

*A Vision To Build
A Mind To Work*

Bethel

Sunday, January 24, 2010

WELCOME TO BETHEL

TRANSFORMING PRAYER

Prayer is simple but powerful. In genuine prayer, there is no need to make long discourses. Express yourself to God as completely as possible, but do not try to express yourself in fancy words. Don't strive for verbosity or "religious verbiage" lest your mind be distracted from true devotion by a fumbling search for words.

Engage your mind fully in what you are saying to God. Occasionally, repeat a word or phrase more than once and meditate deeply on what it means. Concentrating fully on what we are praying can empty out our crowded mind and create the quiet space where we can truly meet with God.

A wise man said, "Solitude is the furnace of transformation." Aloneness with God is not just a comfortable place of rejuvenation. Rather, it is the place of conversion, change, transformation; the place where the old self dies and the new self is born; the place where the emergence of the new man and the new woman occurs.

In solitude we get rid of our superficial scaffolding: no friends to talk with, no telephone calls to make, no meetings to attend, no music to entertain, no books to distract, just me -- naked, vulnerable, weak, sinful, deprived, broken -- nothing. My insignificance and aloneness is revealed before God.

It is this nothingness-of-self that we face in solitude, a nothingness so frightening that everything in us wants to run to our friends, our work, and our distractions so that we can forget our nothingness and make ourselves believe that we are something. But when we choose instead to face our nothingness, alone in our solitude with God, we begin to see ourselves as we really are and when that happens, God can begin to show us how we really ought to be.

Only when we see our insufficiency do we truly understand the sufficiency of God. In our aloneness with Him, when the noise of the world is quieted, we begin to hear His still, small voice as He directs us to deeper commitment and greater obedience -- and transformation begins.

Solitude is the *furnace* of transformation. It is a place of heat, of pressure; an uncomfortable environment where our carnality can be burned away and we can be bent, shaped, and molded by the Master's hand.

Let us commit ourselves to transformation during this 21 Days of Devotion. Don't devote your prayer time to just asking God for "things" -- prayer is much more than just submitting a shopping list to God. Instead, make a commitment to emerge from this process transformed by the Spirit of God. We are in the furnace. Let's come out of the fire purged and transformed.

"But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- **5:00 AM PRAYER AT THE CHURCH**
Monday, Wednesday, Friday this week
- **21-DAYS OF DEVOTION**
Prayer & Fasting Campaign continues
- **MIDWEEK SERVICE**
This Thursday – 7:45 PM
- **BTS KICK-OFF FORUM**
This Friday, January 29th – 7:30 PM
- **CHOIR REHEARSAL**
This Saturday, January 30th – 4:00 PM
- **10 AM CLASSES AT BETHEL**
Through the Bible – begins Jan. 31st
Discipleship – begins February 7th
Endtime Series – begins February 14th
Please sign up in the foyer
- **CONNECT POINT FORUM**
For High School Grads – age 25
Friday, February 5th – 7:30 PM
- **SINGLES EVENT**
Saturday, February 13th – 6 PM
See Mary Murray for details

You can find these announcements and additional information by accessing the online calendar at www.BethelUPC.org

COAT CLOSET CLEANOUT

If you have items in the coat closet, please take them home with you. The coat closet will be cleaned out this week. All items not claimed by that time will be donated to charity,

Don't forget your building fund pledge!

CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

Bethel Contribution statements for 2009 will be mailed on January 31st. If you have changed your address or telephone number since last year, please stop by the Bookstore table and make sure that the church office has your current information.

BAD WEATHER

In case of inclement weather, call the church office to find out if services or scheduled events are being held – (516) 338-1032, Ext. 10.

- On Sundays – call after 8 AM
- On Weekdays – call after 5 PM



BETHEL TEEN SCENE

Date: Friday, January 29th
Time: 7:30pm – 10pm
Where: Bethel UPC
Age: 13-19

DOES YOUR LIFE "MATCH UP" WITH THE WORD OF GOD?

Please bring \$3 for pizza

Dress Attire:

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ADVANCE