



Bethel Shows Hospitality to New Friends

By Erin Dye

From January 7th to 10th Bethel hosted a group from Central Christian High School in Kidron as they fulfilled credits for a mini term at Adriel. The group composed of six youth and one adult, and they spent their evenings and free time staying comfortably at the Potter's Place. This was the groups third year visiting Adriel the second week in January, but in the past Adriel had unused group homes where the volunteer group could stay. Now with Adriel's increasing census, all group homes are currently in use. Given the many connections between Adriel and Bethel, Bethel seemed to be a natural substitute as a place where the group could stay close to the school as well as stay together in one location.

Bethel's youth group took extra meas-

ures to guarantee the traveling group's comfort. Not only did they offer up their meeting space, but they dedicated an evening to cleaning and preparing the house to be occupied. The youth also wanted to personally get to know the Central Christian high schoolers, so youth and adults from both groups spent Tuesday evening together playing games.



The Central Christian group spent their days working along side the youth at Adriel during the school day, at after school programs and Adriel Live. They spent their free time journaling about their experiences and potential futures in social work and special education.

The Central Christian visitors would like to express their gratitude to Bethel for our gracious hospitality and helping to make their trip as enjoyable as possible. Adriel would also like to extend a 'Thank You' to Bethel for being a great neighbor and supporter of our youth!

“What was a memorable worship experience for you from 2012?”

Here are a few answers from a few members of the congregation,
What would be your answer?

“My most memorable worship service was our first Sunday back from Dave's sabbatical. It was like coming home. I loved worshipping with our church family again!”—Beth Maurer

“The Election Day Communion Service was meaningful in that our focus was turned to what was really important.”—Bill Barrett

“One of the most meaningful services to me this past year was the Election Day Communion Service. I felt such a unity with the community of fellow Christians.”—Linda Roth

“I always enjoy it when there is a drama during the worship service.”—Jessica Stoner

“The Minor Prophet series was very meaningful to me, especially the participation of many ‘prophet’ actors from Bethel.”—Doug Steiner

“The Christmas Eve Service—I like going to it every year. It's a tradition.”—Michael Lehman

“When Pastor Dave returned from his sabbatical, he shared the words of Jesus from Matthew 5,6, and 7. It was meaningful for me to hear these words for our time.”—Sara Ellen Stoltzfus

What I learned in College had Nothing to do with Fixing Old Cars

By Brody Robinaugh

My love for cars has been fueled by a certain red 1965 Ford Galaxie 500 2 door hardtop with a 352 cubic engine V8 and “Cruisomatic” transmission. You’ve likely heard of her, she’s my Gal, my sweetheart, my soul-mate. However, she needs a lot of love, and dad and I knew that back in 2008 when we bought her, but having a vehicle that I could have the pleasure of restoring back to its lost glory intrigued me. It intrigued me so much that dad and I found out about Ohio Technical College in Cleveland, which boasted its Classic Car Restoration program that I could get my Associates Degree and have a general understanding of the world of old car restoring. We got more information and I decided that this was where I wanted to go after I graduated high school in 2010.

What I learned in college about fixing old cars, is that it takes a lot more than 18 months of school to learn how to fix old cars. Honestly, I didn’t learn as much as I expected to about cars. I did learn a lot, and I won’t say that it wasn’t worth going to, I just had higher hopes for my car expertise.

However, the kid I was when I packed up my black truck in mid-July 2010 and headed north, was far from the man that packed up a silver truck the day before Christmas Eve, 2011, and came back home.

It seems that a lot of college students in today’s society are seeking sex, drugs, and alcohol more than a meaningful education. I stuck to my values and stayed away from reckless behavior, and tried my best to get the meaningful education. Regardless, most likely directed by God’s hand, there were three events that, while they were admittedly lapses in judgment on my part, they were effective in maturing an old teenager into a young man.

First, on Labor Day weekend of 2010, I was in the process of the changing the U-joints on my black truck. With a friend’s help, we pulled the driveshaft with the rear end jacked up. We ran into complications and would end up not being able to reinstall the driveshaft that weekend. So on Monday, before I headed back to Cleveland with dad’s truck, I decided I ought to move the truck out of the way, as it was in my parents driveway. My plan was to lower the truck, and roll it backwards slowly and under control, easy enough to do home by myself. Without thinking, I lowered the truck off the jack from behind the rear end. The truck was on enough of an incline that it would roll if not secured. It didn’t matter that the transmission was in park, as there was no driveshaft

connecting the transmission to the rear end; and someone didn’t think to hit the emergency brake or engage the front differential to keep the truck from going anywhere when the rear wheels touched the ground.

The truck rolled backwards, with me behind the back wheels. I managed to get my top half out and I found myself cradling the rear passenger tire of my F-150 in my stomach as it rolled towards my brother’s car. Even though my right arm got ran over and I got dragged over gravel for several feet, I managed to get out from under the truck and ran to get in the driver seat get the brakes before it hit the car behind it. I failed. And Jordy got a new hood. It was a stupid decision that I can hardly believe that I made. Trucks are heavy, and had things gone differently, it could’ve been the last stupid decision I’d make. But, I suffered only scratches and scrapes, and emotional shock at how stupid I had just been.

The next two events came nearly a year later in July of 2011. However, the event that happened on July 12-13, 2011, needs background that began in July of 2010. My first set of college roommates were Brody from Ohio, Adam from Arizona, Josh from North Carolina,

and Brian from Illinois. We all got along well for the first months. We had our quirks but we were friends. Adam, Josh, and I had no trouble making friends at school, but Brian was different. He was a very nice guy. He cared about his friends and was always quick to help. However, Brian had a tendency of not giving his friends space, and it caused a lot of people to stop being his friend and treat him badly. Our apartment was split up just before Thanksgiving due to “consolidation” by our housing agency. Adam and I went to one complex, Josh and Brian to another; we all four joined separate apartments.

I now had new friends, but I tried to keep Brian as my friend, as I felt like he didn’t have many left, at no fault to him. We hung out and stayed friends through the winter and spring. He didn’t get along with his second apartment, so I helped him move to his third, where he didn’t do well either. At this point, I felt that I was the only friend that he had. It didn’t stop me from beginning to feel overwhelmed by him when he would call daily to try to hang out, and when he would come over, to stay longer than my new friends appreciated. I began to ignore his phone calls and we stopped hanging out; we’d see each other at school but just in casual passing. **Continued on Page 3.**

“I believe that growing up is something that is never complete; there is always wisdom to be gained. God is the almighty though, He is ever-present and He protects us without sheltering us; never giving us more than we can handle.”

—Brody as he reflects on his challenging college experiences.

“What I learned in college” continued

Life moved on until the night of July 12th. I received a message on Facebook at about 11:00 pm from Brian’s mother, asking me to check on him. They were worried about some things he had posted on his page and were concerned about him. I was about to go to bed, so I decided I’d shoot him a text and try to talk to him. His roommates would keep him from doing anything stupid, right? He never replied, and I then discovered that he had moved out of his third apartment into one of his own, and he no longer had roommates. I got his new address and went to try to find it. I found the complex, but was unable to find his apartment. I went back to my apartment and prayed, and assured his mother that I was praying for him. I went to sleep that night not taking the situation very seriously.

When I got to school the next morning, I found out that a fellow student had taken his own life the night before. His name was Brian...from Illinois. I know that I can’t blame myself for what happened, but I can’t help but consider the meaning behind what July 12th and 13th were for the my first set of roommates. Adam’s birthday was the 12th, and mine is the 13th. Coincidence?

The way that I felt after finding out that my friend had committed suicide, is a way that I don’t want to ever feel again. Its heartbreaking to know that a mother and father buried their son, and you had many chances to prevent it. Since I graduated from college, I’ve found that I just have my small close group of friends, but that’s alright because it allows me to invest enough time in them to make sure that I’m being the best friend I can be. I feel like I get along with nearly everyone, but I want to always be in a position where whenever someone needs a friend, I can be there, even if they aren’t the most socially compatible person. I’ve realized the importance of really being there for my friends.

Upon finding out that one of them, with whom I’ve become close, had tried to hang herself years ago, but failed when the curtain rod broke, I simply told her that I was glad that it broke. The profound truth of that statement and the fact that I believe it was God speaking to her through me, is something that I don’t think I would’ve realized in high school. So possibly it was God speaking through me to her, loud enough for me to hear it as well and realize that losing Brian was a bittersweet way to become a better friend, a better Christian, and ultimately a better man.

I don’t remember the exact date, but later in July 2011, the third event occurred that influenced my college experience. On my way to our cousin’s optometry and glasses retail business in Cleveland, where I helped out to make some

money, I had to take a different route due to construction. All was well until the last car, a silver Dodge Neon, tried to make it across in front of me. I thought she wasn’t going to go, she thought her car was quick enough to get across, we both were wrong. We both suffered minor injuries, but her car was obviously totaled. My truck didn’t suffer major damage, but both airbags deployed. To replace just the airbags, it would cost about half of the value of the truck, so it was totaled as well.

I had been in one accident before, rear-ended in my first truck just before I left for college the summer before, but this one was different. I saw it coming, with the whole “everything slows down” feature. Also, it was my first airbag experience, and I was three hours from home. My wrist was sore from the airbag coming out of the steering wheel and I had the bitter smell of the airbags all over me, but it was hard to call my parents and tell them what happened, and with them not being able to come help me. Everything worked out and the truck was replaced with one that, frankly, I like better.

I hadn’t realized how many words it would take to share my experiences, but hopefully I’ll be able to briefly sum them up with how they have positively affected me as a Christian man. They were all traumatic experiences that I’m not proud of and don’t wish upon anyone. But I gained a lot of wisdom from them, beyond remembering to set my parking brake, to show my friends that I appreciate them, and to be extra cautious of other drivers on the road.

God was with me through it all. I believe that it was Him who pulled me out from under my truck and it was Him who let me suffer through losing a friend, to develop me into a better friend, and it was Him who protected me and the other driver when my F-150 and her Neon collided. It was all me, too. I had the support of my family and friends, but the experiences were mine alone and they were the first of their kind.

I believe that growing up is something that is never complete; there is always wisdom to be gained. God is the almighty though, He is ever-present and He protects us without sheltering us; never giving us more than we can handle. The time that I spent in college allowed me to develop a deep trust in God, one that I feel that I didn’t have in high school. I trusted Him and believed in Him before, it just wasn’t as vibrant as it is now. Tomorrow, I’m expecting to find a deeper relationship with Jesus as I live another day, gaining more wisdom and growing up even more.

Note from the editor: When invited to share, this is the testimony that Brody offered of how God has been working in his life. What is your testimony? How have you experienced God’s presence? What would you share?



Brody with ‘his Gal’ at the Top of Ohio Cruisers Car Show August 2011—about a year into his time at Ohio Technical College in Cleveland.

Favorite Books of the Bible

Thank you for your responses in Sunday School!

Genesis—because I like stories

Genesis & John

Genesis gives us a basic start on the Bible

Judges

Judges 6—Gideon tears up the alter to Baal and cuts down the Asherah pole to cook a cow—funny and **2 Kings 9**—Jehu comes flying in and talks attendants into throwing Jezebel out of a window—she splatters and dogs eat her-gory.

Esther—because she’s a great heroine to her country and people.

God’s responses at the end of **Job** (ch 38,39,40,41 are awesome!), **Psalms 15**, and **Genesis 3** (Leslie Beam)

Job—I like the eloquent language used in the debates

Psalms—I like all the different songs

Psalms—because there are many verses praising the Lord with voices and instruments and dance. Through all of the calamities and hardships of life we can still praise the Lord. (Mary Ann King)

Psalms—poetry speaks to me

Psalms

Psalms—words of wisdom and praise (Ken Shank)

Psalms—it has encouraging words

I do not have a favorite—do like to read **Psalms**—applies to many situations

A favorite is **Psalms**, a collection of songs and hymns full of the range of emotions of human experience. I memorized some of these as a child and can still recite them—Ps 8, 24, 100 (Marla Longenecker)

Proverbs

Proverbs—as a young person, read a chapter a day every month for years—lots of wisdom!

The 4 Gospels and Acts—(Janice Rabenstein)

Matthew—it seems like the most plainly written verses describing God’s requests of us are in Matthew

Matthew (Dean Horn)

Luke—because he tells the life of Jesus so clearly from John the Baptist through Jesus’ ministry and Ascension.

Luke—I like the Christmas story from Luke. Just coming out of Christmas that is my favorite right now.

Luke—birth of Jesus

Romans—action packed, insightful, a must read! #1 on the NY Times best seller list for many years. It will make you want to read all prequels and sequels! (Rick Norviel)

Ephesians—learning how to relate to our spouses and others in a loving way

Philippians—it’s inspiring and reminds me to “look on the bright side” (KJ Shrock)

Hebrews—a book of faith and good examples for God’s people

James, John, and Psalms—I really like all 3 of these. James is practical for everyday life. John has so much of the teachings of Jesus. Psalms deals with so many feelings. (Elaine Newcomer)

James—so practical for everyday living

James—practical teaching **James** (Chuck Buck)

James, Proverbs, Philippians—message of wisdom and encouragement

1 John—full of practical advice on living a life of love

Revelation—challenge to understand the symbols (Bill Shumaker)

Total number of times each book was mentioned

Genesis—4

Judges—2

Esther—1

Job—2

Psalms—10

Proverbs—3

The Gospels—1

Matthew—2

Luke—3

Romans—1

Ephesians—1

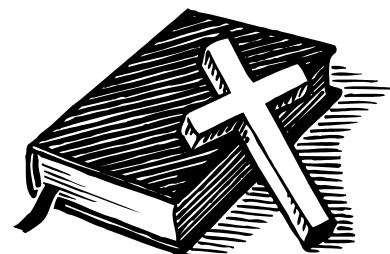
Philippians—2

Hebrews—1

James—5

1 John—1

Revelation—1



A Light in the Darkness

By Pastor Rick Stoner

The youth got into the Christmas spirit this year by decorating the youth house. This was all part of our Anabaptism and Advent miniseries, where we tied certain symbols of Advent and Christmas to the core themes of Anabaptism. One theme that we focused in on was light. For this theme we put up lights inside and outside of the youth house. After that we thought about the power of the symbol of light, especially in relation to the season of Advent.

The main text that we looked at in relation to this theme was John 1:1-9. In this text John talks about how the light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood, or overcome, it (v.5). This verse provides us with two great themes when it comes to the mission of the church. First, the light cannot be overcome by the darkness. This seems fairly obvious but how many times do we think that we have to take a defensive stance when it comes to engaging our culture. When Peter makes his proclamation that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus responds by stating that the gates of hell will not stop the church! Now unless we enter into some weird Monty Python world, gates are not an offensive weapon, so we need to be shining the light into the darkness because the darkness cannot stop the light. Therefore when we think about the darkness not overcoming the light we need to know that we have the power to shake up our culture because the light changes the landscape of society

Additionally, the darkness cannot understand the light. The darkness simply cannot comprehend the light. The darkness of the world only sees the light as foolishness and who can blame the darkness for this. The way of the light must seem just ridiculous. Empowering the lowly? Distributing wealth? Loving enemies? Reconciling instead of walking away from each other? All these things might seem foolish to the darkness. And, if we are honest with ourselves, we might think the darkness is right. These things don't seem practical or they might seem difficult for growth. Yet, in the end they are signs of the kingdom and serve to expose the brokenness of the world around us. So, the light might not be practical but we are not called to be practical, are we?

So, the beauty that breaks forth in Advent is the fact that light has burst into the world. This is a light that the darkness around us cannot overcome through any physical means. It cannot drag it down or destroy it through any power of its own. But neither can it understand or comprehend the light. To the darkness the light is simply foolishness. It's not practical. It cannot possibly "work." Yet, the light shines into the darkness and exposes its false promises and empty dreams. It tears away the glimmer façade and shows the ugliness of the darkness. The light changes the world around it! And the most amazing thing is that the world is longing for the light and we cannot keep it to ourselves!

What is MDT?

By Mary Newcomer

The Ministry Development Team (MDT) has 8 members from around Ohio whose job is to respond to congregational needs, develop programs, conduct studies & surveys, create Resource Teams, evaluate program, and reviews and forwards an annual spending plan.

MDT is chaired by the Assistant Moderator of Ohio Conference, Norma Duerksen. Also in attendance at our meetings: Moderator Marion Beyeler, Conference Minister Tom Kauffman, the 3 Regional Pastors - Matt Hamsher, Ralph Reinford, and Wanda Stopher, Stewardship Ministry Chairperson Lois Bontrager, and staff persons Sherah-Leigh Gerber, Judy King and Ann Leaman.

The concerns and ideas MDT works with come from the Regional Pastors as they meet with pastors, church leaders, and frequently through pastor/peer groups. Table-talk groups at ACA are another good source for ideas and con-

cerns. MDT then takes all of these ideas/concerns, prioritizes them, discusses them, fleshes them out, and assigns leaders to carry them out.

The result is seminars, workshops, and retreats that are offered to all of us in Ohio Conference which address the ideas and concerns received. A first-time youth event offered at Bluffton last year was in response to churches in our conference who felt they cannot afford to send their youth to the large bi-annual conventions and wanted an alternative option they can afford. This event was successful and will continue to be offered in the off-year of the larger conventions. MDT also disperses grants when funding is available, using the ideas expressed at ACA.



Note from the editor: Bethel hosted the January 9th MDT meeting. Thanks to all who assisted with this.

What is Organic Church?

By Pastor Dave Maurer

Now a days, it isn't uncommon when grocery shopping to find quite a selection of "organic" products. In fact, Beth was excited to learn that Aldi's is now branching out in this direction as well. The organic options often cost a little more; but they come with assurances of what was, or more often perhaps what was not, used in the growing/making of that product. Along with this comes the understood assumption that the organic product will be better for you than that which is not certified organic.

After sharing a chapter of the book [Organic Church: growing faith where life happens](#) by Neil Cole, Administrative Council decided to spend the next five weeks reading and discussing the rest of the book on Sundays after worship. Everyone is invited to read this book and join in the discussion. The congregation is also invited to be in prayer for leadership as we continue to discern our congregational vision and structure.

But you may be wondering, "What does 'organic' have to do with church." When we apply the term "organic" to describe a type of church, we can draw some parallels to its use as it applies to food. The Organic church does not have additives or preservatives. It is simply about Jesus and the movement of the Holy Spirit. It is also something that grows naturally. It is not forced or about getting someone into the church building, but rather about engaging people in everyday life. And as organic food is counter-cultural to mainstream food practices so the organic church is counter-cultural to the mainstream church. In fact, it is not about growing the church so much as it is about spreading gospel seeds.

The reality is that our culture is shifting from a time in which the church was central to a time in which the

church is on the margins. We experience this in a number of ways from people's schedules and priorities to declining worship attendance. And we face the reality that while people by in large are not looking to come to a church, they are interested in matters of faith. "Modern pollsters tell us that a large number of those who are not Christians are indeed interested in Christ but not in attending church." How then do we engage hungry people with the gospel when they are unlikely to come to church to receive it?

Cole suggests that we should shift our focus from getting people into church buildings to taking the gospel out to the people. "The Great Commission says that we are to 'go into all the world,' but we've turned the whole thing around and made it 'come to us and hear our

message.'" Cole goes on to write that "Instead of bringing people to church so that we can then bring them to Christ, let's bring Christ to people where they live. We may find that a new church will grow out of such an enterprise, a church that is more centered in life and the workplace, where the Gospel is supposed to make a difference."

The purpose of Bethel is "to experience and extend the gracious rule of God." Perhaps, the way that we carry out this vision is less about getting people in our doors and more about planting gospel seeds in their lives where they live. Perhaps, each one of us is a missionary that God has called to evangelize those that we meet in our everyday lives. Perhaps, this could be the beginning of a new movement of the spirit in our community that starts with us.

[1 Organic Church](#) Neil Cole pg. xxii

[2 Organic Church](#) Neil Cole pg. xxvi

[3 Organic Church](#) Neil Cole pg. xxvi

Bethel's Purpose Statement "...to experience and extend the gracious rule of God."

January and February Wedding Anniversaries

January 14, 1966 – Nellie & Dick Lindemer
January 16, 1965 – Jeannette & Jim Hostetler
January 23, 1948 – Ruth & Jack Yoder
January 25, 1980 – Deanna & Mark Kauffman
February 3, 1985 – Jeff & Terri Steiner
February 9, 1969 – Paul & Linda Hostetler
February 15, 1975 – Ed & Kim Lehman
February 16, 1997 – Lyle & Mary Ann Pratt

January Birthdays

5 – Chuck Swartz
8 – Bill Barrett
11 – Bridget Early
14 – Steve Rabenstein
19 – Kathi Robinaugh
19 – Tara Sanford
21 – Trace Robinaugh
22 – Jeanette (Ken) Hostetler
26 – Donna Risner
26 – Wanda Shumaker
31 – Pat Yoder

February Birthdays

1 Paul Harshbarger
1 Royce Link
6 Nellie Lindemer
8 Tim Lehman
9 Roy Byler
11 Dennis Showalter
17 Lori Lehman
27 Rodney Graber
27 Donna Lehman

Remembering the Days of Yore

By Donna Lehman, Bethel Historian

Winter is here again, and who knows what to expect of winter in Ohio? Anyone that was living in 1978 (35YEARS AGO), remembers the '78 blizzard. (Well, maybe you don't if you were less than 3 years old!*) Young people and teachers who were in school remember-10 days with no school that January!

But, there are more heart felt memories than winter snowstorms, and they have to do with beloved brothers and sisters who were so active in our Church, but are now in heavenly realms. It was December 18, 1987 (25 YEARS AGO), that our dear James Steiner lost his life when he was out for an early morning jog. Jim was a devoted family man (father of 4-sons, husband of Mary Psolla) and Physician involved in Mary Rutan's Emergency Medical Department and had done overseas medical/missions work. Here at Bethel, Jim took responsibility as Church Chairperson as needed, and was on the committee responsible for the new South wing of the church that was built. In his spare time, Jim could be found in the basement, painting in the new fellowship room or working in his garden.

Then 15 YEARS AGO, January 1998, Bethel lost two valued members. Cindy King (January 9,1998) and Loren King

(January 16, 1998). Cindy, after a fight with cancer. She was a sweet mother of 6 children, in planning activities for children; such as Halloween activities at the church, rather than trick or treating. Unlike the aforementioned, Loren lived to age 91; and because of that, he had many years to be active in the church and community and father to his 6 children. In his day, churches had 'Deacons,' who filled in as needed for the ministers, and in his year, he filled in during pastoral transitions. Loren has been the Administrator of the Orphan's Home, then became the owner/manager of a family feed mill which we know today as King Feed. He also was involved with the Gideons and helping to plant churches in various areas. Former Pastor Duane Beck said of Loren, "He was a solid rock."

On a different note, in that winter of 1998, two Bethel persons were serving on Mercy Ship duties. Shelly Roth was on a ship that went to Guatemala and Harry Graber was on a ship to Benin.

As years go by, we realize the importance of Church in our lives; a Fellowship of Believers.

***Editor's Note:** like our pastor for example :)

Bethel/Oak Grove Mennonite Women

By Donna Lehman, MW Secretary

Our November and December meetings were well attended (average 26!) And, why not? We always have great meals and time to share together. At our November meeting, we had a soup meal with all the trimmings and for December, a brunch with those yummy breakfast casseroles. Thanks to hostesses for each meal, along with their seasonal table decorations.

For our devotions, we have been looking at verses that Mary Psolla has picked out to give input. In November we looked at 'Stability and Steadfastness,' and were reminded of the verse in Isaiah 7:9, "If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will

not stand at all." Others gave some examples of those who were good examples of standing firm. For our Christmas devotional time, we shared in various Christmas memories.

A highlight of our December meeting was decorating Christmas cookies. Jan, Mary Psolla and Kyle had baked 400 cookies which needed to be iced/decorated. So, a group gathered in the kitchen and did just that! Snow-Homework Help, Adriel, MacO-Chee and shut-ins. (Oh yes, even those in attendance even got a take-home treat!) Work completed: 3 comforters, 4 health kits, 2 newborn kits, and 400 cookies!

Bethel Mennonite Church

416 Washington St.
PO Box 549
West Liberty, OH 43357

Email Addresses:
Pastor Dave Maurer
bethelpastor@2access.net

Pastor Rick Stoner
bethelyp@2access.net

Administrative Assistant,
Erin Dye
secretary@2access.net

We're on the web!
Check out:
bethelchurchwl.org



Purpose of our Newsletter

Its purpose is three-fold:

- Inform** the church about events
- Acquaint** persons who attend Bethel with each other
- Inspire** us to Christ-like living

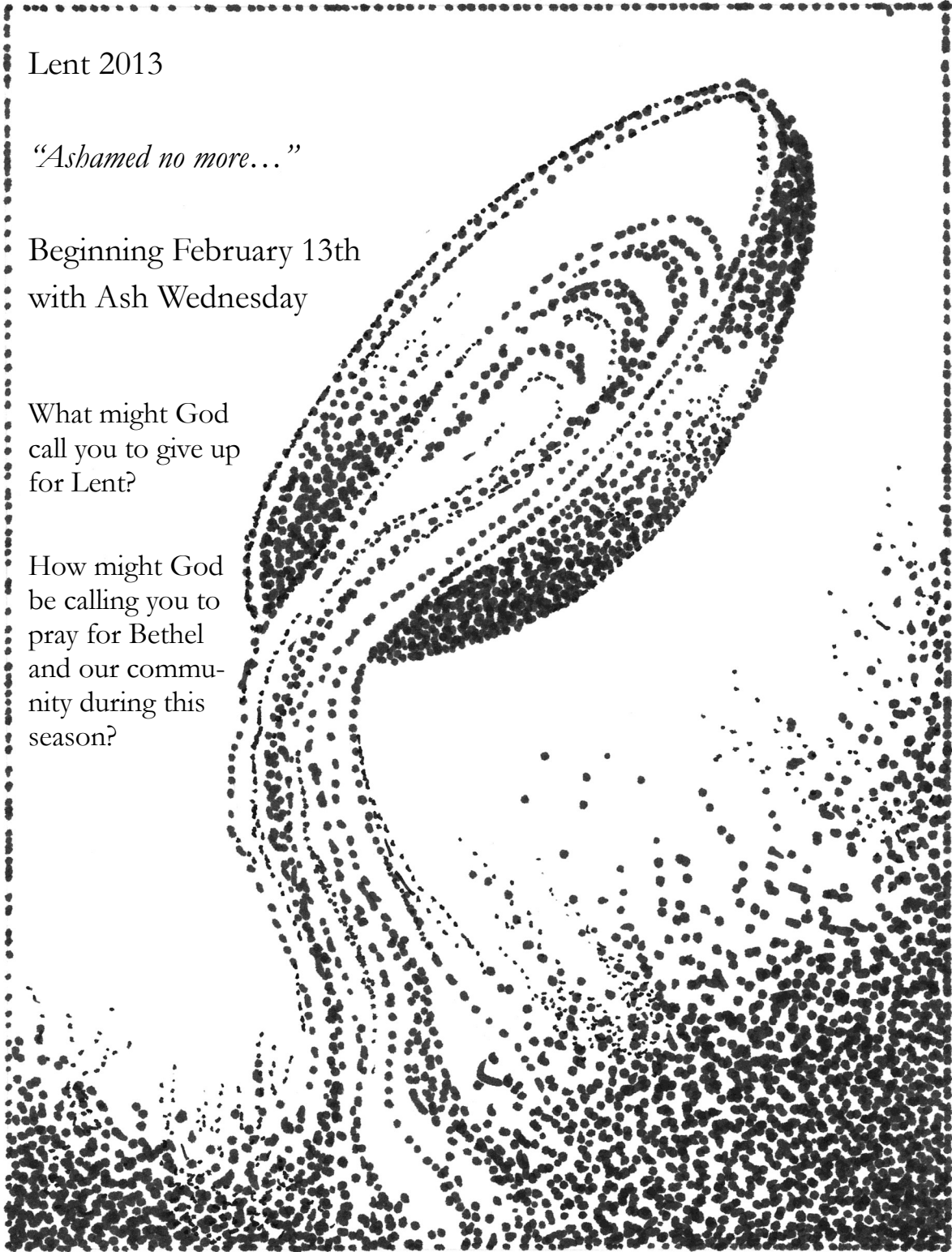
Lent 2013

"Ashamed no more..."

Beginning February 13th
with Ash Wednesday

What might God
call you to give up
for Lent?

How might God
be calling you to
pray for Bethel
and our commu-
nity during this
season?



Lent 1

Milk and Honey

Ch. Allie

