Dear Members and Friends of New Bedford Church,

Have you noticed the great blessing we as a church have received the last couple of years? We are seeing many, many "new faces" in our worship services. We are seeing these faces at both the early service and the later service. Last Sunday I even considered opening up a 3rd seating section to accommodate everyone (In the end I just let the two middle sections be full). We are also seeing more and more "new faces" in our Bible Studies, choirs, and ministries. Yes, the good news is this… some people have had to find new places to sit in the sanctuary. Praise the Lord!

What are the reasons for our growth? Some of it is because we moved into the EPC and we are upholding Scripture as the truth. Some of it is because we are the center of ministry for New Bedford. Another reason is our ministry to children that is touching so many families in our community. I also believe the work of our Vision Team over the last few years has raised our awareness of the privilege we have to share the Good News of Christ. I am sure there are many other reason I am not aware of.

But the blessings of the Lord also bring challenges to us. First, we must never forget we are called to share our faith and I believe it is the Lord's will for us as a church to grow both individually and corporately. Stagnancy, either personal or corporate, is never God's will. Lyle Schaller was a leader guiding churches to growth. He is an author of many books on church growth. He states that the number one reason churches do not grow is because they truly do not want to grow. The status quo is comfortable. Sure every church wants to "replace" lost members. Usually they want to replace these lost members with new people that look a lot like themselves. Sustained growth is uncomfortable.

Schaller continues by saying that a healthy church should have a minimum growth in their worship attendance of 5% net each year. If this is not the case stagnancy and lethargy quickly sets in. For us that would be a net gain of about ten people per year. Taking into account inevitable loss through relocation and death we need to grow by about fifteen new people per year to remain a healthy growing church.

The key to growth has been given to us by the Vision Team for the past few years. The command of the Lord is to "go and make disciples" (the Great Commission). This is the task of every person who is part of the New Bedford Family. This is why we have hung the banners in the front of our Sanctuary. We obey this command not primarily because we want New Bedford Church to grow (although that is a legitimate secondary reason). We obey this command because people need to know the Lord. Whether they end up at our church is secondary… the goal is to have them end up in the Kingdom of God. Again, this is the task of every person…. not just a committee… not just "young people," not just "older people," not just "gifted people," everyone! Obedience is important because eternity is at stake. The primary focus of our church must be directed at our community. All of the programs in our church….. Sunday School, Awana, Youth Group, Bible Studies, Worship Services must be in obedience to the Great Commission. If this is not true a church gets into a rut, becomes self-centered, and ends up in a stagnant or declining situation. Truthfully, this is the situation of the vast majority of churches in our nation. Again, praise God this is not our situation at this time.

There is a second challenge we face. We as a church must be a friendship building church. Not just a "welcoming church." Saying "Hi" to visitors is easy….building friendships with new people is much more difficult. It takes openness and it takes time. Our friendship

group should never be closed. Imagine how you would feel going to a new church. Yes, you would want to worship the Lord…. but you would also want to be among friends.

Allow me to give this invitation during this Lenten season. Specifically identify a person or two in your "contact" life (they may not at this time be friends). It may be a co-worker. It may be a neighbor. It may be a fellow student. It may be someone in your "club". Begin praying for that person on a daily basis. The Lord may use you to show that person the way to His Kingdom. What a blessing… what a joy!

Also look around the church. If you see a face you do not know… learn their names…. begin conversations….sit with them at dinners….start a friendship. It is indeed a command from the Lord. Again, praise the Lord. We are blessed with a growing church. Let us continue to be obedient to the Lord and reach the lost in our own community.

In Christ,

Doug

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

- **Approved all Committee Members**
- **Reviewed Financial Reports**
- **Accepted Report of Auditors. Auditors found all Financial Reports in good order**
- **Discussed possibility of receiving electronic offerings as suggested by Auditors. Referred to Administration Committee for further discussion**
- **Received report that 29 infected Ash trees have been removed…. 3 more still need to be removed. Administration Committee is discussing stump removal, reseeding and replanting new trees**
- **Evangelism Committee has ordered six new signs… three for Easter and three "general" signs**
- **Evangelism Committee will guide the Bible Studies at Lenten Suppers**
- **Approved Adult Bible study using Kingdom Marriage by tony Evans. Class will be led by Lee Harris**
- **Mission Committee is discussing use of Special Easter offering**
- **Received reports from the Woman's association, the vision Team, the Stephens Ministry and the Vision Team**
- **Discussed need to approve General Assembly Delegates (meeting is Sacramento) in the next month**



Gene Bicehouse.....03
Steve Fox.....03
Sally Withers.....04
Emily Withers.....05
Sue Bluedorn.....08
Doug Houk.....13
Larry Bluedorn.....15
Dakota Boyer.....16
James Allison.....17
Jake Emery.....17
Sandy Saulpaugh.....17
Dan Dieter.....19
Ed Rudzik.....20
Perry Boyer.....21
Beth Kendall.....22
Jennifer Saulpaugh.....24
John Book.....25
Erick Boyer.....25
Jackie Hall.....25
Jamie Phillips.....26
Robert Bretz.....27
Ryan Morse.....27
Judy Stuhlmann.....29
Helen Bicehouse.....30



Jane Clingan.....02
Ashley Houk.....02
Evan Lambert.....04
Marcie Lambert.....04
Barbara Pence.....04
Peggy Hilliard.....05
Bill Harshbarger.....06
Andy Hostetler.....07
Jodi Allison.....08
Jamie McCarthy.....08
David Magee.....09
David Carr.....19
Ty Phillips.....19
Henry Reed.....21
Collin Duffy.....22
Donna Fox.....22
Bonnie Glogowski.....23
Patty Wade.....26
Edward F. Rudzik.....27
Madeline Whiting.....28
Sabrina DeVite.....29

Please remember in prayer the following persons who are hospitalized, receiving treatments, recuperating at home and those who have requested prayer.
Nancy Templeton----------Overlook Medical Clinic
Dot Jones----------Avalon Nursing Home
Marie Snyder----------Home
Gladys Barnhart----------Home
Jo Ruby----------Home
Henry and Pearl Reed----------Overlook Nursing Home
Don Jones----------Avalon Nursing Home-Rehab
Carl Black----------Clen-Moore Place (Greer House)

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We extend our deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the following people that passed away during the month of February.

Wally Huber (former pastor of New Bedford Church) ~ February 12, 2017

John Anderson (father of John [Tammy] Anderson) ~ February 22, 2017

Judy Beck (Bill Beck's wife) ~ February 28, 2017

"The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."
Psalm 18:2

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Congratulations to Julie & Christian Fulkman on the birth of their son, Bowen Walker Fulkman! Bowen was born on February 15th, he weighed 7 lbs. and 5 oz. and is 19 inches. Aubrey is a big sister again and Eli is a new big brother! Congratulations to the entire Fulkman family on the birth of this precious baby boy 💙



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Nancy Templeton would like to thank everyone that gave her gifts during Christmas. She appreciates the kindness and thoughtfulness shown to her by her church family.

We would like to thank the members of the New Bedford Presbyterian Church for the beautiful floral arrangement that was sent for Wally's Memorial Service. Thank you also for all the cards, phone calls and prayers that have been said on our behalf. We are forever grateful to our New Bedford family.

Ginny Huber & family

MARCH CIRCLE MEETINGS

Deborah Circle ~ meeting on Tuesday, March 14th @ 9:30A.M. at the church.

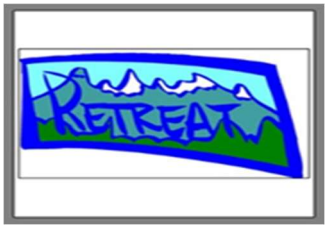
Lydia Circle ~ meeting on Tuesday, March 14th @ 1:00P.M. at the church. (please take note that this circle is meeting a week early)

Elizabeth Circle ~ meeting on Thursday, March 16th @ 6:30P.M. at the church.

Rebecca Circle ~ meeting on Saturday, March 18th @ 9:00A.M. at Bedford Trls. Rest.

Ruth Circle ~ meeting on Monday, March 20th @ 9:30A.M. at the church.

THE WOMAN'S RETREAT



Women's Retreat Theme: My Heart will be Blessed with the Sound of Music
Dates & Times: March 31 – April 1, 2017 (with an option to stay Thursday night and/or Saturday night which will be followed by a service on Sunday in the small chapel on the hill. Additional cost: $10.00 per night)
Location: The Castle in Franklin PA
Cost: $55.00. Payable to "Women's Association." (Scholarships are available.)
Last day to Register is March 12th.
Money is nonrefundable after March 12th.
Registration & Info Forms are located in the vestibule. Please return form and payment to Debbie Pogozelec or GayAnn Miller.

*****We want you to join us on the Woman's Retreat. Sign up's are happening in the narthex. The final day to register is Sunday, March 12th!!!**

2 DATES TO REMEMBER

Saturday, April 29 @ 9:30am is our Ladies, Love and Laughter Breakfast.

Thursday, May 4 is National Day of Prayer. Join us in worship that day as we lift our prayers to our Holy God.

More details will be forthcoming in the months ahead.

Just a reminder, if you are new to the Women's Association and would like to be included in our email list please send me your email address so I can add you. My email address is jriethmiller@aol.com.

Our next scheduled meeting is Saturday, May 13 @ 1:00pm. at the church. If you want to know what is happening with our association or to be a part of the decision making process please come. Hope to see you there.

In His Service ~ Judy Riethmiller

LENTEN CALENDAR

SUNDAY 3/12 – Lenten Supper @ 5:00P.M. followed by a Bible Study

SUNDAY 3/26 – Lenten Supper @ 5:00P.M. followed by a Bible Study

SUNDAY 4/9 – Palm Sunday Cantata @ 5:30P.M.

THURSDAY 4/13 thru SUNDAY 4/16 – Prayer Vigil

THURSDAY 4/13 – Maundy Thursday Worship Service & Communion @ 7:00P.M.

FRIDAY 4/14 – Good Friday Worship Service @ 7:00P.M.

SATURDAY 4/15 – Community Easter Egg Hunt & Activities

SUNDAY 4/16 – Sunrise Worship Service @8:30A.M., Easter Breakfast @ 9:30A.M., Traditional Resurrection Sunday Worship Service @ 10:40A.M.



The Worship Committee will be hosting two meals over Lent. On March 12th there will be a baked potato dinner and on March 26th they will be serving soup. Both meals will begin at 5:00P.M. and following both meals the Evangelism Committee will be hosting Bible Studies.
****Youth Group will be serving dinner, please meet at the church at 3:30p.m.**

The Evangelism Committee will be hosting the Community Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 14th. There will be many children from the community attending, we are asking you to please consider helping us by donating a bag of individually wrapped small candy pieces (such as miniature candy bars, M&M's). The candy will then be placed inside of plastic eggs. There will be box in the Narthex for all donations.
The Evangelism Committee would like to thank you in advance for your help!





The Deacons are once again taking orders for Easter Flowers. This year you have a choice of Easter Lilies, Hyacinth and Tulips! We invite you to honor or remember a loved one, these will be printed and placed in the bulletins on Easter Sunday. The cost of flowers is $9.00 each, please fill an Easter Flower card out from your bulletin or see Linda Canami or Lori Jones. Thank you!



afO is in the midst of their busiest time of year. Between events, fundraisers, bible studies and retreats; we are so blessed to be fortunate enough to have all these activities to do! It's probably best to list everything going on in chronological order so we don't miss anything! March 12th is the first Lenten supper at 5 pm, where the youth will be serving dinner. Youth should meet at the church at 4 pm. If you are feeling led to donate, some of the donations will go towards the youth's mission trip fund. This night is also when the $50 mission trip deposits are due. PAYING THIS SECURES YOUR SPOT FOR THE TRIP! March 19th is when Jo Ann is coming to youth group to show them how to make sleeping mats for the homeless. This is the last day to donate any plastic shopping bags you may have. March 24th is a Girls Only sleepover at the church! We'll meet at 6 pm and end at 9 am the next morning: there will be karaoke and movies! Please bring snacks to share with the group, as well as appropriate jammies for the night. Lastly, we have another Lenten supper on March 26th at 5 pm. The youth will be serving dinner and cleaning afterwards. Again, meet at 4 pm. Some of the donations will go towards the mission trip fund for youth group. Just a reminder that I NEED $50 deposits by March 12th if you're going on the mission trip this June. Please get deposits to me NO LATER than March 12th. I will send them in to Pittsburgh Project to secure our spot there for the week of June 18-24. Thank you all so much for your constant support and prayer for our young people. I hope that together we can help them walk closer with God and be a bold follower of Christ!

Awana Clubs-----Wednesdays
Preschool- Grades 6 5:15-7:00
(Music is from 5:00-5:15)

Dawn Harris, Awana Commander
dawnhnbpc@aol.com 330-881-8110

March 1st – Regular Club Night
March 8th – Double, Double Points Night
March 15th – Green Night
Clubbers are to wear something green…. Green Shirt, Green Pants, Green Hat, Green Socks, Green anything!!
March 22nd – Hats Off to your Leaders and Director Night
Show some love for your Leaders, Coach Lee, Director Shirley (Grades K-2), with a handmade card or note **AND wear your favorite hat!!**
March 29th – Mystery Party Night
Commander Dawn is planning a party and YOU are invited to come! Clubbers will be able to shop at the Marketplace with the points that they have earned through the year.

Awana CAN make a difference for the CITY RESCUE MISSION

Our goal is to collect 300 pounds of food for the City Rescue Mission! To date there is 258 lbs collected!

Needed Items:

Canned Soup	Cereal	Mac N Cheese	Syrup
Boxed Rice	Pancake Mix	Crackers	Jelly

Any of the above items can be donated at any time. However, there is a 'Most Wanted Item of the Month'.

MOST WANTED ITEM FOR MARCH – CANNED FRUIT

Thank you for helping to provide this ministry with food for families in need.

Donation Opportunity----On Wednesday, March 29th the AWANA Clubbers will have the opportunity to go shopping in our 'church' marketplace. They get to buy items with the points they earned. They can earn points each week for; attendance, bringing a Bible, bringing their Handbook, completing sections, wearing uniform, and attending church. Many kids have earned a lot of points and they look forward to shopping with them at the end of Awana. *If you would be able to donate items for the marketplace please leave them in the box in the vestibule by* ***Sunday, March 26th***. Many great items could be purchased from a dollar store. If you have any questions please let me know. Thanks for your help in rewarding the kids for their commitment in Awana and earning points.

Looking Ahead……. 3rd Annual AWARDS NIGHT

Wednesday, April 5, 2017
5:00-7:00 PM

EVERYONE is invited to join us in recognizing this year's Awana Clubbers. We are excited about their accomplishments and this will be a special ending to our year. A dinner will be served after the Awards Ceremony. If you are able please to bring a side dish or salad to share *Please sign up in the Vestibule so we can plan accordingly.* Thank you.

BOWLING PARTY



Who? All kids in Pre-School-Grade 6
(A parent/guardian needs to accompany Preschool children)
When? Friday, March 24, 2017 5:30-7:30 PM
Car Pool leaves the church at 5:00 and returns approx. 8:00
Where? Ten Pin Alley 3825 E State St. Hermitage, PA 16148
Cost? $5.00 Church/Awana Kids--$6.00 all other Kids
Includes bowling, shoe rental, pizza, chips, pop, dessert
Come and Have some Fun!!!!!!
Permission Slips are in the vestibule or by Dawn's office.
Permission Slips need to be returned by Wednesday, March 22nd

*****WANTED*****Children At Worship Leaders*****WANTED*****
Children At Worship is held during the 10:30 Worship Service for children K-Grade 6. Interested in helping with Children At Worship? Not sure what is involved or what to do? There is a sign up calendar in the church narthex. Contact Dawn Harris to discuss this ministry and how you can be part of this ministry.

LOOKING AHEAD-SAVE THE DATES…….VBS will be June 12-18, 2017!
Please continue to save the empty wrapping paper tubes. Thank you

Contact Info: Dawn Harris Call/Text: 330-881-8110 Email: Dawnhnbpc@aol.com

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Couple's Bible Study beginning Sunday, March 19th at 9:30 AM



Lee Harris will lead the Dr. Tony Evans video series Kingdom Marriage, Connecting God's Purpose with Your Pleasure. There are 6 sessions: Finding God's Purpose for Your Marriage, Honoring the Covenant of Marriage, Embracing the Unity of Marriage, Love Your Wife, Respect Your Husband, & Rekindling Your First Love.

Please sign up in the vestibule so participant guides can be ordered. If you have any questions please contact Lee Harris 330-881-8114 or Pastor Doug.