the fund continues to grow and benefit our church. The committee that oversees the fund will recommend appropriate disbursements to the church board beginning October 2027. By that time the fund will have established a three year return and any disbursements that fulfill the fund's mission can be calculated. Guidelines set forth in establishing the fund nearly two years ago will be followed. Thank you again for your continued support.



CHURCH FUNDRAISER

OCTOBER 13
11:30-6:30

KEMPTON FIRE COMPANY



Bible Study



The Bible study group is studying the 4 gospels, and we are currently in the book of Luke. Come learn, laugh, and discuss with us as we get together on Wednesdays from 10am - 11:30. All are welcome!



IN
MEMORY

Darryl Dieter
Myrna Kamp



PASTORAL CARE: When you are in need of pastoral care, please have a family member contact Pastor Peiffer at 570.778.1245 or call the church at 610.756.6589. If you are in the Lehigh Valley Hospital, please note that they will be phasing out the church code option.☒

REMEMBER THOSE WHO ARE ILL OR RECOVERING FROM ILLNESS

Dick Albright, Michael Aulenbach, Carla Bartholomew, Sandra Bauscher, Pastor Dave Blitch, Sarah Burns, Brenda Derr, Jay Drey, Donna Greenawalt, Sharon (Henry) Griffiths, Tim Haring, Felicity Herring, Tiffany Hoch, Casey Hoffman, Ernie Kanas, Bethany Keck, Emily Keck, Blair Keim, Cindy Keiser, Deb Kenney, Davis Knauer, Emma Laigaie, Judy Lenhart, Peggy Light, George Megerle, Mary Beth Mogus, Andy Miller, Diane Miller, Bonnie Moll, Heather Munsey, Lloyd Pettit, Steve Schwoyer, Kevin Smith, Melanie Wessner, Cassie Wolfe, Joanne Zawada-Paskoff, Reuben Zettlemoyer, Susan Zettlemoyer, and Ben Ziehmer.

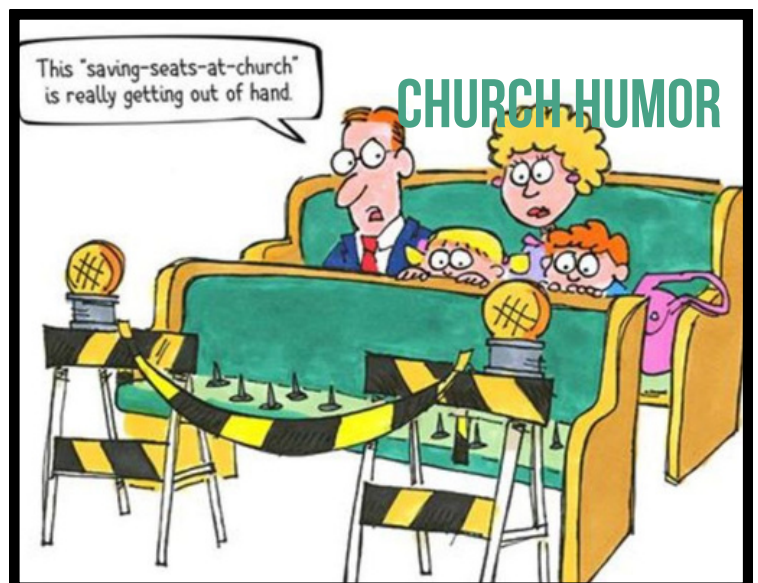
FRIEND INC. FOOD PANTRY

During these times let us not forget those less fortunate than we are. If you are able, please consider donating any nonperishable items. For the month of August we will again be collecting food items that can easily be prepared for lunch. In addition to food items, please consider donating personal items such as shampoo, soap, etc. and household items (laundry detergent, cleaning supplies, etc.). These last items are things that we often overlook.

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP: Join us following worship for our coffee fellowship. Enjoy the coffee and snacks and the fellowship that comes with it. If you would like to bring snacks and/or drinks for any given Sunday there is a sign-up sheet at the door to the choir room. You may also sign up to help set up before worship or clean up following coffee fellowship. Paper products and coffee are provided.

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Oct 2 Michael Hamm
Oct 2 Kenneth Hugo
Oct 3 Michael Schroeder
Oct 13 Monica Rabert
Oct 14 Darren Weaver
Oct 17 Helen Weaver
Oct 20 Holden Smith



ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

Sunday, November 1, 9:00am

We remember those who have passed away in the last year.

**To include your loved one,
please contact
Pastor Peiffer or Ruthann Lutz**

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR**

UPCOMING EVENTS

New Bethel and Our Community

NEW BETHEL PET FEST  **OCTOBER 3**

COMMUNITY TRUNK OR TREAT  **OCTOBER 17**

THANKSGIVING WORSHIP  **NOVEMBER 25**

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP  **DECEMBER 24**

REMEMBER THESE MEMBERS

Ray Bilger
Maidencreek Place
105 Dries Road #56
Reading PA 19605

Pat Graff
601 St John St
Rm 211B
Allentown, PA 18103

Lila Kramer
420 Krocks Road,
Apt. 236
Wescosville, PA 18106

George and Judy Megerle
Fellowship Community
The Villa Room 323
3000 Fellowship Drive
Whitehall, PA 18052



New Bethel Church

The Board at New Bethel Church is looking to gather information with hopes of shedding some light on our current attendance levels. The historical decline is reflected below:

Average weekly attendance in 10 year increments:

1999 – 127 members

2009 – 98 members

2019 – 52 members

2021 – 35 members (post covid)

2025 – 33 members

Your opinion and needs are very important in this process as we continue our mission:

“Our aim is to share the gospel of Jesus, celebrate the sacraments, build up believers to maturity of faith who will value prayer, praise, the sharing of their faith and service.”

Please consider sparing a few minutes of your time. It is with much hope that you are willing to respond to our inquiry and provide insight on three important questions.

- 1. What obstacles do you face when looking to attend 9am Sunday worship service?**
- 2. What about worship service do you most look forward to?**
- 3. What would you like to see/hear at a church service that a traditional service hasn't provided?**

Responses can be made via email to calbright@albrightsmill.net. If you prefer to be contacted by a member of the worship committee via telephone, please call or text 484-357-6361. A group setting for discussion will also be offered if there is interest expressed. Date/time to be determined.

**Best Regards,
Your friends at New Bethel**