



2021 Spring Newsletter

God is Spoken of Here

Bethany Retreat Center | Life Line Pregnancy Services | Direct Services | Anawim Community | Youth Programs

“Hearts built for service by God honor Christ Jesus.” ~ Ephesians 6

Every act of service is a prayer and every prayer is an act of service. Our service work flowing out of Bethany is the ministry that is most often seen out in the community and is the work we are known for. But that ministry sits on top of our first ministry – a ministry of regular, faithful prayer. We know that if it were not for all the prayer that is infused in and through Bethany, good service would not and could not occur.

We received a call from Trapper, a neighbor who was undergoing medical treatments and could not cut and split his firewood for the Winter. The project was filled with cold fingers, ear muffs, whirring chainsaws and a log splitter. The end of the story was an amazing pile of dried, split hardwood ready to be used to keep Trapper’s home warm for the winter. Yet the “project” started way before Trapper or we had an inkling what was to come. Instead, we were all preparing as best as we are able, ***“through prayer, a clean heart, and a renewed right spirit within.” (Psalm 51:10)*** Only with that foundation are we ready and able to receive and hear God’s many calls. ***“The heart allows us to respond with plans and action, but the Lord establishes the steps.” (Proverbs 16:9).***

Our small army of volunteers, with hearts built by God for service, is growing. Sr. Therese Dush, C.A., our foundress, envisioned and built a community that comes together to serve the unmet needs of our neighbors in Clearfield County and beyond. The work our volunteers do continues to spread a message of Jesus’ hope and joy as we recognize His presence in those we serve. We invite you to join us in this ministry for a day, for a weekend or longer if your schedule allows. These simple acts of love, prayer and service grow communities, transform hearts and change lives. Please get in touch with us for prayer, or direct service, or both.

May His blessings rain down on you. ~ **Doug Laplante**

The Blueberry Festival is Back!

Mark your calendar and plan to spend a fun filled day with us at Bethany Retreat Center!

When: Saturday, July 31, 2021
10:00 am – 7:00 pm

Where: 1031 Germania Rd.
Frenchville, PA 16836

Events include:

- Silent Auction & Special Raffle Items
- 50/50 Raffle
- Pick Your Own Blueberries
- Refreshments
- Arts & Crafts for kids and adults
- Face Painting & Games
- Live Music with Heavenbound and A Day Awaits
- Corn Hole Tournament
- Stations of the Cross & Trail Walks
- Guided Labyrinth Walk
- and much more...

Check out our website for other events and updates at www.bethanyretreatcenter.org.

We Belong to Each Other

“Today, if we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other --- that man, that woman, that child is my brother or my sister. If everyone could see the image of God in his neighbor, do you think we would still need tanks and generals?”

“Let us not use bombs and guns to overcome the world. Let us use love and compassion. Peace begins with a smile. Smile five times a day at someone you don't really want to smile at; do it for peace. Let us radiate the peace of God. “

~ Mother Teresa



Deep faith connections through Zoom

Many faces, many zoom sessions, and an abundance of grace! Since going to the Zoom platform for youth retreats, Sr. Suzanne Thibault, C.A., has led over 500 students with their sponsors to explore many aspects of their faith together. We've connected with 22 parishes from 2 separate diocese!

Grandparents have been in conversation with their grandchildren. Parents and their teenagers have been communicating on a deeper level about what the Catholic faith means to them. One mother called to thank Suzanne for creating the space to reconnect with her daughter. Sr. Suzanne received a picture on her phone of a grandfather and grandson working together, with a message from a mom saying, ***"I am so happy my dad and son are bonding on the level of faith."*** One young man reflected on the concept of being "in communion" with other members of the church: ***"It made me realize everyone there could relate to one another."*** He experienced this during the breakout room discussions.

We are extremely grateful for God's continued grace and inspiration that more than 1000 people (students and their sponsors) in our church have a deeper awareness of God and His grace active in their lives!

The joy and hope of Christmas has lasted far longer than December 25

"One cry awakened the world, one birth changed history, one life made all the difference."

This greeting card verse inspires me to pray for the many, many, people God has put in our lives here at YPWC. For those who assisted in our Christmas program, you are that one life that made all the difference in the lives of 78 families – 287 people in all.

On Christmas morning 16 families had new vacuum cleaners. One mom called to say thank you and told me, "That vacuum made my Christmas!" Two families have repaired vehicles and now have a secure way to get to work and run errands. 6 families (28 people) now are eating meals at a table instead of on the floor or on a couch. Sarah (name changed) called YPWC imploring, "Please don't buy me anything for Christmas. What I really want is warm, safe clothing and boots for my husband, who is a welder." A mishap at work destroyed his fire-resistant outdoor work gear and he was going to work in just a light jacket and sneakers. Your generous financial donations made it possible to outfit him in work boots and what was needed to keep him safe, warm and still working.

I could keep going with more stories, yet what I really want to say to you is that the joy and hope of Christmas has lasted far longer than December 25.

How can all this be measured in our eyes? It can't, but with God one life can make all the difference. Thank you to each and every one of our donors and volunteers who make our Christmas program possible. May God continue to inspire you toward acts of service, kindness and love.

~ Sr. Suzanne Thibault, C.A.
Bethany Youth Center 814-263-4177
Bethanyyouthcenter@gmail.com

Prayer and Service Connect Us to One Another

For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

~ Galatians 5:14

Through our Direct Service program YPWC provides a wide ecumenical circle of care among those who give and those who receive. Sister Therese Dush, C.A. , our spiritual guide, founded this ministry knowing we are called to serve our neighbor in need with love and compassion. She prayed and trusted that in building this mission, God would use us as His hands and feet (and strong backs and smiling faces) to serve those in need. We empower people to participate in the circle of care to connect to one another through service. It is our greatest gift, to make this opportunity to connect available to our valued volunteers and to the wonderful families and individuals we serve.

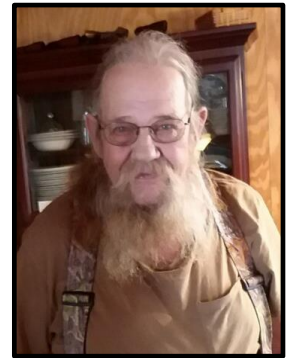
Loving your neighbor as yourself means acting with compassion. When Jesus was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" He responded with the story of the Good Samaritan. Who did Jesus say was being a neighbor? The one who had compassion.

Compassion is not simply a warm fuzzy feeling in our hearts. Compassion is a call to action. A heart that is moved by compassion cannot sit idly by while someone suffers a need. Loving your neighbor as yourself is being moved to help your neighbor in so far as you are able.

Compassionate care connects us to our neighbors and brings us into right relationship with God when we serve one another with respect and dignity.



Trapper, a neighbor dealing with multiple health issues needed help to cut and split firewood for the winter to heat his house. We connected him with Carl from the Clearfield Knights of Columbus who gladly assisted Trapper, making several trips out to his home, to work through a load of fire wood and move it to his basement for use in the woodstove. And while we were there, we noticed Trapper needed a new railing installed on his basement steps to make that trek safer. Dan who has helped with many Direct Service projects jumped in and installed the new railing.



Our Neighbor, Trapper

When we take time to participate in these efforts, it is never just a project to be checked off the list. It is always a chance to meet Jesus in our neighbor, to make a new acquaintance and learn their story. Trapper is an actual trapper, a woodsman who enjoys many outdoor activities, including trapping animals to sell the hides. His health condition set him back but hopefully just temporarily. And with Spring weather near we hope and pray he'll be back to his outdoor activities soon.

Another friend, Celeste, needed a ramp to safely access her home. Tammy, her daughter, was unable to get her mom in and out to medical appointments because Celeste was unable to negotiate the steps leading up to her door. We connected them to our team of volunteers who set about building a ramp. Celeste and Tammy were truly pleased and decorated it with lights and bows as a finishing touch. Hugs were exchanged as tears of gratitude flowed.



Celeste's Ramp

Building relationships, building friendships. When you let your heart be moved by compassion, when you step up to meet the need you see before you, God steps in and miracles, large and small, happen.

Our Volunteers - Hearts, Hands and Feet of Service



It is our mission at Bethany and YPWC to create a culture of serving others by connecting volunteers with the needs that exist in our community, especially to those that fall through the cracks of other service providers. Volunteers give their time and talent to work along side our staff in meeting the needs of the programs on our campus as well as the needs of our neighbors, striving to put God's love into action intentionally, holistically and unconditionally, remembering that we are all under His care.

With over 45 years of ministry we have had the privilege and the honor to work with thousands of amazing volunteers. We have individuals that come for a day or a weekend or on a weekly basis and some jump at the opportunity to help out anytime we call. We offer many service opportunities for individuals, groups and families.

Dan is a volunteer that visits Bethany each week to perform whatever task he is given. We asked him what role Bethany has played in his spiritual journey and why he chooses to come back week after week.

"I don't think about Bethany as something I do, but enjoy coming back each week to see the staff and lend a helping hand wherever needed. As much as I enjoy coming to retreats, the holiness of Bethany really comes out through the summer youth program and serving in the community."

Another volunteer, Julie, says that she has experienced comfort and community at Bethany during the COVID pandemic. When her hours were cut back at her job due to the virus, she relied on her volunteering at Bethany to get her up and moving and out of her apartment. She says we can count on her to continue helping out whenever we need her.

Our good friend "Irish" has been volunteering at Bethany for many years. Irish shows up to lovingly maintain our large cross on the hill, under siege by lightning strikes, peeling paint and myriad insects. His efforts keep that Holy space on top of our mountain beautifully maintained for groups and individuals to seek time and space and connection with God.

Volunteers are essential to the work we do and the goals we want to achieve at Bethany and YPWC and in our community.

We appreciate all our volunteers whether they come once a year or once a week; the work and time they give are immeasurably valuable to the individuals and families we serve as we come together to build the Kingdom of God. **If this calls to you, please join us!**



Our Good Friend, Irish

Contact Deborah Harzinski
Bethany Retreat Center 814-263-4855
Bethanyretreatcenter@gmail.com

Called to Love and Serve Our Neighbor



"Christ has no body now, but yours. No hands, no feet on earth, but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ looks compassion into the world. Yours are the feet with which Christ walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which Christ blesses the world."

~ St. Teresa of Avila

Fr. Phil Billotte, our treasured pastor and friend

"You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" ~Hebrews 7:17

Fr. Phil Billotte continues to live out his call to the priesthood over these past twelve years at Bethany Retreat Center. He was ordained to the priesthood June 4th 1966 by Bishop James E. Kearney in service to the Rochester Diocese in New York. He served as Associate Pastor and Pastor for many different parishes over his years as a diocesan priest. Taking an early retirement after a heart attack he moved back to his parents' homestead. How providential that Fr. Phil's boyhood home was located right next door to YPWC mission.

It was a natural evolution that he became a part of the community and retreat work at Bethany and YPWC. In addition to serving sacramental needs and celebrating liturgy he has filled in for area priests and, for the last 10 years, volunteered at the Moshannon Valley Correctional Center, serving the incarcerated where he was honored as the 2019 Volunteer of the Year. One of the opportunities Fr. Phil has enjoyed most over all these years has been teaching and being an influence for young people while serving at Bethany.

Often Fr. Phil challenges us in his homilies at Mass with the words, "Are You Ready? Are you ready to live out your call by living out the gospel and following our Lord Jesus?" One of his favorite scripture passages is, "Whatever you do to the least of your brothers and sisters you have done to me." (Matthew 25:40) It has been his guidepost for his entire priesthood. Thank you Fr. Phil for being our pastor and for being a priest forever.



Life Line Clearfield, 35-Year Ministry of Presence

Facing an unplanned pregnancy can be a frightening and lonely prospect. Since 1986 Life Line Clearfield has been providing much needed childbirth education, parenting support, nutrition counseling, clothing, car seats, pack and plays, baby formula and emotional support to pregnant women, mothers, and young families with nowhere else to turn. Ours is a ministry of presence and endurance.

Lisa (name changed), a 23-year-old mother of four, has been a Life Line client since 2015. Facing many struggles, she has turned to Angela Larson and Ronda Stiles at Life Line Clearfield for the support and supplies she has needed to move toward independence and self-reliance. With no spouse to help she has done her best to provide a loving home to her young children with a goal of independent living. Life Line has been there for her on many occasions providing formula, needed baby items and guidance. She recently received approval through housing assistance to seek a house (to move out of public housing) and most recently landed a job which brings her closer to her goal of independent living. Her perseverance is paying off!

We are so grateful to our many benefactors who make this ministry of life possible. We could not do this work without your help. Thank you!!

**Contact Angela Larson,
Life Line Clearfield 814-765-3225**



Young People Who Care
PO Box 129
Frenchville, PA 16836

Contact us at:

Bethany Retreat Center 814-263-4855
Bethany Youth Center 814-263-4177

Check out our website for events and updates at www.bethanyretreatcenter.org

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.” (1 John 5:14)

Because we trust God completely in this promise, we believe sincerely in the power of prayer. Whatever your circumstance, we want to pray for you. So please send us your prayer request in the enclosed envelope. We will begin praying for you as soon as we know of your need. And if you'd like someone from our community to contact you and pray with you, please indicate that.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Phone _____ Zip Code _____

Email _____

My prayer need:



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