

# Belmont Beacon

November 2017

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I have a case of church on the brain. I am not sure if I should go see a doctor or just see if it goes away or intensifies. I do not know if this condition is contagious, but I share it with you in hopes that it might be. I understand why church is on my mind and that background might be helpful to share.

Our October worship focus on the 5 *Solas* of the Protestant Reformation has stirred reflections about the church regarding those topics of "Glory to God Alone, Christ Alone, Scripture Alone, Grace Alone and Faith Alone." Are these affirmations essential for Belmont Baptist Church? What affirmations are essential for Belmont Baptist Church?

As I continue writing my thesis dissertation, I am in the middle of the biblical and theological chapter. Reflections on biblical passages from Luke 10 and Ephesians 2 along with other scriptures and readings only adds to this condition of church on the brain. The questions about the nature of church and how Belmont Baptist Church lives that out generate some answers and equally even more questions.

On the weekend of October 20-22, Mary Buckner, Mark Buckner, Jim Carpenter and Peggy Haluska used their many gifts to lead the annual Retreat for Youth and Adults with Special Needs. I hope that you will ask one of these individuals about that experience. They have an amazing story to tell.

A part of that story they have related involves the contagious spirit of love and joy that the retreat participants shared with them. We focused on "Grace Alone" while the retreat took place. One

connection that struck me between these two separate happenings is our level of surprise with grace. These retreat participants clearly express a sense of awe with each new day and a love for life. I cannot help but wonder about our level of surprise with grace in our lives or if we are trying to earn something by our own devices. Where does Belmont Baptist Church fit into this connection? During our recent Wednesday evening *CrossRoads* study about Paul, (*Which Way, Lord? Exploring Your Life's Purpose in the Journeys of Paul*) we briefly considered the church at Antioch (Acts 11-13).

The church at Antioch was instrumental in Paul's call to share Christ. Paul continued to face opposition from the Jews that wanted to kill him and intense scrutiny from the followers of Jesus who were not sure if he was to be trusted. The church at Antioch welcomed Paul as they completely trusted that God's love can transform any and all of us. Robert Fuquay, the author of *Which Way, Lord?* writes, "A church that helps people feel forgiven will always be a place folks want to go. I think Antioch was just such a place." Is Belmont Baptist just such a place where forgiveness is practiced and God's transforming love is celebrated and acknowledged?

I have attempted to share my symptoms with you regarding this case of church on the brain. Do you think that it is serious? More importantly, is it contagious?

Blessings,  
Greg



“Here and Now: Living in the Spirit”

By Henri Nouwen

What is the proper mindset for being a servant of God? Certainly many suggestions have been presented over the years. The Catholic priest, Henri Nouwen has some fascinating thoughts in his book,

“Here and Now: Living in the Spirit.”

“The compassionate life is the life of downward mobility! In a society in which upward mobility is the norm, downward mobility is not only discouraged but even considered unwise, unhealthy, or downright stupid. Who will freely choose a low paying job when a high paying job is being offered? Who will choose poverty when wealth is within reach? Who will choose a hidden place when there is a place in the limelight? Who will choose to be with one person in great need when many people could be helped during the same time? Who will choose to withdraw to a place of solitude and prayer when there are so many urgent demands made from all sides?”

“My whole life I have been surrounded by well-meaning encouragement to go higher up, and the most-used argument was: “You can do so much good there, for so many people.”

“But these voices calling me to upward mobility are completely absent from the Gospel.

Jesus says: “Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life (John 12:25). He also says: “unless you become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3).

Finally, he says: “You know that among the gentiles, the rulers lord it over them, and great men make their authority felt; among you this is not to happen. No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25-28).

“This is the way of downward mobility, the descending way of Jesus. It is the way toward the poor, the suffering, the marginal, the prisoners, the refugees, the lonely, the hungry, the dying, the tortured, and the homeless-toward all who ask for compassion. What do they have to offer? Not success, popularity or power, but the joy and peace of the children of God.”

Nouwen’s thoughts to God’s plan offer us guiding direction to stay on track. It’s so easy to get distracted in our society, but God’s servants are always here to point the way. Amen

Richard Wharam  
Deacon Chairman

### NOTES FROM MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

**We are providing and serving a breakfast on Thanksgiving morning at 9AM** to our friends at Parkview at Pantops. This is an annual mission service project and everyone is invited to participate. Last year we served over 40 residents--our hope and prayer is that we can share our love and friendship with those who may otherwise be alone on Thanksgiving.

**We will be hosting the ladies of PACEM** starting the **Saturday after Thanksgiving** and the week after that we have partnered with the congregation of All Souls allowing them the use of our facility so that they can host a week at our site. Please pray for these homeless ladies, as we share Christ's love and our call to take care of those in need. I am currently recruiting individuals to spend the night as an added support person for the staff of **PACEM**, as well as individuals or groups to provide and serve a meal.

**If you wish to serve in a mission capacity**, we are always looking for **laundry volunteers**. This commitment can be every week or every other week. It usually takes approximately 2 1/2 hours for a client to complete their wash. For the families in need that we serve, the money they save from not having to go to the laundromat can mean the difference between feeding their children and/or buying needed medication.

**The past four months, we have been providing and preparing a meal** (once a month) for the families that are staying at the Ronald McDonald House. It has been a great deal of fun for those of us who have been participating with this activity and we have been blessed by the opportunity to serve the families.

**If you would like more information about participating in any of these missions, please feel free to contact me after 5pm at 989-3458. Barbara T. Lowery**

The Properties Committee has been busy this year!

There is a new snow blower and a contract with Morris Lawn Care to clear parking lot of ice, if needed.

The windows on the back side of the laundry area need to be replaced.

We will be working on better lighting in the fellowship hall, as the choir is having difficulty reading the music.

There is to be a clean up and disposal of obsolete or recyclable items in the church. If you are aware of anything that needs to go, please contact me or a member of the Properties Committee.

Finally, Church Council is exploring the cost of the elevator construction in order to have a reliable dollar amount to work toward designating.

Please pray for our church, that we continue to do God's will as we move forward.

Blessings,

Cheryl Weston

**WMU is looking for the Cuisinart** they use in order to make delicious Brunswick Stew and Chili.

If you have borrowed the **Cuisinart** and forgotten to return to Belmont Baptist Church, please return it as soon as you can.

**This kitchen equipment is greatly missed!**

**Comcast Channel 13 will Rebroadcast the Worship Service Sunday at 7:00 pm.**



I just love the season of fall. It gives me energy and I love the colors. I must admit that the sun going to bed early is not my favorite but the crisp bright days make up for it. When Jim and I were young this was always the time to go camping and spend time outside. I love when the chimneys smell of smoke and everything smells of pumpkin and spice inside.

As much as I love to be outside a lot of time has been spent inside preparing for the new season of hymns and music for us to praise God with. I am happy to say that we are doing a cantata once again this Christmas with a full orchestra. We need to get the word out that we want singers from all over to join us. Invite everyone you know into our sanctuary for the event and to hear our songs of praise. We will be practicing on Wednesday nights during choir practice. Please join us when you can. Everyone is welcome. We will present the cantata on December 17<sup>th</sup> during regular service.

As well the music department has been busy with the afternoon band. We are up to five notes. That is a big accomplishment. They seem to be having fun in learning and many parents hang around in fellowship hall. This is a great time for members to just pop in and speak to some of these folks and invite them to service. Step out into fellowship hall and engage them in conversation. They will always talk about their children. From there, inviting them to service will be easy. How cool would it be if someday these children will be singing our cantata or playing in the orchestra accompanying the choir? The possibilities are endless.

Please pray for the young folks that are filling our church with great noises and I look forward to the day we can bless you with sweet music. Enjoy the fall weather.

Blessings,  
Peggy

BELMONT BAPTIST CHURCH  
830 Monticello Avenue  
Charlottesville, VA 22902

**My Name**

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**(Cost is \$10.00 each.)**

**(Orders must be received by Thursday, November 30, 2017.)**