

A photograph of the Bethany Retreat Center, a large stone building with a gabled roof, surrounded by a lush green lawn and trees with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of orange, red, and yellow. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

2020 Fall Newsletter

God is Spoken of Here

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

Lord You send forth Your spirit and You renew the face of the earth. - Psalm 104

Around every corner over the last 6 months Christ has continued to lead us and send us bountiful blessings. In the midst of cancelling our entire summer youth program, which allows us to provide direct service to those most in need in our area, 6 young men agreed to self-isolate so they could come live at the retreat center and engage in outdoor service projects in a way that provided safety and allowed us to multiply those bountiful blessings.

This year's blueberries were bountiful as well and provided an opportunity for a safe activity that brought community together and allowed us to serve and laugh and harvest. Our lovely labyrinth gave us a starting point for learning how to offer retreats in the midst of the pandemic. Using much of our 150-acre retreat center grounds is giving us an opportunity to be a place of deep renewal and continued spiritual direction.

We've been delivering food, pounding nails, scraping decks, and spreading compassion and connection often in the midst of loss of hope and loneliness. The increased need for connection to others during this pandemic is well-studied and well-documented. At YPWC we remember that connecting to one another is connecting to Christ and is, in this way, deepening our relationship with God for so many.

May His blessings rain down on you.

~ Doug Laplante

Youth Ministry is Zooming!

Sr. Suzanne Thibault is leading the way in technology and (literally) zooming her way into parish communities developing and facilitating on-line virtual youth retreats incorporating process and reflection materials between sessions, bringing confirmation candidates and their sponsors together to work through and explore the faith journey as a team. The first retreat is entitled "Baptized to be God's Witness as Priest, Prophet and King." It will provide an opportunity to explore the connection of Baptism and Confirmation as well as the topic of growing in the Catholic faith beyond Confirmation. Since 1987 Sr. Suzanne has been bringing the faith journey alive and making it relevant to today. For more information contact Sr Suzanne at bethanyyouthcenter@gmail.com

Summer Service Success in 2020

Direct service gets it done!

This year looked very different at Bethany Retreat Youth Center with Covid-19 curtailing our regular summer program of parish groups, college groups and families (approximately 200-250 people) taking part in social justice outreach serving the



Our Summer Staff

Mike Slanga, Chris Beran, Charlie Saggese, Cory Pius, Sr. Suzanne Thibault, Tom Whiteford, Aidan Kerlin, (Jason Hahn, not pictured)

marginalized of Clearfield County. But God made a way! He sent us 6 young men through the AmeriCorps Service program, 5 of whom are current seminarians with the Erie or Greensburg Diocese, to live and work with us and go out and serve friends and neighbors in need. We served 52 families in need of various outdoor service projects ranging from house painting, wheelchair ramp construction, small home repair, yard clean-up, gutter cleaning, gardening and lawn maintenance.

Ramping up service

Gary M. is a disabled veteran who was in great need of wheelchair ramp access to his home. Gary sought help from several organizations but was denied because of the nature of the job site. The task

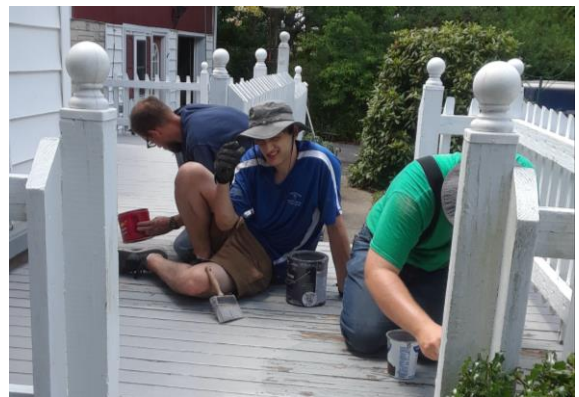


Completed ramp project

required manually removing significant amounts of dirt to ready the site to receive an extensive ramp that led from Gary's door, up the side of his house, turning 180 degrees and terminating at the front sidewalk. In many ways, YPWC was Gary's last resort. And although the job site did indeed pose many challenges, the YPWC summer staff, along with several volunteers, completed the ramp in about 3 weeks. This ramp has significantly changed Gary's life for the better. Many thanks to our entire summer staff as well as Dan Riley, Jim Maund, Darrell Meyers, John Farr and fellow volunteers from Habitat for Humanity.

Attention to the details

Kathy M. is a lovely widow who contacted YPWC in need of help scraping and painting her front and back decks. Our team was happy to oblige and earned great appreciation from Kathy with their kind, friendly manners and attention to the details.



Doug, Jason and Tom painting Kathy's deck

Trustworthy for the task

Peggy C., an endearing woman who grew up and raised her family in this area, is recently widowed and recovering from hip surgery. She contacted YPWC needing help tending to her flower beds, trimming bushes, mowing grass and painting her fence and oil tank. She is a lovely neighbor with many stories to share. She was looking for some trustworthy help to aid with her outdoor tasks and she found it in our genuinely compassionate and capable summer staff volunteers.

Walking the Labyrinth. What a Gift!

In June, around the time of the Summer Solstice, Carmel Stabley, a sensitive, knowledgeable teacher, introduced the idea of praying with the body, and the value of walking the labyrinth at Bethany Retreat Center.

I practice Centering Prayer daily, but had little understanding of the power and healing potential of the labyrinth. With Carmel's guidance, I learned some of the history of labyrinths, and why they are such powerful tools for prayer. One of the most important things Carmel did for me was to give permission to walk the labyrinth as I needed to, or as the Spirit moved me at any given time. She said, "There is no one way to walk a labyrinth."

Carmel prepared us for our walk by asking us to set an intention, then journaling before and after our walk. By choosing an intention, and solidifying it by writing it on paper, I was able to let go of expectations and let the Spirit speak to my heart. What a gift! Carmel also asked us to consider what makes a space sacred. Although I have yet to answer that question, I have spent considerable time pondering it since.

When I came home, I knew that I had to build a labyrinth. There's a space in the forest just to the north of our house that I have considered for years. I didn't know if it was a sacred space but it felt right for this particular endeavor. It didn't take long for me to realize that the exercise of gathering stones and putting them in place was a prayer. This prayer is one of patience, humility, and perseverance. This is not something I will finish in a season. But every time I work on it, I learn something about myself and about the people who help. And I think our coming together is the element that makes the space sacred. When it's finished, those who come to our forest to walk the labyrinth and pray, will truly make this a sacred space.

-Sandy Trimble shared this reflection after walking our labyrinth (pictured here)

Bountiful Blueberries

We had a wonderful crop of blueberries this season and Sr. Ruth Ann Madera guided us in all the practicalities and ministry of this precious bounty. We offered "Pick Your Own" to the public which proved to be very rewarding for individuals and families. It was an especially safe opportunity for people to enjoy nature, be in a peaceful environment and have some nutritious berries to take home. We received a note from one family saying, "**Thank you so much! This is a wonderful and affordable family tradition.**" A huge thank you to the volunteers who helped us pick and sort the blueberries for the orders we filled – Leona Davis, Diann Westrick and Dennis Garmont. We plan on making blueberry jam with the berries we have frozen that will be available for sale soon.



Life Line Pregnancy & Infant Services is meeting the need

Angela Larson and Ronda Stiles have been keeping our Clearfield Life Line office open and accessible to expectant mothers and families with infants during these difficult times. Life Line has been adapting and making the necessary changes to help families get the vital counseling and items that they need through phone counseling, video conferencing, or meeting and talking with them in the parking lot while maintaining social distance.

"When Clearfield County moved to the red phase, we handed out many cans of emergency formula and diapers to clients who had no where else to turn. We began brainstorming how we could still counsel with no face to face office visits. When we moved into the yellow phase, we had all the right tools in place to be available to our clients. Since transitioning from yellow to green we have served 110 clients with 36 of them being new to our services. And just since the middle of June, we have given out 50 convertible car seats, with another order already placed for more. We are so thankful to all the benefactors who support the Life Line ministry. We would not be able to do what we do without all of you!"

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



Young People Who Care
PO Box 129
Frenchville, PA 16836

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

YPWC provides a wide ecumenical circle of care among those who give and those who receive, where the exchange of culture, education and training empower individuals and groups. While adapting to changing times and needs, prayer, simplicity, hospitality and service remain constant characteristics of Young People Who Care, Inc.

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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

Prayer is one of the core characteristics of YPWC. We lift up the intentions of our benefactors at daily morning Mass. What prayer intention would you have?

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Phone _____ Zip Code _____
Email _____

I would like my donation to go towards:

- Where it is needed most
- Life Line Pregnancy and Infant Services
- Direct Services to those in need
- Bethany Adult Retreat Scholarships
- Anawim Religious Community
- Youth Programs