

THE HISTORIC BETHANY UNION CHURCH OF CHICAGO

1750 W 103rd Street

Chicago, IL 60643

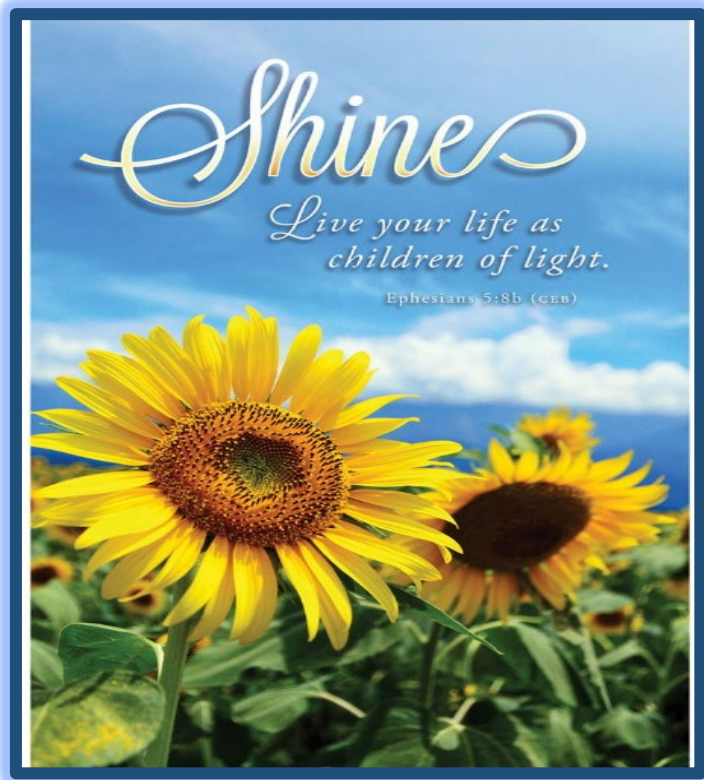
773-779-0123

Time Sensitive Materials

DO NOT DELAY

Address Correction Requested

THE UNIFIER JULY 2026



***BETHANY UNION
CHURCH OF CHICAGO***

***Worship with us
Sundays at 10:30a***

In-person

*Live on our Facebook Page or for
review on our YouTube Channel or
Website*

www.bethanyunion.com

Dear Friends in Christ,

As I reflect on our congregation's 154-year journey, I am filled with gratitude for the faithfulness of those who came before us and for the faithfulness I continue to see among you today. Through seasons of growth and seasons of challenge, through times of abundance and times of uncertainty, God has sustained this church. We may be smaller in number than in years past, but we remain rich in faith, rich in compassion, and rich in the love that binds us together as the body of Christ. Our story is not merely one of history; it is a living testimony to God's enduring presence among His people.



It is easy to become discouraged when we focus only on what has changed or what has been lost. Yet throughout Scripture, God often works through small and seemingly insignificant communities to accomplish extraordinary things. Jesus reminded His disciples that even faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains. Every prayer offered, every act of kindness shared, every hymn sung, every hand extended in welcome matters deeply in the kingdom of God. The strength of a church is not measured by attendance figures alone, but by the depth of its love, the sincerity of its faith, and its willingness to follow Christ wherever He leads.

As your pastor, I want you to know that you are loved, valued, and needed. Each person who gathers here carries a unique gift and a sacred place in this congregation's life. Let us continue to care for one another, pray for one another, and encourage one another. Let us remember that our hope rests not in our own strength but in the promise of Christ, who said, "I am with you always." The God who has guided this congregation for 154 years is not finished with us yet. May we move forward together with courage, gratitude, and hope.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Larry



GOD'S BONUS DAYS

An author writing in *Guideposts* magazine calls those nostalgic moments of memory "God's bonus days." LaVerne Sexton recalled that in her family, life's unexpected dividends — a summer rainbow, a blazing sunset, a gentle spring thaw — were invitations to set aside ordinary tasks and celebrate something special.

She remembered one breathtaking day from her childhood when the sky stretched wide and impossibly blue, as if it had no edges at all. Her father grabbed the fishing poles and called out, "Let's play hooky, hon. It's one of God's bonus days."

— Marion R. Vuilleumier, *Meditations by the Sea*

Sea



Calendar Events in July

July 4 **Independence Day 250th Anniversary**

July 5 **“They might appreciate you without you ever knowing it.”**
Communion Sunday, Congregational Meeting

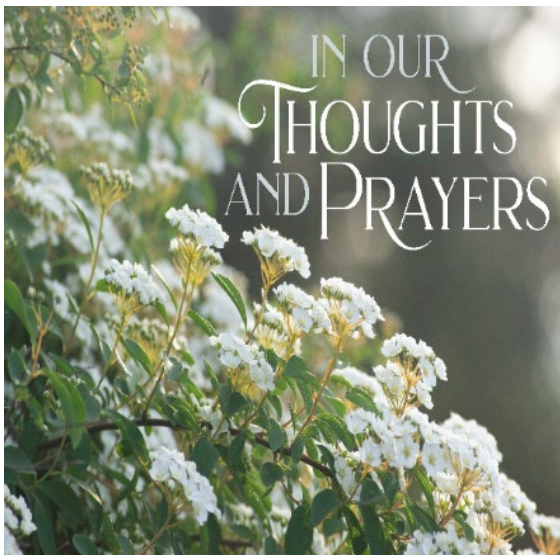
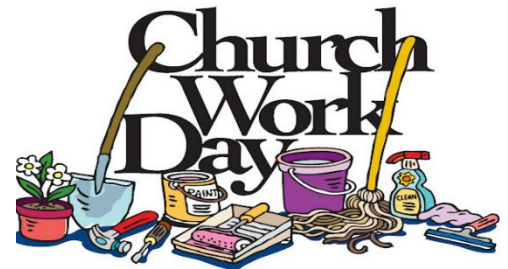


July 12 **“Thinking more clearly “**

July 18 **All Church Workday**

July 19 **“Stop expecting what isn’t real”**

July 26 **“Shifting into Life Speed “**



We pray for our Bethany Union families and friends, in their joys and in their sorrows; for peace in our families, our community, and our world; for those in need of our prayers for health, jobs, and special intentions; in thanksgiving for our many blessings; for our Country in celebration of 250 years of independence, may we, the people, value what we have achieved, and promise to make it better for one and all; for victims of abuse, addiction, hunger, homelessness, mass killings, and war.

Keep Leonard Achtenberg in your prayers; Steve Livesey passed away suddenly on June 21st.

FROM YOUR CHURCH COUNCIL CHAIR

As we celebrate the month of July, we are reminded of the many blessings God has bestowed upon us as individuals, families, and a church community. This month brings opportunities to gather with loved ones, enjoy the beauty of summer, and reflect on the freedoms we cherish.

The Fourth of July reminds us of the precious gift of freedom. As Christians, we are especially grateful for the freedom to worship, pray, and share God's love with others. As we celebrate our nation's 250th birthday, let us also remember those who have sacrificed to protect these freedoms and keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

Summer is often a season filled with vacations and busy schedules, but it is also a wonderful time to stay connected with our church family. Whether you are traveling or staying close to home, I encourage you to join us for worship—in person or online. Our church remains a place of welcome, fellowship, and spiritual growth for all.

As highlighted in a recent article in *The Unifier*, I would like to add my heartfelt thanks to everyone who generously gives their time and talents in support of our congregation. From maintaining our facilities to serving in worship and caring for one another, your dedication helps our church thrive. I would also like to extend a special thank-you to Terry for all that she does for our church. Even while working remotely, she faithfully handles countless responsibilities, and we are truly grateful for her hard work, commitment, and service.

As many of you know, we are continuing our efforts to improve our church facilities, including the planned replacement of the social hall floor. We deeply appreciate the support, prayers, and contributions that have already been received. Together, we can ensure that our church remains a welcoming and functional place for ministry, fellowship, and service for generations to come.

May God bless you and your families throughout this summer season. Let us continue to walk together in faith, hope, and love, trusting that God will guide us in all that we do.

Blessings,

Cheryl A. Diddia-Bernstein

Chair, Church Council

STAY CONNECTED THIS SUMMER “Summer schedules can be full, but staying connected matters. Be sure to check the bulletin, newsletter, and social media for updates on worship, events, and opportunities to serve. We are grateful to walk through this season together as a church family.” (Newsletter Newsletter)

Bethany Union realizes you may not be here in person for Worship each week this summer, and we pray that your travels are restful, safe, and blessed with a renewal of spirit to face the time until your next vacation. Please consider staying in touch with us each week at 10:30 a.m. Sunday Worship, either through Facebook Live or view it later through our Website – www.bethanyunion.com. Keep up with activities in the Bethany Union Church Family and community, following Facebook and our website link to the Unifier.

Keeping up with your financial commitment to Bethany Union through the Donate link on the website will enable the church to continue operating as usual. You will be able to designate how you want your donation to be used: giving, food pantry, memorials, etc. Bless you in your travels!

“We plan to continue to broadcast our worship services on Facebook Live and then move them to our website for those unable to join us in the Sanctuary. Still, seeing your smiling faces in the pews at Bethany Union Church would be so much better.” (Chuck Diddia, 2022)

THE SACRED PACE OF REST: JESUS, who often withdrew with his disciples to quiet, deserted places, understood something we easily forget transformation takes time. The richest, most life-giving compost does not form overnight. As author James Gleick observes, “You can’t hurry compost for the same reason you can’t hurry love, and you can’t hurry a soufflé. The biochemistry has its own inherent pace.” In much the same way, the most meaningful parts of life unfold slowly. Relationships deepen over years. Wisdom grows through experience. True rest cannot be rushed.

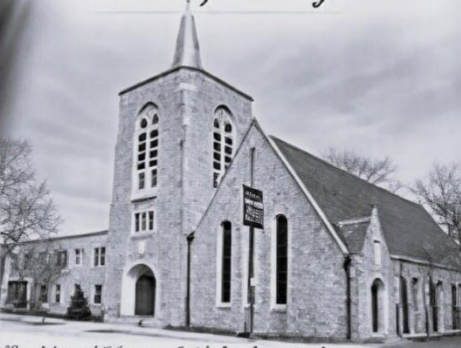
Disciples of Jesus today are invited to rediscover the value of the deserted place. It is not empty or wasted space, but sacred ground. It is where long books can be read, unhurried prayers can be offered, and deep thoughts can take root. It is where Sabbath is honored through rest, renewal, and quiet attentiveness to God. In a culture that prizes speed and productivity, stepping away may feel counterintuitive. Yet it is in these still moments that our souls are restored and made fertile for growth. The deserted place becomes a gift, shaping us into people who are grounded, attentive, and spiritually mature, ready to reenter the world with renewed strength and purpose. (Newsletter Newsletter)



A TIME OF *Healing* AT THE “UNION”

With Rev. Benedict Kelley, OSFM

Held at:
THE HISTORIC
BETHANY UNION
Church of Chicago





*“And Jesus said to him,
‘Rise and go your way;
your faith has
made you well.’”*
- St. Luke 17:19

As we journey through the difficulties of life, our faith leads us to Jesus,
seeking healing and wholeness, not just for ourselves but for the
community and society as a whole!

Join us for a time of prayer, reflection and healing as we once again
hear Jesus say:

“Go your way, your faith has made you whole.”

 DATE: AUGUST 15, 2026

 TIME: 11:00 AM

 LOCATION:
1750 W. 103rd Street
in the Sanctuary

 HANDICAP
ACCESSIBLE

*All Are
Welcome!*



COME EXPECTING HOPE, HEALING,
RENEWAL, AND THE PRESENCE OF GOD.



A SEASON OF GRATITUDE

Where do we start! So many angels stepping forward in Bethany Union's request for help!

- ✚ **Pastor Larry**, you have been an inspiration, serving the Bethany Union Church Family and community, as well as those who rely on your blessed counsel.
- ✚ **Cheryl** is truly a gifted Council Chair. She wears a lot of hats, yet she is always available to talk, advise, and share the load.
- ✚ **David Zizic and the Ensemble Choir: Linda Murphy, Maria Barwegen, Joe Lehman, and Tuesdai B. Perry**, fill our sanctuary with exquisite sounds and sacred music each week.
- ✚ **Robert Davis** has graciously agreed to help with financial issues since the untimely death of Andrew Greene. Additionally, he and **Mark Linnerud** have teamed up on activities at both the Church and Howe House to ensure things stay in working order.
- ✚ **Arlene Williams** has been a Godsend when it comes to interfacing with the bank and the government, writing checks, and translating actions to maintain the accuracy of our Church Windows financial system.
- ✚ The Dynamic Fellowship Ladies, **Nancy Diddia, Aracely Brooks, and Tammy Sloop**, Sunday after Sunday, from 'coffee and' to a full meal, ensure that fellowship is inviting, coffee is hot, and food is delicious. The other part of the team consists of the many people who stay to put the Social Hall and kitchen back in order.
- ✚ **Ophelia Carlton, Lisa, and Mario Butler-Del Rio** our liturgists.
- ✚ **Aracely and John Brooks** provide great counsel and are a resource for vendors. Most recently, they spent the day in the Garth Garden cleaning it up, planting flowers, and preparing it for Summer and guests.
- ✚ **Lory Linnerud** is quick to let the office know if things are not working right. Her attention to detail is so helpful in making corrections.
- ✚ **Margaret Walson's** coming forward to answer the office phone has made a difference in just these past couple of weeks. Response time has improved. **Lorraine Morgan** for the weekend coverage.
- ✚ **Lisa and Mario Butler-Del Rio and family** are a great support team, stepping in when the tough work needs to be done. Lisa, too, was a minute taker at the Congregational Meetings and always so responsive when asked for assistance. Mario offers great counsel and support and, when necessary, brings the muscle from the entire family!
- ✚ **Ophelia Carlton** was so helpful to the Council when she stepped in to take minutes at the Council Meetings as needed. Just because AI takes minutes does not mean her gracious service is still not needed; perhaps somewhere else?
- ✚ **Jamie Peirce** and her team have handled mailing the Unifier for the past year. She picks them up, prints the labels, picks up the stamps, and sets to folding, taping, stamping, and getting them to the mail so they can be delivered to the recipients by the first Sunday.
- ✚ **The Bethany Union Church supporters!** The ads in our bulletin, those who use our parking lot and sacred places for worship, educating our youth, healing, and empowering adults; neighbors and community projects that consider us in their planning. Many feel that not only is Bethany Union Church historic, but its beauty, convenience, and comfort keep them coming back.
- ✚ **To all who have answered Bethany Union's call for assistance, whether through prayer, physically, or financially, know how much you are loved and appreciated! Your love for and stewardship of Bethany Union Church cannot be denied.**