

Jan. \ Feb. 2024



Bethel

Colony of Mercy

Breaking the Chains of Addiction
Since 1948



Need for the Light

As Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, He preached in a time where there was unrest in every sector of society: spiritual, social and political chaos. The Lord taught His followers how to live in it with the Beatitudes and He went on to say that a city couldn't be hidden, and a light is not to be put under cover. He told us that **"you (we) are the light of the world."**

Matt. 5:14 Around every corner of our society there seems to be unrest. We see the attitude and the morals of our world have declined and that is putting it lightly. Can I remind you it can get worse? The Lord taught in scripture it will be like the days of Noah and Sodom. So, it will get worse. **In a dark world it is a clear indicator that we need light.** We know **Jesus is the source of the Light** and now is the time for the church to be who He called us to be.

Many believers that I know are praying for revival to happen. That before that great Day of the Lord He will show His mercy again and pour out His Spirit and revive the church and regenerate the lost. Are we ready for the revival He could pour out? Our world is hurting in so many ways, drug addiction, families frazzled, abortion, sexual bondage, identity crisis, materialism, and political corruption. The list could take up this whole page. So many of these subjects the church would rather steer clear from because of all the extremes that the church has been accused of. And in some cases, the shoe fits. But that isn't

a reason to not help people because of fear, name calling, or the mistakes of others. People are hurting and the darker it gets just means people are going to be looking for light in the tunnel, a voice in the silence of night, and hope where despair is trying to make its home. Comfortably numb is no longer working for many.



But if they don't know where to turn, they will listen to the next empty solution because it is the only voice who is talking. We, the church, know who the answer is...let me boldly say that name.... JESUS! And we know where answers are found... in a personal relationship with Him!

This is what Barna found out in their research in 2022. Three out of four (74%) say they want to grow spiritually. Additionally, the same proportion (77%) say they believe in a higher power. Nearly half (44%) say they are more open to God today than before the pandemic. The world is saying they are open to hear more from God. As believers, we need not allow the only voice in the room to be another version of bondage. In the world of addiction, the medical field is pushing another substitute instead of street Fentanyl or other opioids. **"Come get methadone, suboxone or subutex." That answer may be legal and coming from a doctor, but is still bondage.** The problem is not just physical addiction but a heart that is lost and bound by sin. **Every day of your life dependent on another chemical that is slowly deteriorating your body, mind and spirit is not the answer.**

That is not the solution we offer to the men and women that come to Bethel. In the book of John, chapter 1 verse 5, it says, **“And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”** Another translation says, **“That light shines in the darkness, yet the darkness did not overcome it.”** The Greek word there is “the darkness cannot grasp, comprehend and therefore it cannot overcome the Light”. In the middle of a drug infested world and a state (North Carolina) where 11 people a day are dying, our country throws 35 billion annually at addiction. The numbers of deaths in North Carolina alone have gone from 2,554 in 2018 to 4,243 in 2022. In our nation in the last 23 years there has been almost 1 million deaths due to drugs.

Bethel Colony was privileged to minister to and share The Light with over 450 individuals this past year. We are seeing freedom in many of those hearts. Thank you for helping us hold the lampstand high! We see many who are getting tired

of the substitute and want real answers. At Bethel we are ready to teach them how they can be overcomers. We plan to be that light. In planning we are excited to see what this year holds as we will be sharing with you soon housing plans at the Women’s Campus. Reconstructing Bethel’s very busy auto shop. Plans for a new lodge at the Women’s Campus. **We want to be that refuge where those who are bound by addiction can hear the voice of the Lord! To know Him is to know true freedom!** Thank you for being part, through your prayers and donations, of the thousands that get transformational help in the name of Jesus!

Pastor Paul and Stacy Pruitt
Executive Director

Testimony of one who found The Light at Bethel Colony

I came through Bethel in 2021. When I arrived to Bethel, I was on house arrest, had an ankle monitor and had not been out of prison long for trafficking methamphetamine. My addiction started when I was 12 and it progressed for the next 20 years, until I woke up in prison. **I didn’t realize the pain that I had caused other people, the devil had blinded me to what I was doing and the sorrow I was causing others.** I got to Bethel, and I was scared coming through those gates. It is terrifying giving up the only thing you’ve ever really known. Upon arriving I was embraced with love and now I’m able to call the addiction and the things that I went through for what they are: spiritual warfare. **Bethel is a safe place but when you walk out of those gates, it is on. It is war.**

One thing that Bethel taught me is how to be equipped with the tools that God provides. You must put on the armor of God that Paul tells us about in Ephesians 6. While at Bethel, you are taught to put it on every day. I learned how to use these tools and how to wear God’s armor. This program is a training facility that taught me how to defend myself against the spiritual warfare that I was facing.

One of my favorite verses is Joshua 1:9, which says, **“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”** After being out of Bethel for a while, I returned and extended for extra time. A friend of mine had overdosed and died, and that terrified me. I didn’t want to wind up like that. I knew I wasn’t where I was supposed to be, so I came back and stayed for another 30 days.

Then, a few months after I left Bethel, I was given the opportunity to be strong and courageous. God told me to reach out to a family member of mine, to see if she needed some help with work. She said, **“Yeah, can you come yesterday?”** So I took my next check, and I bought a one-way plane ticket for my dog and me to Miami, Florida. I’ve been here for a little over a year and a half now. God has restored everything. EVERYTHING that I lost in my addiction. What the devil tried to take from me, God has blessed me with something better. I have a fulfilling career, a cozy home, and I’m surrounded by people that are also in sobriety. **I have been gifted with godly friends, several of whom I met while at Bethel.**

I just want to glorify God because He is so good. If you come to Bethel and you submit, pay attention and learn; then be obedient in acting on what you learn, God will bless you beyond measure. He will bless you so abundantly. **I’m proof that recovery through Christ is attainable.** I am forever grateful. Amen.



Bethany Logan

BETHEL COLONY OF MERCY, INC. OPERATING BUDGET
 MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CAMPUSES
 Combined Budget
 Nov. 1, 2023 to Oct. 31, 2024



INCOME	
10- Contributions	\$764,270.00
14- Sales Tax Refund	\$10,000.00
15- Fund Raiser	\$31,000.00
16- Pay Phone	\$29,000.00
18- Estates & Foundations	\$100,000.00
19- Entry Fee Donation	\$4,000.00
20- Canteen	\$40,000.00
22- Edward Jones	\$65,000.00
23- Entrance Fee	\$165,000.00
24- Other & New Const.	\$11,000.00
25- Lawn Care	\$72,500.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$1,291,770.00
TOTAL	
EXPENSES	
26- Utilities	\$125,000.00
28- Vehicle	\$46,000.00
30- Food Services	\$35,000.00
32- Telephone	\$7,500.00
33- Pay Phone	\$300.00
34- Public Relations	\$45,000.00
36- Office Supplies	\$8,000.00
37- Web Donation Fees	\$2,500.00
38- Postage	\$6,070.00
40- Medical	\$6,200.00
42- Homecoming	\$5,000.00
44- Christmas	\$4,800.00
46- Conference & Travel	\$600.00
48- Chr. Ed.	\$7,500.00

50- Recreation	\$2,200.00
51- Media	\$3,150.00
52- Floral	\$300.00
53- IT Management	\$45,000.00
54- Computer	\$7,000.00
56- Misc. Items	\$300.00
57- Lawn Care	\$16,500.00
58- Work Projects	\$200.00
59- Heavy Equip	\$10,000.00
60- Housekeeping	\$10,500.00
62- Maintenance	\$18,000.00
64- Property & Lib. Ins	\$45,000.00
66- Auto Insurance	\$7,000.00
68- Lawn & Garden	\$4,500.00
70- Pest Control	\$700.00
72- Equipment	\$6,000.00
73- Other Construction	\$25,000.00
74- Remodel	\$75,000.00
75- New Housing	\$60,000.00
76- Property Taxes	\$1,850.00
77- NC Sales Taxes	\$10,000.00
78- Land	\$0.00
80- Salaries 24 employees	\$505,000.00
82- Social Security	\$34,500.00
84- Treasurer Exp	\$7,000.00
86- Staff Insurance	\$92,000.00
90- Internet	\$2,600.00
92- Benevolent Fund	\$3,000.00
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$1,291,770.00

From November 1, 2022
to October 31, 2023

Bethel Colony Men's Campus:

Serviced 351 men
 Served 90,429 meals
 Held 156 worship services
 Held 364 teaching sessions

Bethel Colony Women's Campus:

Serviced 99 women
 Served 17,262 meals
 Attended 156 worship services
 Held 364 teaching sessions

**Dual Campus Cost Breakdown
(w/o construction, housing,
remodel & land)**

\$32.31 per day (per man/woman
x's man days here)
 \$3,177.32 per day
 \$22,302.33 per week
 \$96,643.41 per month
 \$1,159,720.93 per year

We want to thank our supporters who have let God work through them in making provision for His vision which He has revealed through our Board Members and Directors.



Ramah Reflections

Filtering Our Faith in Prayer



"I hope God does it." From babes in Christ to veteran saints of the faith, many of us have felt or said something to this effect after a prayer. But this sentiment, however common, is contrary to what we are taught in scripture about faith. We are told to pray in faith, believing, but all too often, we pray in hope, wondering. It is important to identify a very significant Biblical truth: faith and hope are not the same thing, and praying in hope only will not garner the same results as praying in faith. Oftentimes when we pray for things, we pray in hope, rather than in faith. The Word of God is clear that faith and hope are, in fact, two different things. Hebrews 11:1 says that **"faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen."** Hope is necessary for faith, but hope is only a portion of what faith requires. As believers, we must learn to guard and filter our faith so that we can truly receive all that God has for us.

Sometimes we imagine prayer like the petition in 2 Chronicles 20:12, when Jehoshaphat declares **"we don't know what to do, but our eyes are on you,"** when the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir were coming against Judah. This prayer reflects desperation, which we often need to identify with to genuinely engage with God in prayer. But even in desperation, we, the children of God, are not called to beg. **Prayer is not begging. Begging reveals the doubt in our hearts about God's word.** If we are begging God for something, we are subconsciously assuming His indifference, lack of goodness, or lack of faithfulness, not to us, but to His own Word. Or, we simply do not know His Word enough to believe it. Begging lacks the confidence we are called to have in prayer by scripture: **"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us"** (1 John 5:14); **"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need"** (Hebrews 4:16). God desires that we know, like Jehoshaphat knew, that we can call upon Him to keep His Word. In the verses leading up to the iconic prayer, Jehoshaphat spends time identifying the promises of God to Israel before calling upon the Lord to move, saying **"O our God, will You not judge them?"** The desperation of Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah was combined with trust. In other words, Jehoshaphat's faith was filtered.

Unfiltered faith looks like hope with no certainty. Hebrews 11:1 says that faith is **"the certainty of what you hope for"** (NASB). Our prayers can often be fueled by such faith. Unfiltered faith is belief in God's Word hindered by doubts or wrong mentalities that contradict God's Word. It takes the form of phrases like

"I know what the Bible says, but..." followed by a reason why something other than what God's Word says is more true. James says that if we ask God for wisdom in this manner, we should not expect to receive it:

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubt, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways". James 1:5-8

Faith mixed with doubt cannot receive from God. This is why our faith must be filtered. The definition of the verb "filter" is "to pass something through a device to remove unwanted materials." The "device" is God's Word, and the unwanted materials are our doubts and wrong beliefs. We must filter our faith, removing impurities and obstacles to our belief so that we can fully trust the Word of God.

Unfiltered faith is often directed towards an imperfect or incomplete image of who God is. It is rash and unfocused. It is sloppy, lazy faith that does not bother to identify who God is or what He has said about what we are praying about. This is why we must spend intentional time in worship and the Word. The more we see God rightly, the more we honor and reverence His Word and trust the character we find there. The more this is true, the greater our faith becomes, and the more seriously we begin to take scriptures like Mark 11:24, **"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."** This kind of faith is so vital to walking into the transformed new nature of Christ. Many of the things we are walking away from seem too big even for God to handle when we are in them, but if we can begin to believe correctly what God has said, then we will unlock the power for His Word like never before. We will have the power to truly say and believe, with Jesus that **"you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free"** (John 8:32)

Blessed beyond measure,

Mrs. Regina Kelly
Women's Campus Co-Director





2024 Yahweh or Yourway

The year is 2024 and it feels like only yesterday that we entered 2023. How is it possible that an entire year has passed by so quickly? Many people begin a new year by making plans or establishing goals that they want to accomplish. Did you accomplish everything that you had planned for 2023 or did life and circumstances get in the way?

Thinking about how quickly time passes by and the projects that fell by the wayside this past year, I am reminded of a passage found in James 4:13-17 ***“Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit.” You don’t even know what tomorrow will bring— what your life will be! For you are like smoke that appears for a little while, then vanishes. Instead, you should say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So it is a sin for the person who knows to do what is good and doesn’t do it.”*** (HCSB).

It is easy for us to make decisions and plans where we forget to include God in the process. I will even go so far as to say that when we do not achieve these goals, we can face a season of dwindling faith. Especially if we prayed and even fasted for the specific goal and it never came to fruition. Identifying with Christ as our Lord and Savior should put us in a place to where we depend on Him in everything. Self-sufficiency, self-sustaining, and independence should not be identifying markers of a follower of Christ. Remember Jesus tells us in John 15:5 that apart from Him, we can do nothing. What about the goals and plans where we have included God, but they still fall short?

Proverbs 16:9 states ***“A man’s heart plans his way, but the Lord determines his steps”.*** (HCSB) We can make all the plans and goals in the world but if it is not the Lord’s will, we should not expect for our steps to land on those paths.

According to James’ illustration, our lives are as fleeting as smoke from a fire that appears for a moment and then dissipates into the atmosphere. Plans, goals, and ambitions can be good things, but you must ask yourself where your strength, your resources, and your desires are placed. God must be included in your plans, goals, and agendas. Regardless of the plans we make we must ask ourselves

‘what are we doing today?’ Am I living for Christ today? Am I asking for the Lord’s will and direction for my future? Am I allowing Him to determine my steps faithfully or am I kicking and screaming along the way?

A follower of Christ cannot live independently from Him. That is why we must remember to seek His will. There will be moments in our lives when we are successful from the plans we made on our own. This can be dangerous ground if we do not give the credit where it is due. An arrogant spirit can easily become our friend, but we will only find destruction when we operate in pride. Humility is inevitable, either by choice or by force. Jesus states that ***“whoever exalts Himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted”.*** Matt. 23:12 (HCSB)

Ignoring God with your time, future, and whatever you do in life is sinning against Him. Most believers only acknowledge the “big” sins as wrong and rebellious. James is extremely specific; if you know the right thing to do and do not do it, you are rebelling and that is sin.

Each of us has a choice; whether to choose God and seek His will or to choose something else. Jesus Christ faced a choice in the Garden of Gethsemane. He knew that His journey to the cross was ending soon, and He prayed asking God for a way out. He was sweating drops of blood because He knew what lay before Him. His prayer was not just any old routine prayer. He prayed for His Father’s will over His own (Luke 22:42).

Jesus knew what cup God had in store for Him and He still took time to seek God’s will. We do not usually have that kind of foreknowledge of what God has in store for us. We need as much guidance and direction from God that He will give us. We must choose Him and ask Him for direction in fulfilling His will for our lives. My prayer for you in this new year is that you seek God in everything you do, every decision you make, and every goal you set. Seek His steps. It may not be the direction you had in mind, but I guarantee you, if it is His steps, they are perfect.

Pastor Zac Starnes
Associate Director





Mercy of God

We hear of the mercy of God, but many refuse to embrace it. Shakespeare had a knowledge of scripture. He made a revealing truth about mercy. **“Nothing emboldens sin so much as mercy.”** Sin is so hardened in the soul it resists the mercy of God. Only the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ is able to remove this rebellion. **“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force.”** (Matthew 11:12) Elliot’s Commentary on the “kingdom of heaven suffers violence” writes; *“The Greek verb may be in the middle voice or passive. Since dead men cannot respond, it was the acting of God impressing on them the reality of the kingdom of heaven. The words describe the eager rush of the crowds of Galilee and Judea, first to the preaching of the Baptist, and then to that of Jesus. It was, as it were, a city attacked on all sides by those who were eager to take possession of it.”* John the apostle writes, **“And the light shines in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light; that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.”** (I John 1:5-10)

The kingdom of darkness has no interest in the mercy of God. The veil of darkness has blinded those who love the light of this world. The glitter of the world with myriads of counterfeit lights have embraced sin. It manifests itself in false apostles, Satan its author. **“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ; And no wonder! For Satan transforms himself into an angel of light.”** (II Corinthians 11:13-14) I’m reminded of my professor in seminary at CIU, Dr. Harold Burchett, saying, be careful of which Jesus you believe. The Galatian Christians were in danger of being guilty of the same. **“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.”** (Galatians 1:6-8)

The love of sin manifests itself in a hatred of the mercy of God. **“For the fleshly mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”** (Romans 8:7-8) Many who are in addiction to sorcery, an enchantment for drugs, are deceived. It is the snare of the devil to counterfeit euphoria and light in that lust. *My beloved professor said those clouds may be fluffy but they will not hold you.* It is a light but not the True Light. Beware! Jesus is the True Light.

Consider an illustration from Flannery O’Connor’s work “The Violent Bear It Away”. Jonathan Rogers wrote a book entitled “The Terrible Speed of Mercy: A Spiritual Biography of Flannery O’Connor” (Thomas Nelson 2012) Ralph C. Wood reviewing the book writes; “O’Connor’s fiction is shocking and arresting, Rogers contends, because of its inward even more than its outward violence. Mason Tarwater, the backwoods baptizer in The Violent Bear It Away, encounters God as if he had been wrestling a wildcat, “Have you been torn by the Lord’s eye?” He later asks. Yet the aging prophet fears a threat greater than the fury of the violated Savior. It is a far more dreadful thing to be hounded down by Christ’s forgiveness. Hence this paradoxical call to the youth who he hopes will become a new Elisha: “Go warn the children of God of the Terrible Speed of Mercy.”

John Bunyan writes in his autobiography Grace Abounding how his conscience was wounded on Sunday by the sermon of the pastor speaking of the evils of breaking the Sabbath. While playing a game of cat, “A voice did suddenly dart from heaven into my soul, which said, *Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?* At this point I was put to an exceeding maze; wherefore leaving my cat upon the ground, I looked up to heaven, and was, as if I had, with the eyes of my understanding, seen the Lord Jesus looking down on me, as being very hotly displeased with me, and as if He did severely threaten me with grievous punishment for these and other ungodly practices.”

Three hundred seventy five years after Bunyan hearing a voice, my own conversion came with the terrible speed of mercy in my slavery in sin. While in a bar Mercy fell with speed from the throne of grace with a dart in my soul *“Will you leave your sins and go to heaven or continue in your sins and go to hell?”* I was emboldened by sin to resist it. And I did. The second time shortly thereafter, driving home from a night out I spun around my car, slammed into a curb, causing an awful pain in my left thigh. I threw up my hands and said to God “I surrender”. I was immediately swept into the kingdom of God. The terrible speed of mercy granted me repentance. That was at the age of 29 years old. Praise God for “his terrible speed of mercy to my lost soul.” May His mercy hound you into the Kingdom of God. I pray that He will.

Where the Grace blows,

Pastor Don Loss

Director of Counseling



Fill out and mail your prayer requests to us.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

II Chronicles 7:14

Prayer Request: _____

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Bethel Colony of Mercy, Inc.



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Breaking the chains of addiction

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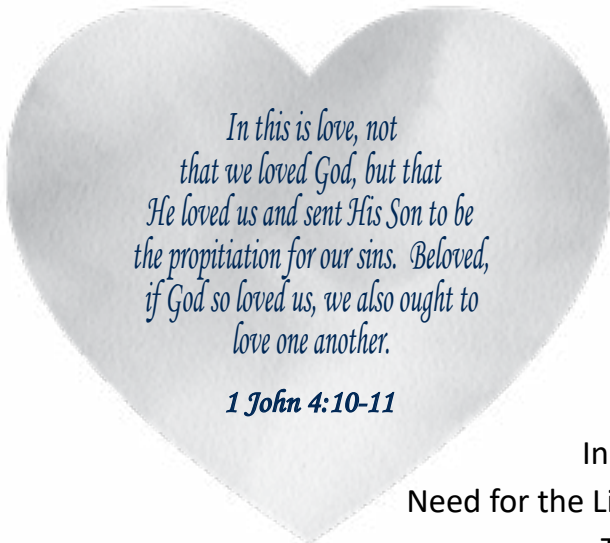
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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*In this is love, not
that we loved God, but that
He loved us and sent His Son to be
the propitiation for our sins. Beloved,
if God so loved us, we also ought to
love one another.*

1 John 4:10-11



In This Issue:

Need for the Light....Pastor Paul Pruitt

Testimony

Budget

Filtering our Faith in Prayer....Mrs. Regina Kelly

2024 Yahweh or Yourway...Pastor Zac Starnes

Mercy of God.....Pastor Don Loss

Prayer Requests