



2021 Fall Newsletter

## *God is Spoken of Here*

Bethany Retreat Center | Life Line Infant & Pregnancy Services | YPWC Direct Service | Anawim Community | Youth Programs

***“See if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour out for you blessing without measure.” - Malachi 3:10***

Bethany is a “thin” place. In Gaelic “caol áit”, pronounced “kweel atch”. A recent retreat leader at Bethany Retreat Center describes this thin place as a rare location where you can sense the Holy Spirit more easily because there is less space between heaven and earth.

At Bethany, one effect of caol áit is that we are filled with hospitality and hope. Are **we** always filled with hospitality and hope? Short answer – yes. Am **I** always filled with hospitality and hope? Short answer – no. A sacred mystery of Bethany is that the community here bolster and build one another up, filling us each with hope and hospitality. Even though individually we may be weak, He is strong. These charisms of hope and hospitality don’t belong to us. They don’t even start with us. They are from Christ in the truest sense. We are just shining a light that Christ has offered to put in our hands, and we have the simple sense to say yes. To say amen.

A framed poem in my office says ***“I finally understand the true and beautiful symbolism of the winding, dirt path to Bethany's sacred ground.... It has taken me much longer to arrive here than it did to drive”***. I don’t know who wrote it. It was here when I arrived. I moved it to a place of prominence because it speaks this same profound truth in different words. It speaks of a spirit that God has placed on and in Bethany. A soil so fertile that fruit springs forth in all seasons. A path that is bright with a lamplight that pours forth as we walk intentionally in God’s presence. These things cannot manifest in anything other than the hope and hospitality that is the heart of Jesus, the true Christ-light of the world.

Connect with us at Bethany; see and sense this with your own eyes and heart. As the book of Malachi says “Test me in this and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.” Send us your prayer intentions or anything else on your heart that we may pray with you and for you and please pray for us well. May His blessings pour down on you!

- Doug Laplante

# Providing Hope & Hospitality for our neighbors

## Simple Moments Change Our World

In the 7 years Charlie Saggese worked as Young People Who Care's Social Service Coordinator there have been a million (if not more) "simple moments" that have changed the world for many people in our community. Charlie has told many stories of the moments on the phone, the moments at the door, the smiles of gratitude, the invitation of hospitality with a cup of coffee or a homemade cookie. Stories of hope through taking food to someone in great need, the trip to the hospital, the conversation in the car. It all works together – the generous heart, the willing spirit, the opportunities God puts in front of all of us – to share in each other's story. When you live in the spirit of hospitality and have the radiance of hope in your heart you can't help but be changed yourself. Recently at a celebration dinner we held for Charlie on the occasion of his retirement, he and his wife spoke of how much God has blessed him and his family through his work at Young People Who Care.



Charlie Saggese

“Helping others really opened my eyes to the deeper needs of my neighbors. It has been a great privilege to join in ministry with the Anawim Sisters over these last 7 years. This is not goodbye; it is a transition from employee to volunteer. I'm not that far away.”

Thank you Charlie!



## The Blessings Go Both Ways

Young People Who Care has always functioned with one goal in mind; to help its neighbors in need. Recently, Jim and Jane were two of these neighbors in dire need of assistance. An exterior stairwell had rotted away, and could no longer be used as an exit. This stairwell could be life-saving if an emergency occurred in their home. These neighbors needed our help to make their home safe.

YPWC quickly met the need. A local volunteer, Dan, and a small youth group from Our Lady of Grace Church of Greensburg went to work on this safety issue. In a few short hours, Jim and Jane were grateful to God for their new stairs and for bringing this group to them. Their prayers were answered!

During their 4-day stay with us, the volunteers from Our Lady of Grace Church had many opportunities to serve our neighbors in need. Not only

did they build new stairs for Jim and Jane, during their visit they completed six other jobs at multiple locations around Clearfield County. This group helped with construction projects, cleaning, painting, mulching, and yard work of all types. Direct Service work touches the hearts and lives of those served as well as those serving. The blessings go both ways.



Our Lady of Grace youth group with Sr. Suzanne and Trixie (the wonderdog)

YPWC receives requests that can vary widely from day to day, but each request is carefully considered and matched with volunteers who are equipped to meet each need. Large jobs, such as the construction of Jim's and Jane's stairs, are completed by groups who desire to work in the local mission field. Small needs, like rides to a medical provider or replacing a broken appliance are also met. Recently, Young People Who Care received a donation of a dryer from a parishioner at St. Tobias Church in Brockway. This friend wanted the dryer to be used to help someone in need. Another neighbor nearby was in dire need of a dryer. Young People Who Care was able to pick up and deliver the dryer on the same day, and in doing so, two households were blessed.

Helping neighbors in need defines the mission of YPWC. Direct Service of all types is provided year-round to neighbors who live in Clearfield and surrounding counties. This ministry is only possible through the continued dedication of our many volunteers who selflessly give of their time to share God's love and become God's grace in the lives of our neighbors.

**Please join us in this vital mission!**  
**Call YPWC at 814-263-4177 to volunteer and serve.**

*"...thereby, some have entertained angels unawares."*

- Hebrews 13:2

## *The Spirit Flows on this Holy Mountain*

In late May I invited a group of friends (Associates of the Sisters of Divine Providence in Pittsburgh) to consider attending a retreat at Bethany Retreat Center. Since the Pandemic, we had not been able to gather in person, and I felt this would be the perfect opportunity to introduce them to the lovely rural area in Frenchville, PA. We wanted to spend individual time in prayer as well as share some in-person social time with each other in a safe setting. Seven were eager to accept the invitation, all fully vaccinated, and ready to venture to Bethany Retreat Center.

I knew they would appreciate the quiet setting, good food and spirit of hospitality. I asked Sr. Ruth Ann to prepare a session on Centering Prayer, and Sr. Suzanne to do one on the labyrinth and then build in time for solitude and communion with God. We were able to participate in daily liturgy and common prayer, explore nature in the surrounding woods and fields, and talk with each other face to face!

After carpooling for the 3- hour drive, lunch, settling in, and a tour of the retreat center, we had time to rest, take a walk or visit. The three days would pass quickly, so a group set off to explore the Stations of the Cross in the woods, the hilltop cross and the blueberry bushes. Five of us got caught in the rain, but after a few frantic minutes we just slowed down, got soaked, laughed and enjoyed the unexpected.

Each associate had her own treasured moments and truly embraced the time away from daily routine in the city. One shared that all her expectations were met; a comfortable bed, healthy food, and prayer time. Another gained new insights into walking the labyrinth which allowed her a more peaceful prayer. A few who are experienced in Centering Prayer noted how much more meaningful it was to pray as a community and have other Bethany staff join us.

Driving home, my heart was full. Not only was God spoken of at Bethany Retreat Center but God's presence was felt everywhere. In the beauty of the grounds, the quiet of the Prayer Center and in each person coming and going, serving or being served. I was happy to share this hidden gem that Sr. Therese Dush so lovingly brought into existence so that others could be uplifted and renewed. My friends will return again and bring others with them. They will pass the Spirit on to others as I have to them.

- Tish Donze, Summer 2021 Retreatant

## *Bethany Blueberry Festival Success!*

On the last Saturday in July 2021 a small army composed of volunteers, sponsors and staff brought back a piece of Bethany tradition -- the Bethany Blueberry Festival returned! What a wonderful event it was! Hundreds of people drove up Germania Road to find all kinds of activities to do and delicious food and desserts to eat. There was never a dull moment in the Arts & Crafts Tent or on the Obstacle Course. With over 35 items in the Raffle Tent, the staff and volunteers were busy all day selling tickets! Those working in the kitchen faced a line of hungry guests all day long and never missed a beat. Local Christian Bands Heavenbound and A Day Awaits played great concerts that lasted into the evening hours. We are eternally grateful to all who came to visit and to serve. **Thank you!**



## *Join Our Circle of Care*

Saint Mother Teresa teaches us, "We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty." For 45 years YPWC has created a "Circle of Care" to connect those who have with those who need. Our Christmas Program builds a bridge to offer love, hope and help for our neighbors facing difficult times. This program focuses on personal needs of clothing and household items, things that make everyday life better for the families we serve.

Consider helping us this year, providing hope and care, by sponsoring a person, a family or a specific need for someone at Christmas time. Or come and help us organize, wrap and/or deliver Christmas gifts to our families in need. Last year we reached out to 78 families. Help us do even more this year.

If you would like to be a part of this Circle of Care, contact Sr. Suzanne Thibault at 814-263-4177 or at [bethanyyouthcenter@gmail.com](mailto:bethanyyouthcenter@gmail.com).



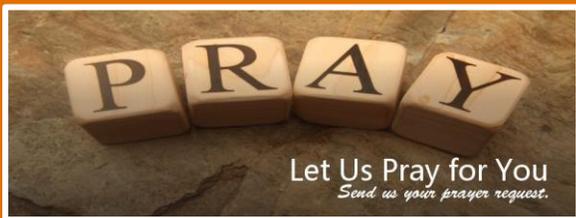
Young People Who Care  
PO Box 129  
Frenchville, PA 16836

**Contact us at:**

Bethany Retreat Center 814-263-4855

Bethany Youth Center and Young People Who Care, Inc., 814-263-4177

*Check out our website for events and updates at [www.bethanyretreatcenter.org](http://www.bethanyretreatcenter.org)*



Because we trust God completely and believe sincerely in the power of prayer, we want to pray for you. Please send us your prayer request in the enclosed envelope. The Anawim Community will bring your intentions to our daily prayer. And if you'd like someone from our community to call and pray with you, please let us know.

*“Pray for one another.” – James 5:16*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

My prayer need:

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*Young People Who Care, Inc., is a Catholic grassroots ministry which is a religious nonprofit with 501(c)(3) status as a charitable organization.*