



Beverly Heights
Presbyterian
Church

scattered seeds.

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2021

our
new
KINDERGARTEN

V.B.S.

pre-
school

SUMMER SCHOOL EDITION

photos

adult
christian
education

*Mary Welling
Reflections*

Charlie Webster,
with his preschool
certificate, alongside
teachers Holly Devlin
and Louise O'Boyle,
aka "Omi," his
grandmother.



Jesus in the Basement

BY LOUISE O'BOYLE



When I consider my life, I have to chuckle about how much time I have spent in the basement of Beverly Heights Church!

As a child, I never thought I would be a teacher. I remember thinking I'd be an inventor and save the world from something big like the world running out of energy.

Instead, I became a speech therapist. But God had other ideas for my gifts!

Through the lives of my own children, I was led into teaching at church. First in our Protestant church in Germany and then as the leader of every one of the children's programs at our first church in Pittsburgh.

In 1993, Tom and I came to Beverly Heights looking for sound biblical teaching and fellowship for our children.

Two years later, I was working in the preschool as an assistant teacher. Just a year after that, I was the preschool's director.

Up until then, the school had been called the Beverly Heights Weekday School or Beverly Heights Nursery School. The school began in 1953 as soon as the new education wing was completed. (It was the first preschool in the South Hills to open – St. Paul's, up the street, opened one year later.)

Its purpose at that time was to prepare the church's children for kindergarten. There were two classes: one for 3-year-old children on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the other on Monday-Wednesday-Fridays

for 4-year-old children. Classes were in the morning only.

Not much changed in the following years except the names of the directors and the teachers. When we came to Beverly Heights, Ruth Metzger was the director and teacher of both classes. Jubilee Christian School was sharing the space in the basement with the Nursery School.

But change had begun with the arrival of Pastor Wolling and wife Mary in 1985. As Mary wrote in her story, much was done to physically improve the Nursery School – paint, furniture, curtains. But, most importantly, change came in the form of adding a Christian component to the classes.

In 1994, after 18 years as director, Mrs. Metzger retired. For the next two years, two different directors led the school. A school board had been established to help guide the school.

It was during that time that I began my work downstairs with Beverley Barron and Bette Thomson. When I became the director in 1996, we changed the name of the school to Beverly Heights Christian Preschool. We wanted the community to identify us as a Christian preschool.

Mary Wolling has written about how she came alongside Mrs. Barron and me to write an integrated Christian curriculum. God had orchestrated this by having my first year as director to be the same year Mary had a sabbatical from Jubilee. She had time to give and we took what she offered.

Much growth occurred over the 15 years I was director. When Jubilee moved out of Beverly Heights to a larger home to accommodate its growth, we were able to add classes and teachers.

But the best and the most lasting change that occurred at that time was our focus. Lifting up the name of Jesus was and is

our focus. In everything we teach, God is the center. Everything comes from God and we teach the children to see God in everything.

Karen Sourbeer became the director in 2011. I had always taught as I directed, and it was time for a director to give all of her attention to administrative duties. I was delighted to "just teach!"

Now there are 11 women working together in the preschool, teaching about 100 children morning and afternoon, Monday through Friday, in eight classes for children ages 2 to 6 years.

I have taught many children and their parents in the 26 years I have been a preschool teacher at Beverly Heights. It has been my joy to love these children and to add to their knowledge of Jesus and his goodness.

While this was not the plan I had for my life, I now see that God had a much

better plan. I did indeed help to "invent" something important! Maybe I didn't develop a new energy source for the world, but I have been teaching about the ultimate energy source for all peoples! Jesus!

And to add a cherry on top, God has allowed me to teach my own grandchildren! Blessings abound! Just this year, Charlie Webster was in the class I helped teach with Holly Devlin. Last week, as our year ended, Charlie's mom – our daughter Cara – wrote out the words Charlie wanted to say to me.

"Thanks for being my teacher," it begins. And then Cara wrote, "Your love for the kids and teaching them about Jesus' love shines through in all you do. I am so thankful you found such a calling."

And to that, I say, "Amen!"

Turns out, Jesus spends lots of time in the basement, too!

Preschool Album



Teachers pictured here who have taught in our preschool in past years are church members Bette Thomson, Bev Barron, Lisa Tyger and Karen Sourbeer, the school's current director.



Letter People
puppets
will be used
in the new
kindergarten
class to teach
children their
ABCs.



A Giant Hug from God

BY HOLLY DEVLIN

Beverly Heights Church will have a new kindergarten class starting this fall!

As exciting as that is, it's even more wonderful to see God's hand in bringing this about. Isn't that the way God always works?

When I look back over the last six months, I see how God perfectly orchestrated all of the pieces in bringing this about. When I look ahead, though I cannot see as clearly what God is doing, I trust in His provision. I need to put one foot in front of the other while keeping my eyes fixed on Him.

That's a useful lesson for me to remember as we prepare this summer to commence our new kindergarten, which begins the Tuesday after Labor Day. The new class will work alongside the very successful Beverly Heights Christian Preschool program.

I have been a classroom teacher since

I graduated from Geneva College in 1999, where I met Nate. I immediately went to work as a second-grade teacher at Jubilee Christian School under the leadership of Mary Wolling and loved it! I taught for about five years before Nate and I decided to start a family.

When my second child Nathan was in first grade, I returned to Jubilee as a kindergarten aide in 2011 and then as a kindergarten teacher in 2015.

By this time, Nate had been called into full-time ministry at Beverly Heights. Serving two ministries and my family at once was challenging, so in 2016, I happily joined the staff of Beverly Heights Christian Preschool!

While the past year in the preschool presented unique challenges due to Covid, God was ever faithful. Our

preschool stayed open while many others were closed.

Our classes were a blessing to many families whose children were in our care. We were able to serve and love on the children as they heard the story of Jesus and His love for them!

In January, during my parent conferences, parents asked: had Beverly Heights ever considered adding a kindergarten class? They were not enthused about the options in their own communities. They wanted to give their children another year of learning in a school they loved, where they would continue hearing about Jesus.

I began looking into whether we might offer these parents an alternative. After discussing this with Director Karen Sourbeer and the other church staff, a meeting was held to determine how many parents were seriously interested.

I wanted the parents to know I would continue teaching using the integrated

curriculum approach employed in the preschool and that our instruction would always point to God.

The meeting was well attended. I was excited by the number of parents who said they would be VERY interested in the program. I then presented a vision for the kindergarten class to Session, which approved it on one condition: we would need to enroll at least five children.

Praise the Lord, currently nine students are registered! The class will occupy the current Run-Abouts room on B level five days a week, on Monday through Friday mornings. The room will continue to serve the church's children on Sundays and for other programs.

God is so good. He took my love for teaching kindergarten children – and my love for this church – and provided a way for me to combine those loves!

But God is not done. He continues to make this vision possible through His provision. Here's one example of God's great provision.

During the parent meeting in March, I mentioned a great program I had worked with in the past called the "Letter People."

I love the Letter People because they are a super engaging way for children to learn letters and sounds through puppets. The program includes books with sight words in a complete reading library using these characters. There really is nothing else like it.

One of the moms in the parent meeting, Karen Kress, shared my enthusiasm for the Letter People with her mother, Alice Kettner. The wife of the pastor at Christ Lutheran Church in Illinois, Mrs. Kettner was a kindergarten teacher for many years at the Christian school in that church.

Although their school closed three years ago, she had access to resources in storage (including the Letter People) and offered them to us!

Talk about coincidences! But as we all know, there are no coincidences in

God's Kingdom.

This provision is miraculous because you can't buy this curriculum as a set anymore. Though the materials can be purchased individually, they are expensive. Through Mrs. Kettner, we purchased the entire set for a great price. Nothing is missing!

And, in addition, they supplied us with many other pieces of curriculum, as well as classroom supplies, games, books, math manipulatives and a smart board! I am so thankful for these gifts from God and the generosity of Christ Lutheran Church!

It is a giant hug from God – affirmation that THIS IS HIS WILL!

As we move toward our opening in September, I will continue to trust in the Lord, as Proverbs 3:5-6 commands: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and he shall direct your path."



My Life as a Christian Educator

BY MARY WOLLING

“When did you know you wanted to be a teacher?” own preschool, Busy Bee School.

My response has always been: “Since I was a little girl lining up my dolls and stuffed animals on the living room couch and playing school while emulating my earliest mentor, Ding Dong School’s Miss Frances.”

It was the 1950s.

From stuffed animals to neighborhood friends – I was always the teacher standing in front of a foldaway blackboard and making up worksheets for my students who sat behind desks of cardboard boxes. Music, an important part of early education, involved the singing of songs familiar to all who learned them in Sunday School.

As a teen, I agreed to teach the 2- and 3-year-old class in Sunday School. It was vital on-the-job training fraught with huge mistakes. But it confirmed a growing

sense of call to a lifelong vocation.

My applied work in college was in vocal and choral conducting which led to my first job in Danvers, Mass., teaching music in three elementary schools, K-6th grade and two classes of children with Down syndrome, using my gifts and honing my craft.

It was here I realized the difficulty of sharing my faith in a secular work environment and I began to consider the value of Christian education as an alternative to public schools.

Five years later, after Rick received a call to a pastorate in Oklahoma, I opened my

It integrated an early childhood learning experience with Christian teaching that included Bible stories and an approach to character and behavioral development founded on biblical principles. It was a great opportunity to form young lives with Christian teaching and to also serve the community, as it was the only school of its kind in our small town.

After a move to Mt. Lebanon in 1985, when Rick began his pastorate here at Beverly Heights, I joined discussions with those who were establishing Jubilee Christian School.

That began an association with Jubilee which started in 1987 and lasted nearly 25 years, first, as a classroom teacher and, ultimately, as principal for more than 23 years. I got excited about the integrated approach to learning and could see the enthusiasm of the children and parents for this style of teaching and learning.

The integrated approach to education is one in which, at the heart of the curriculum, lies the pursuit of knowledge



Mary Wolling’s class at Jubilee includes two familiar faces: Erin (O’Boyle) Westgate, far left first row; and Kate Kuzko, far right second row. Kate now produces our podcast.



of the triune God as revealed in Scripture and as observed in the world around us. This aligned perfectly with the style and philosophy of education I had embraced.

What is integration of faith and learning? That was the question I was determined to answer for every family that came to enroll at Jubilee.

I explained that it was an approach which fostered the development of life-long learners, helping the student to discover that all of creation and the disciplines we teach are connected.

Often referred to as thematic teaching, it is much more. It is a hands-on approach which includes intense discovery of a topic while building skills in writing, counting, technology research, math integration, spelling, history, language and, at the heart of each topic, scriptural

teaching which ties it altogether. It was an exciting way to teach and an exciting way to learn.

It was a privilege during these years at Jubilee to also become involved in the shaping of our own Beverly Heights Christian Preschool.

Ruth Metzger had served for many years as director. Upon her retirement, I became the board chair and with Janet Camel’s help, we gave the preschool a facelift. New décor was installed and a Christian Education component added.

Bette Thomson took responsibility for teaching the weekly Bible Story and that was a beginning of Beverly Heights becoming a truly Christian Preschool.

Louise O’Boyle became director several years later and then Karen Sourbeer after her. During their tenure, the

preschool became a decidedly Christian school with a focus on unit teaching and the integration of faith and learning.

It has grown into a distinguished Christian school where Christ is at the center of all teaching, declaring the gospel and offering a great beginning to the little ones who come.

At the heart of a distinguished school is a Christian world and life view which pervades all of learning. All of life must filter through our understanding of who God is and what He has done for us, which then leads one to determine how to live faithfully in the world.

My desire over the years has been to help students become devoted members of God’s kingdom and to help them recognize His hand in all of life and learning. In my view, this is what true education is all about.

When Did You Last Attend Sunday School?

BY BOB THOMSON

What have been your favorite Adult Christian Education classes?

Did you like church history courses? Some of these we have offered include A Survey of Church History, Reformation and the Rise of Science, Biblical Archeology, and Church History and Your Formation.

Maybe your preferences were more theological, like Christian Formation Through Spiritual Discipline, The Exchanged Life, Grace Alone, or Prayer?

If you liked to attend a class on the Bible, I think we have covered all 66 books. Well, maybe not Obadiah.

For those with a more practical bent, we have offered such classes as How to Manage Your Money, Crazy Busy, Bridging

Generations, and Coping with Cancer.

The Adult Christian Education Ministry Mission and Vision Blueprint sets forth the four curriculum categories that the team tries to include in its classes every year. They are the Bible; Doctrine/Theology; History/Work of the Church; and Practical Theology.

Its Mission is “to equip and encourage people through various educational opportunities, to establish strong relationships with Jesus Christ, and to provide support for the larger Christian Formation ministry in its focus on Spiritual, Character, Community, and Cultural Formation.” Its Vision is “God’s

people being formed in Christ.”

The Christian Education Committee originally covered all Christian education in the church. In 1993, the committee was split into three committees – one for children’s education, one for youth education, and one for adult education.

At that time, I was chairman of the Church & Society committee, which sponsored talks, workshops, and classes for adults. Shortly thereafter, that committee was merged into the Adult Christian Education (ACE) committee, and that’s how I ended up on the ACE committee. I am one of nine persons on that committee, which meets monthly.

At that time, there were three adult classes every week, and most of them were 12 weeks long. One class was held in the



After returning from Ethiopia, Carl Templin worked on the church staff starting in 1976, when as Director of Christian Education he oversaw church education for all ages. He is pictured from that time and during an ACE class in 2019.



Chapel, and two in the Lounge. A movable divider turned the Lounge then into two classrooms.

But when the church was renovated, the Chapel morphed into a meeting room and a choir room. We lost one classroom.

Now we typically offer two classes each week, one in the Social Room and one in the Lounge. If we have a guest speaker, we may offer only one class. In addition, the classes are now typically five or six weeks long. We have also added a Wednesday night class.

It is fun to look over the hundreds of subjects that have been covered on Sunday mornings over the years. It is too bad we had no way to preserve them until recently. Now all of our classes are filmed and archived on the church website (under the Resources tab, where you’ll

find both audio and video recordings).

When I was growing up, I read a couple of little books by a guy named Fritz Ridenour. The books were *Know What You Believe* and *Know Why You Believe*.

Do you know what you believe? Can you explain to someone else what you believe? Can you explain to your children what you believe? Can you explain to your children why they should believe what you believe?

Do you know what the Bible says about important matters of the day? Would you like some help with your prayer life? Or how to better witness to others?

These and many other topics are included in adult Christian education. Your children are going to Sunday School.

Don’t let them get ahead of you. Learning is a never-ending process.

I strongly encourage you to make Adult Christian Education classes a regular part of your Sunday worship.

The classes are conveniently scheduled at 10 a.m. each Sunday so you can attend after the early service or before the late service.

Right now, there are two classes running – one on Biblical Parenting in the Social Room, and a video series on the first chapters of Genesis in the Lounge. Attendance at previous weeks in the series is not required for either class.

These classes are a significant part of our church’s efforts to help you be better formed in Christ.

Lisa Tyger with
VBS friends from
years past.



VBS is back! I can't wait.

BY LISA TYGER

Life changes in a moment.

Sometimes those moments are planned. Starting a new job. Getting married. Welcoming a new baby.

But many times, we don't see those moments coming. Your company is downsized and your position's been eliminated. A beloved family member is present with you one moment, and present with the Lord in the next.

A declaration of a worldwide pandemic that shuts down the world for a year. Perhaps there were individuals who saw that one coming, but I wasn't among them. I didn't foresee a year-plus long pandemic that would cancel Vacation Bible School and any other event that involved two or more unrelated people being in a room together. That certainly wasn't on my radar as I pulled out the VBS curriculum last January.

Thankfully, our Session deliberating and laboring over a safety plan, found a way for us to step out in faith and worship together on Sunday mornings through Covid.

But the virus stole our VBS program last year, and many other events.

It was a year when life took many unforeseen turns in the matter of a moment. Moments where we would envision how we might do a program – a July 4th concert or a Birthday Party for Jesus – and hope would rise, only to be crushed in a moment by an order from the governor extending strict mitigation orders even further.

Sometimes, it felt like he heard what we were planning and specifically drafted his order to crush that particular event. A loophole would briefly appear, only to be tightened at the 11th hour.

But our Session persevered and continued to seek wisdom and discernment in navigating the mandates of our governor while staying faithful to our King, ever mindful that job #1 is to worship the One who will one day command every virus out of existence. In a moment, everything will change.

It changed last week for our sister Nancy Trylko. Life here had gotten challenging for Nancy. Physical ailments and age made it difficult for her to care for herself and her home. She spent the last year, like so many of our seniors, isolated.

It seemed quite likely that Nancy might have to leave the home she loved for a facility where she could be properly cared for, but that wasn't God's plan for Nancy. One moment she was asleep in her bed and the next she was present with the Lord.

As Pastor Nate reflected on Nancy's life at the service last week, he said something that struck me. The real moment that changed everything for Nancy wasn't last week when the Lord made good on His promise that whosoever believed in Him would have everlasting life, but in the moment when Nancy claimed that promise for her life. In the moment when Nancy said "I do" to the Bridegroom, her everlasting life was sealed.

In just a few weeks, we are having Vacation Bible School! We have 15 hours with kids to have fun, teach Bible stories, model the love of Jesus and make an opportunity for them to change their lives forever, in one moment.

In a 2016 Baptist survey of adults who are currently active in ministry in their churches, 70% said that they had given their life to Jesus as a child (somewhere between the ages of 6-19), with many citing VBS as the place and time where they gave their lives to Jesus.

In fact, the article said each year 2.7 million



people attend VBS, and that, on average, nearly 80,000 will make a first-time profession of faith. While many churches world-wide now hold Vacation Bible Schools, the very first was held in this region when the famed evangelist and Christian apologist, Dr. Francis Schaeffer, started it in the late 1930s at Covenant Church in Grove City.

VBS has proven over the course of many years to be one of the most fertile mission fields that exist! In the span of eternity, 15 hours spent at VBS is just a moment, but that moment makes an eternal difference for millions!

For many, Covid concerns are still preventing them from being involved in programs like VBS. In fact, many churches are opting again this year to cancel VBS or to do a modified backyard program with a few families.

While I'm hopeful that whatever endeavors are made bear much fruit for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, I'm also delighted we are moving ahead with ours.

We currently have about 110 children signed up for VBS, and unlike other years, there are many names on the list I don't recognize. Perhaps they are kids coming from another church where VBS isn't happening. Or perhaps they are unchurched kids whose parents are simply searching for camps or activities that are actually taking place this summer.

What I do know is they haven't been to VBS at Beverly Heights before and I couldn't be more excited to meet them and their families and share the love of Jesus with them!

Whoever God brings to our doorstep, we have to remind ourselves to take a view from above. For each one of us, the moment will come when our eternal view is the view from above.

At Vacation Bible School, we have the opportunity to create moments where children reach out to accept Jesus' scarred and outreached hand and, in that moment, their lives will never be the same. With every week my anticipation grows, and this year more than any I can remember, I can't wait for VBS!!

On June 6, 2021, our church will honor Lisa Tyger's 10 years of faithful ministry and celebrate with a dinner and program.

To mark the occasion, the Session approved a public declaration, which reads in part:

Whereas Lisa has taught our children the truth of the gospel and the great articles of our faith in ways that are accessible, age-appropriate, and winsome, through countless Sunday school classes, story times, Resurrection Egg Hunts, Birthday Parties for Jesus, Pumpkin Patch events and Vacation Bible School programs, and ...

Whereas above all else, Lisa has endeavored to honor Christ in all things, both personal and professional, in order that Christ might be glorified in her life and in the church that she serves,

Therefore, on the occasion of the commemoration of her 10 years as Director of Children's Ministry, the Session of the Beverly Heights Presbyterian Church, speaking on behalf of the congregation and the staff, offers our thanks to God for blessing our congregation with the life and ministry of Lisa Tyger. We express our great love for Lisa and our great appreciation for her ministry to us and to Christ's Church.



Vacation Bible School 1967 ↗

VBS Album



Pastors Have Feelings, Too

“Teach me as much as you can.”

Those were the words spoken by a laborer working with my son, Jason, on a condominium construction project on the Mexican War Streets of Pittsburgh. He is a young guy with few skills, little knowledge and no experience but smart enough to know that he could learn some important lessons from someone possessing the very things he lacks.

This young fellow was asking Jason to mentor him.

Mentoring requires knowledge, skill, experience and something a bit more intangible but at least as important as these three – wisdom.

Wisdom is produced when knowledge, skill and yes, failure, are placed in the crucible's white heat of difficult personal experience, becoming something of value that can be passed on to another.

In our day of formal education, advanced degrees and professional certifications, mentoring as an educational approach is often given short shrift. That's a mistake.

Grateful as I am for my college, seminary and graduate study experiences, I learned the most valuable lessons from the wisdom of mentors who cared for me and for my success in life. People with bumps, bruises and scars are often the most valued, effective and strategic teachers. They were for me.

Perhaps the most difficult issue a pastor and church staff deal with is the loss of members. Pastors are people pleasers. We not only like people but we quickly commit to them, to their wellbeing and their thriving in life. Our hearts are knit to members of the congregation and love welds a strong bond.

When people leave the church, it's hard on

the pastoral staff – very hard.

Departures come in various forms.

Some people leave the church because a job change or family responsibility requires relocation. More often, people leave because they disagree with a decision that has been made or they have an interpersonal problem with a member of the congregation. They are dissatisfied.

Most grievous of all is when people leave



The changing of the guard: Rick's retirement celebration service on Oct. 21, 2018, as the mentee applauds his mentor.

in a storm of intrigue, anger, recrimination, accusation and meanness. What a way to describe the church of Jesus Christ!

These are the departures that keep the pastor and staff tossing and turning at night.

What to do? How to handle it? I can't think of one book on pastoral care that adequately addresses this all-too-common phenomenon in the church. But someone who's been through it and come out alive on the other side can address it – a mentor.

What might this mentor say in response to one who says, “Teach me as much as you can?”

These five things:

❶ Allow the fruit of the Spirit to flourish in/through you and stand guard against your own flesh. Let love, joy, peace, patience, etc., rule your heart and all that you do and all that you say.

❷ Learn what you can from their leaving. Is there a change that can be made – in the church? In you? – that might prevent this from happening again?

❸ Let the congregation care for you while you are caring for them. Pastors and church

staff people are often referred to as “wounded healers.” While you care for the health of the flock, permit the flock to care for you.

❹ Don't do anything, now, that will make it difficult for them to come back later or difficult for you to meet them on the street. When you see them at Giant Eagle, you don't want to hide in the frozen food case!

❺ Say Goodbye, mourn the loss of their fellowship, then move on. Rarely will people who have already decided to leave change their minds. It's done. They're gone but you are still here and the flock in this pasture needs you.

Mentoring – it's a good thing. Ask the disciples.

Rick Wolling is pastor emeritus of Beverly Heights Church.