

**THE NEWSLETTER OF
GULF BEACH
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
271 S. HWY. 79
PANAMA CITY BEACH,
FL 32413**

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Find us on the Web at:

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gulfbeachpres@gmail.com

Liz's email:

lizpinkchurch@hotmail.com

Pastor's Email:

gbpcpastor@gmail.com



Vision Statement:

**"Transforming Lives by the Love of Christ Jesus
through Witness, Mission, and Evangelism."**

BEACH TIDINGS

THE NEWSLETTER OF GULF BEACH PRESBYTERIAN

NOVEMBER 2015

Special points of interest:

- Fall Cover dish Picnic
- Journey of Faith, continued
- From the Pastor's Pen
- Ministry update
- Calendar

Articles for the Newsletter can be email to lizpinkchurch@hotmail.com or leave it in the Newsletter Box in the church office. Articles must be received by the 15th of the month.

Sunday School

9:00AM

Coffee and

Donuts

9:45AM

Sunday

Worship

Time

10:15 AM

Last Fall Picnic

There will be a potluck picnic lunch immediately following services on November 1st. Our Grill Master Doug Gilmore will be preparing a Fall Surprise. Bring a side dish to share and come and enjoy the food and fellowship!

Covered dishes can be brought before church and left in the walk-in cooler in Gulf Treat. Food will be set-up in Gulf Treat after worship and you can choose to eat inside or out.

Turn your clocks back Saturday, Oct. 31st

Gulf Beach Presbyterian Church

Rev. Bonnie Wilkins
Pastor/Head of Staff

STAFF

Amanda Matthews-
Accompanist/ Choir Director

Liz Creswell –
Bookkeeper/
Admin. Assistant

SESSION

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Rev. Bonnie Wilkins– **Moderator**
870-415-2082
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JOURNEY OF FAITH continued

THE WAR WITH RUSSIA

BACKGROUND:

I was born and raised in Germany in 1937, while Hitler was in power. World War II had started for Germany in 1939. The Nazis had taken over all of Germany and were running not only the government but all aspects of our society. During the course of this war we were living in Gottwollshausen, a small village in Southern Germany on the outskirts of Schwaebisch Hall, near Stuttgart.

START OF THE WAR ON THE EASTERN FRONT:

Hitler and Stalin, both ruthless dictators, had made a mutual non-aggression pact prior to Hitler's takeover of Poland. But neither dictator trusted the other one. And rightfully so, because Hitler, emboldened by his successes in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, had already made plans to attack Russia.

In March, 1941, Hitler was getting ready to march into Russia. He told his generals that no holds would be barred in the taking of Russia; that this was a struggle of ideologies and racial differences that would have to be conducted with unprecedented, unmerciful, and unrelenting harshness. *The commissars of Russia are the bearers of ideologies directly opposed to National Socialism. Therefore, the commissars must all be liquidated.*

In June of 1941, Hitler proceeded to march into Russia, and both Germany and its ally, Italy, declared war on Russia. Germany's fully mechanized armies crossed the Niemen and various other rivers in blitzkrieg fashion and struck deeply into Russia. The Red Army was totally surprised along the entire front even though there had been warning signs all along.

The Soviets didn't even blow up the first bridges, and so the Germans readily crossed all the rivers. Along the entire border, the Russian Army was not prepared for war, and thus, they were overpowered before they could get organized. Many hundreds of Russian planes were sitting ducks on the airfields and were destroyed without warning. Within a week thousands of prisoners were taken and entire divisions of the Russian army were swiftly encircled and annihilated.

Germany's early military successes in Russia were so impressive that, by the fall of 1941, Hitler believed that Russia was finished as a military power. So great was the German army's progress along the entire front, from the Baltic to the Black

Sea, that a bare three weeks after the invasion had begun, Hitler issued an order that the strength of his Eastern army could be reduced. He disbanded forty infantry divisions, intending to utilize this additional manpower in the war industry at home.

Hitler evidently had not learned the lesson of Napoleon's invasion of Russia. Soon the autumn rains turned the Russian roads into mud, and then winter came with its extreme cold and snow. The German army was ill prepared for a prolonged war with Russia and its vast expanses in territory and its extremely cold winters. The German soldiers had entered Russia in their summer uniforms, since Hitler expected Russia's collapse before winter. On the march to Moscow, however, the roads turned into quagmires, and the motorized German army was stuck in the mud. Winter brought heavy snows and sub-zero temperatures all along the Eastern front; and the German soldiers, ill equipped for such weather, experienced severe cases of frostbite. The troops needed heavy boots and wool socks but none were available. At minus 30 degrees Fahrenheit the tank engines wouldn't start and the troops had to build fires underneath them. Even fuel was freezing and oil became too viscous for proper lubrication. Machine guns were no longer able to fire, and the German 37-millimeter antitank guns were ineffective against the superior heavily armored Russian T-34 tanks.

The Russians, of course, took this opportunity to regroup and counterattack.

OUR FATHER'S JOURNEY OF FAITH:

As mentioned in a previous *Journey of Faith* story, our father was drafted into the German army and sent to the Russian front in the spring of 1942, since he publicly refused to renounce his faith in Jesus Christ. His infantry unit proceeded to move through Hungary and Romania, on their way to the Black Sea.

Mama had a long history of insomnia. She also had a psychic streak in her personality. One night Mama jumped out of bed, all excited, and told my brother, Helmut, and me that she just heard a gunshot very close to her ear. We had learned over the years that Mama's odd nighttime behavior generally had some kind of real life meaning. So we recorded the date and time. A couple of weeks later, we received a letter from our father, relating that he was on guard duty somewhere in Romania and that a sniper fired a shot right by his ear.

In further correspondence my parents verified that the date and time matched Mama's nighttime experience.

Papa's infantry unit fought their way to the Black Sea and the Grim Peninsula to a city by the name of Sevastopol. He and his unit were involved in battles with the Russians along the way. On the Grim Peninsula, his unit was encircled by a Russian battalion, but somehow, Papa's unit fought their way out. There were many casualties, and a number of German soldiers were injured, including my Dad; but as was the practice of the German army in those days, the injured were merely patched up and had to keep going. Our Papa kept going, believing each and every day that God would strengthen and help him. He prayed daily the Isaiah 41:10 prayer (which our Mama also prayed): *Do not fear for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous hand.* He also prayed for us – he told us so in his letters.

Beyond that, unfortunately, we have only scant information on our father's whereabouts in Russia for the next three years. One of the reasons for this was that German soldiers were not permitted to give a location in their letters, only a date, for security reasons. Our Mama had put

up a large map of Russia and Eastern Europe on our living room wall, in addition to the world map. We tried to follow Papa's movements in Russia on that map and inserted locator pins to show his whereabouts as best we could determine from hints in his letters.

One of the many letters he sent to us kids was to my brother Helmut:

My dear little Helmut,

Today you shall receive a letter from me, addressed to you alone. You have drawn so many neat little pictures for me; all of them were great and brought me much joy. I see that you still have Kohlenferien (time off from school due to the coal shortage). You might as well enjoy it while you can! Your dear Mama has told me that you're being a good boy and that you're not fighting with your brother Gerhard. I'm very pleased about that.

Now your Papa has been gone such a long time, and I have no idea when I'll be able to come home on leave. Every day I think of you, my dear Helmut; and every evening I feel happy that you are sleeping so well in my bed! Each day I ask our dear Savior to guide you and help you to grow up, to become a good, strong, and capable man, and that He will protect you until I'm allowed to come home.

*With tender greetings and a kiss,
From your Papa, who loves you dearly.*

The complete story of my World War II experiences, including a history of the entire war of Germany vs. Russia on the Eastern front, and Germany vs. the Allied forces on the Western front, is contained in my book titled ***World War II Through The Eyes of a German Child***. This book was published by Xlibris in 2011 and is available directly from me in paperback form.

Reinhold (Ron) Pflugfelder,

Member of Gulf Beach Presbyterian Church in Panama City Beach, Florida



2015-16 Confirmation Class:

A 9-week confirmation class, We Believe: Professing Our Faith, will be offered by Pastor Bonnie to our youth in grades 7-12. The Confirmation Class will meet on Sunday's from 11:30-1p. We will talk, study, and eat lunch together (bring a brown bag lunch with you). Confirmation students will also do a service project and lead a worship service together. Our class schedule is: Nov. 8, 15, 22; Dec. 6, 13, 20; Jan. 3, 10, 17.



Amazing Grace: Trusting God with our future.

Jesus answered his disciples, “*Have faith in God.*” (Mark 11:22)

Finances are tight. Giving is down over previous years and months. Our membership is not what it once was but it is growing, thanks be to God! We have been blessed with new people, new opportunities for healthy and creative change, and we have a new, God given vision. “Can This Church Be Saved?” God knows

all the possible answers to that question. Our experience of God and our way of faith says to trust that “Yes” will be God’s answer over and over again.

We must come into each new day as a congregation, even in the difficult or unsure times, in the times of waiting, feeling renewed and even re-invigorated about the present and the future. We can do this when we remember how faithful and active God has been and continues to be to the little pink church. All the while we also have to challenge ourselves to remember the past and be more mindful of Christ in the present moment as we “*Have faith in God.*”

The Session will soon begin to plan and finalize a budget for 2016. Each of us need to prayerfully consider our stewardship pledge to the operation, ministry, and mission of this church for another year. Even with the sale of the property (pending), it’s going to be a challenge for us to maintain ourselves as the church we have always been. It’s going to be a challenge to meet our obligations.

A challenging question we need to ask ourselves is “Are we looking through our vision or God’s vision of what it looks like and means to be Gulf Beach Presbyterian Church, today and into the future?” Whose vision are we committed to? God’s vision can be very challenging and sometimes downright unimaginable through our own perspective. Hearing the challenges of discipleship, Jesus followers asked, “...*then, who can be saved?*” We too are asking: “*Can this church be saved?*”

As a congregation, I believe we are always being challenged to follow Jesus at all costs, to the places where there is life for us. That means we may be challenged to give up the things we hold-tight to. Things like our understandings about what a church must look like, how a church must function, who should be here, who should lead and serve, what we can and can not do with or without. These things are just like the possessions we value, accumulate, and hold on to in our own lives—things that sometimes get in the way of holding on to God’s vision.

I believe this is a time in our church’s life where we are being asked to “let-go” in order to claim and embrace God’s new way, new relationships, a new understanding of church and congregational life. This is what God longs to place in our head, heart, and hands. But, God cannot fill us if we are already full. That means we will have to “clean house”

and empty-out places within us to make spiritual room where God's possibilities can be realized through us. We are being challenged to trust in God's vision and God's possibilities for who we are, who we can be, and where we will go from this point forward—that is, if we trust, listen, and follow Jesus.

Salvation and life come by God's hand alone. We cannot make things happen on our own that truly reflect God's Kingdom. The "Message" translation of the Bible paraphrases Jesus' words to his disciples who wondered if anyone could be saved in this way: Jesus said, *"...no chance at all if you think you can pull it off by yourself. But, every chance in the world if you let God do it."*

I am both excited and challenged by what lies ahead for us as a congregation. I believe that God believes in us. God loves us. Jesus loves you. Jesus recognizes our faithfulness and the Spirit empowers us to respond in faith and love. Believe that God can do anything He wants with this church, anything God wants with your life, with our life together. Are you willing to trust God with your whole heart and soul and mind and strength? Will you trust God with the life of this church?

Remember the saving act of God's grace through Jesus Christ, your Lord and Savior. Pledge yourself to live and to love and to serve like you believe in it! Make a stewardship pledge to this church that shows you believe and trust in God's saving grace. Can we be saved? The Word of God says: *"For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."* Let this be our shared cry and prayer of faith in God's amazing grace in the weeks and months to come. Trust and obey. There is no other way!

In Christ' service,

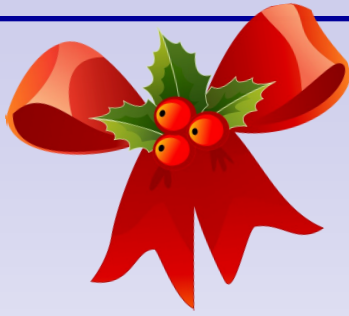
Pastor Bonnie Wilkins

870-415-2082

gbpcpastor@gmail.com



Turn your clocks back Saturday, Oct. 31st



Up-Coming Events in December

Saturday, Dec. 5th– Shepherding Team neighborhood canvas/
community outreach

Sunday, Dec. 6th– Church Christmas Lunch after worship

Monday, Dec. 7th– 7:00PM Tree lighting at Frank Brown Park

Saturday, Dec. 12th– Shepherding Team neighborhood canvas/community outreach

Thursday, Dec. 24th– 6:00 PM Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Pastor's Advent Sermon Series

A Journey in God's Time and Place"

Advent 1 Nov. 29th Making the Most of Our Time

Advent 2 Dec. 6th The Way Forward

Advent 3 Dec. 13th Slow and Steady in Hustle and Bustle

Advent 4 Dec. 20th Do You Hear What I Hear?



Ministry News



The Men's group will meet Monday, Nov. 9th at 11:30AM. Bring a sack lunch and join together for bible study, fellowship and projects.



To all the women of the church

Sara Circle, a revelry of sisterhood, will meet November 10 at 12:30. There will be a short business meeting followed by our continued study of Moses by Beve Lutz.

Rummage Sale Reminder

When you are cleaning out your garage, closets, etc. remember the Sara Circle Rummage Sale. Sara Circle will be happy take those old items of yours any time. We have a special storage room designed for that purpose. All monies generated at our Rummage sale goes to help finance major Church building repairs and upkeep, send our children to Church camp, and support the Thornwell Children's home. We appreciate all the rummage you give us.

Evening Women's Circle

The circle meets for a shared meal and bible study the 4th Monday of each month at 6:00PM. Lead by Betsy Balmer



Heart and Hands CAREGIVER SUPPORT

The Caregiver Support Group will continue to meet on Thursday, 1:00 - 2:00. Our general participation has been a group of four to five individuals, men and women, that care for one another and share their experiences in hopes that their solutions may in some way be of benefit to others.



Empty Cup Bible Study with Thaddeus Wilkins **Every Wed. from 10:30AM—noon**

Come out and meet with Thad every Wed. from 10:30am to noon for fellowship and Bible Study at the Pour Coffee House. 12902 Front Beach Road next to the ARK.

Turn your clocks back Saturday, Oct. 31st

Caring for Each Other



The SHEPHERDING TEAM is available to you at anytime for member care. Please feel free to call on them.

John Skelton 706-436-4288 ratpack219@gmail.com

Lenny Zacher 850-867-3770 tennis850@aol.com

Wanda Pflugfelder 850-249-3396 reinholdwanda@misn.com

Edna Adams 850-230-2540 ednaadams@comcast.net

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Suzanne Burke 850-867-5371 suzannegilmoreburke@gmail.com

Lorraine Gilmore 850-867-5370 lorrainegilmore46@gmail.com

First Together-



A ministry at Gulf Beach Pres. dedicated to building relationships, fostering spiritual growth, and providing assistance through socializing, visiting, resource building, loving and caring. Our activities together will seek to deepen our relationship with Christ, each other, and our community. Activities throughout the year will include day trips, concerts, movies, service projects, forum discussions, "Food, Fun, & Fellowship" (10 a.m. every Friday in the Fellowship Hall) and "First Tuesday" (monthly meals at area restaurants-dutch treat). We are having our monthly fellowship at **Bayou on the Beach, Nov. 3rd at 4:30pm**. We have had a great time talking, laughing, eating, and getting to know one another. Usually about a dozen or so of us each month. Come join the fellowship! Bayou on the Beach 11115 Hutchinson Blvd.



The "Love Line" is available for your prayer needs, announcements and celebrations. Just email your requests to Mary Foist at myseaclusion@gmail.com

FOOD

PANTRY

The Food Pantry's mission is to increase access to food for hungry people, and empower them to help each other.

Report from Food Pantry- September 2015 our food pantry served 126 people a total of 1116 meals.

Needs: Toilet paper, & Personal Hygiene products. The food pantry is in need of small individually wrapped items such as things for a sack lunch. **Snack crackers, fruit cups, juice boxes etc.**

Thanksgiving and American Diabetes Month

- ♦ November is American Diabetes Month. Risk factors include age (over 45), family history, being overweight, and exercising less than three times weekly. Not everyone has symptoms, but if you have to urinate (pee) often; feel thirsty, hungry, or are losing weight even though you're drinking / eating; feel tired a lot; have blurry vision; or have tingling, pain, or numbness in the hands / feet, talk to your healthcare provider: (Learn more at <http://www.diabetes.org>)
- ♦ Controlling diabetes is important to prevent future problems. To stay healthy with diabetes, work with your healthcare provider to create a diet plan to lower carbohydrate intake, exercise every day, stop smoking, take medicines as prescribed, and frequently examine your eyes and feet. (Learn more at <http://www.diabetes.org>)
- ♦ Thanksgiving is fun, but can be stressful. Plan ahead for sharing the work. Ask each guest to contribute a food item. Remember food safety: Thaw the turkey in the refrigerator not the counter and cook to 165 degrees Fahrenheit using a meat thermometer. And don't forget clean-up assignments, as many hands DO make light work! (Learn more at <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/types/turkey/index.html>)
- ♦ Flu season can start to peak in late November. Did you get vaccinated? Although similar to a "cold," the flu comes on faster and can make you sicker. Symptoms include fever or feeling feverish, chill, cough, sore throat, runny nose, muscle aches, headache, tiredness, and vomiting and diarrhea. If you're sick, stay home and don't contaminate others. Contact your healthcare provider to diagnose flu. (learn more at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/go/disease.htm>)
- ♦ Stay safe, have fun, and enjoy each friends and family. May God pour out many blessings on you and yours this holiday season.



Community Music, Art and Craft Faire

The Gulf Beach Community Music Arts & Crafts Faire is scheduled for November 14, 8:00 - 4:00. We encourage anyone that has a craft or hobby to please participate. People will definitely be Christmas shopping, I know I will. Also, if anyone knows of someone with musical talent that would be willing to play for about an hour or so, we would love to have them be part of the fun. Pastor Bonnie Wilkins will be blessing the animals and Thaddeus Wilkins will be taking portraits of our pets. For registration or if you just have a question you may contact Wanda Griffin-Pflugfelder at 850-249-3396 or 360-265-0529, or call the church office Tuesday - Thursday, 850-234-3161.

EVENTS SCHEDULE

10:00AM Blessing of the Animals

10:30AM Story Teller, Norma Hubbard

11:00AM Ekulele Orchestra St. Andrews

12:30PM Story Teller, Norma Hubbard

1:00PM Musical Guest performing

2:00PM Blessing of the Animals

Turn your clocks back Saturday, Oct. 31st

2015 Panama City Beach

Gulf Beach Community

Music
ARTS &
crafts Fair



Saturday Nov. 14th 8-4p

Arts & Crafts Sale, Music,



Storyteller, **FOOD**

Family events, Community Booths,

Blessing of the Animals,

271 S.Hwy79

Gulftreat @ Gulf Beach Presbyterian
Church

Panama City Beach, Fl.
32413

November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:00 am Sunday School 9:45am Coffee and Donuts 10:15 Worship Fall Picnic after Worship	2	3 4:30 PM First Together Supper	4 10:30am-12:00 Empty Cup Bible Study	5 10:00am-12:00 Bible Study 1:00 PM Caregiver Support Group	6 10:00 AM Food, Fun, Fellowship	7
8 9:00 am Sunday School 9:45am Coffee and Donuts 10:15 Worship	9 5:30pm Session Meeting	10 12:30pm Sara Circle	11 10:30am-12:00 Empty Cup Bible Study	12 10:00am-12:00 Bible Study 1:00 PM Caregiver Support Group	13 10:00 AM Food, Fun, Fellowship	14 8-4pm Music, Arts and Crafts Faire
15 9:00 am Sunday School 9:45am Coffee and Donuts 10:15 Worship	16	17	18 10:30am-12:00 Empty Cup Bible Study	19 10:00am-12:00 Bible Study 1:00 PM Caregiver Support Group	20 10:00 AM Food, Fun, Fellowship	21
22 9:00 am Sunday School 9:45am Coffee and Donuts 10:15 Worship	23 6:00 PM Evening Women's Circle	24	25 10:30am-12:00 Empty Cup Bible Study	26 10:00am-12:00 Bible Study 1:00 PM Caregiver Support Group	27 10:00 AM Food, Fun, Fellowship	28
29 9:00 am Sunday School 9:45am Coffee and Donuts 10:15 Worship	30 6:00pm Working Women's bible Study	1	<div> <p>Turn your clocks back</p> <p>Saturday, Oct. 31st</p> </div>			
6	7	8				



Nov. Anniversaries

9-Mary & Bob Thiede
Bill and Karen Ferguson
12-Bill & Sharon Stewart
17-Harry & Beverly Howell

Nov. Birthdays

3-Chuck Grier
9-Audrey Porter
15-Jeff Prater
26-Bill Ferguson
28-Lonnie Galbraith