



BETHANY BEACON

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

A monthly newsletter of Bethany United Methodist Church, Summerville, South Carolina

December 2025 Volume 12

A Christmas Message from the Staff

As we enter this joyful season, the Bethany staff extends our warmest wishes to you and your family for a Merry Christmas. May your days be filled with peace, good health, and meaningful moments with the people you love.

Please remember that you have a church family here at Bethany—one that walks with you through both celebrations and challenges. You are never alone.

For a bit of festive fun, we thought it would be enjoyable to share some of our favorite Christmas movies with you. We hope you'll take a moment to pause amid the hustle and bustle, enjoy a heartwarming holiday film, and keep close the true reason for the season.

Staff Favorite Christmas Movies

Reagan (Director of Music): Christmas in Connecticut

Ann (Financial Assistant): It's a Wonderful Life

Henry (Church Administrator): A Charlie Brown Christmas

Kyle (Youth Ministries & Director of Recreation): Die Hard

Makala (KidsCare Director): Elf

Toni (CDC Director): Elf

Janice (Children's Ministry Coordinator): It's a Wonderful Life

Emily (Director of Christian Education): A Christmas Story

Kevin (Maintenance): It's a Wonderful Life

Mandy (Communications & Pastoral Assistant): Elf and Home Alone

Isaac (Associate Pastor): To be announced

Michael (Senior Pastor): A Charlie Brown Christmas

Wishing you a blessed and beautiful Christmas season!

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Christmas

EVE SERVICES

***5 pm - Family Worship - Sanctuary**

***7:30 pm - Traditional Worship - Sanctuary**

11 pm - Traditional Worship - Sanctuary

Communion served at all services

*Nursery available

Bethany United Methodist Church joyfully invites you to celebrate the birth of our Messiah with three meaningful worship services. A nursery will be available for the 5 pm and 7:30 pm services. Communion will be shared at each service. We encourage you to invite a friend and bring your loved ones to join us for one of these beautiful services as we reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

Combined worship service

10 am Spell Chapel
no Word & Table
no Sunday School

December 28



Christmas Holiday Church Office Hours

Wednesday Dec 24

CLOSED

Thursday Dec 25

CLOSED

Friday Dec 26

CLOSED

Thursday Jan 1

CLOSED

Advent

As we prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christ's birth, the Advent season offers us a sacred time to reflect on the hope, peace, joy, and love that Jesus brings into our lives. Advent is a season of anticipation, a time to pause amidst the busyness and focus on the true meaning of Christmas.

We warmly invite you to join us for Advent Worship Services on **Wednesdays (December 3 & 10) at 6:15 pm in Spell Chapel.**

These midweek services provide a meaningful opportunity to reconnect with God, center your heart, and embrace the beauty of this holy season. Bring your family and friends, and let's journey together through Advent as we await the light of Christ's arrival. We look forward to worshipping with you!

Planning to Give Stock for Your 2025 Pledge or Offering?

If you're planning to contribute stock toward your 2025 pledge or offering, please allow up to two weeks for the church to process and receive the funds. Thank you for your generosity and thoughtful planning!



END OF YEAR GIVING

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR END-OF-YEAR GIVING BY
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31. IF YOU ARE MAILING IT IN,
PLEASE BE SURE IT IS POSTMARKED BY DECEMBER 31.

The Living Christmas Story

BY EMILY VICK

The Christmas Story Comes to Life – Help Needed!

In just a few short days, the Christmas Story will come to life right in our parking lot, and we need your help to make it happen! Our sets are being finalized, costumes are being readied, and the cast is filling up, but there's still time for you to get involved and lend a hand. Here's how you can make a difference:

Set Assembly & Decoration

Saturday, November 29 & Sunday, November 30

We will be assembling the remainder of the sets and beginning the process of dressing them to create the beautiful scenes that will bring the Christmas story to life. We'll meet at the parking lot at 8:30 am both days. Your help is needed to bring everything together!

Final Touches: Lighting & Décor

Monday, December 1 – Wednesday, December 3

From 9 am each day, we will be finalizing lighting, decorations, and other set details. Come help us put the finishing touches on these special scenes that will set the stage for an unforgettable experience.

Pine Straw Spreading

Tuesday, December 2

We'll be spreading pine straw around the set areas to create the perfect ambiance. Meet us in the parking lot at 9:30 am to help with this important task. Bring gloves!

Cleanup

Saturday, December 6

Once the show is over, we'll need to clean up the parking lot and make sure everything is ready for Sunday worship. Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 7:30 pm, and we'll work together until everything is cleared.

Casting – We Still Need You!

There are still a few cast spots open! If you haven't signed up yet, don't wait—please sign up as soon as possible. Knowing who will be part of the cast helps us plan, so if you're interested in participating, let us know by scanning the QR code.



Food Donations – Help Feed the Cast & Crew

Every night, we will feed over 200 cast members and crew who are working hard to bring the Christmas story to life. You can help by donating sandwiches, chips, drinks, and desserts. We need your contributions to keep everyone energized as we work long hours. Please sign up for one or more nights to provide food. Sign up in Sunday School rooms or on the boards downstairs.

Thank You for Your Support!

This is a big project, and we are so grateful for the many hands that come together to make it all possible. Whether you're lending your time, talent, or resources, every bit of help is appreciated. Let's work together to make this year's Christmas Story an event to remember! We can't wait to see you there!



BY EMILY VICK

Bethany NOW in December: A Time for Celebration, Fellowship, and Reflection

This December, Bethany NOW continues to offer a warm and welcoming space for our congregation to come together during the busy holiday season. We invite you to join us each Wednesday for a special time of celebration, fellowship, and reflection as we journey through Advent.

Here's what's happening in December:

Wednesday, December 3 –

Pancakes, Sausage, Grits & Pastries

On December 3, we'll enjoy breakfast for dinner! The Gift & Gourmet Market Committee will serve as our hosts for the evening, ensuring a warm and friendly atmosphere for all who attend.

Children will have their regular activities.

At 6:15 pm, adults and youth are invited to Advent worship in Spell Chapel.

Wednesday, December 10 –

Lasagna, Garlic Bread, Salad

On December 10 the meal will be served by the Searchers class—this is a great opportunity to enjoy good food and fellowship with others.

At 6:15 pm, join us again for Advent worship in Spell Chapel, where Rev. Rick Rogers-Berry will preach. It's another opportunity to reflect on the season of Advent and prepare spiritually for Christmas. Children will have their regular activities.



Wednesday, December 17 – Blue Christmas Worship

For many, the holiday season can be difficult.

On December 17, we will hold a special Blue Christmas worship service at 7 pm in Spell Chapel, led by Isaac Dusenbury, for those who may be struggling or feeling grief, loss, or loneliness this season. This service offers a space for reflection, healing, and peace during a time when the holidays can feel especially hard.

Bethany NOW is the perfect place to slow down and connect with one another during this busy season. Whether you're enjoying a meal, participating in Advent worship, or seeking comfort in the Blue Christmas service, we hope you'll make Wednesday nights at Bethany a part of your December celebrations.

We look forward to seeing you each Wednesday as we celebrate the Christmas season together!



Ministry Spotlight

Music at Bethany

At Bethany, music is one of the ways we worship, serve, and grow together as the body of Christ. From traditional choirs to modern praise bands, children's ensembles to handbells, there are opportunities for every age, skill level, and musical style. If you love music—or simply want to try something new—there's a place for you here.

Chancel Choir

The Chancel Choir leads worship most Sundays and prepares special music throughout the year. Wednesday night rehearsals are a joyful time of fellowship, learning, and praise.

Children's Choirs

Our children learn foundational musical skills while singing songs of faith. These choirs help young disciples grow in confidence, community, and worship leadership. Choirs rehearse on Wednesday evenings and sign once per month.

Youth Choir

Middle and high school students come together to sing, serve, and lead worship. The Youth Choir provides a meaningful place to grow musically and spiritually while building strong friendships. This choir practices on Wednesday evenings.

Bethany Bells

Handbell choirs for adults add a beautiful, unique texture to worship. Whether you've rung for years or are just starting out, you are welcome to join. Practices are on Thursday evenings.

Word & Table Praise Band

Our Word & Table Praise Band leads the contemporary service with modern worship music that is vibrant, heartfelt, and inviting. Vocalists and instrumentalists serve together to help create a prayerful, energetic worship experience.

Youth Praise Band

The Youth Praise Band offers students the chance to develop their musical gifts while leading worship for youth gatherings and special services. It's a meaningful way for young musicians to serve, grow in confidence, and deepen their faith. The Youth Praise Band plays at Ascend on Sunday evenings.

A Place for Everyone

Whether you sing, play, ring, or simply love the gift of music, Bethany's music ministry is a warm and welcoming place to get connected. We invite you to join us as we lift our hearts, voices, and instruments to the glory of God.

For more information about how to get involved, contact the church office—we'd love to help you find your place in Bethany's music ministry!



Music Ministries

BY REAGAN LORD

Celebrate the Joy of the Season: Festival of Carols

Bethany UMC's Music Ministries invites you to experience the wonder and beauty of the Christmas season.

Join us on **Sunday, December 21 at the 8:30 am** worship services in the Sanctuary.

We will proclaim the story of Christ's birth through song, scripture and timeless carols.

Bring your friends and join us for this glorious celebration of the season.

Bethany United Methodist Church

SUMMERVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA



Child of Peace

BETHANY UNITED METHODIST CHANCEL CHOIR & CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

STRINGS

MICAH GANGWER, KAREL ABO, RACHEL GANGWER, DANIEL MUMM

GUITAR

MIA STONE

ORGAN

Michael Lopez

A Service of Seven Lessons and Carols

Children's Ministries

Sunday, December 28

Children's Church and Children's Sunday School will be on break this Sunday to give our dedicated volunteers a well-deserved rest. We are incredibly grateful for each of you! Your commitment and love are a true blessing to the children here at Bethany. Thank you for all that you do!

THANK
YOU!
♥

Happy Hearts Luncheon

BY CATHY WILBER

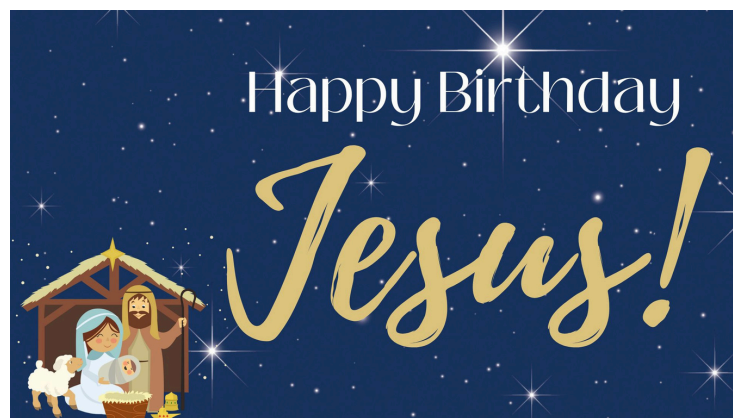
Happy Hearts Luncheon Friday , December 12

Meal Reservations Due by Sunday, December 7

Happy Hearts is delighted to welcome back Dylan Carter, the talented 20-year-old from Ladson who captured national attention on The Voice with his moving performance of Whitney Houston's "I Look to You"—a tribute to his late mother. His audition was even shared by Whitney Houston's estate, and Dylan continues to use his music to bring hope and healing to others.

Join us on **December 12** for an inspiring program as Dylan shares his story and his gift of music. A delicious lunch will be served at 12:00 noon with pork tenderloin, rice pilaf, green beans, rolls with butter, apple pie, and tea.

Please reserve your meal by **December 7** by contacting Helen Rooney at 843.771.3979 or rooneyjrclan@mac.com.



Birthday party for Jesus

Sunday, December 14

Elementary Ages – Room 213

Preschool Ages – Room 110

During the Sunday School hour, join us for a festive birthday party celebration! We will make some fun crafts, enjoy delicious cupcakes, and learn about the meaning Christmas. Don't miss out on this joyful time of learning and celebration!



KidsCare

BY MAKALA BOCZKOWSKI

As December arrives, we find ourselves swept up in the joyful hustle of Christmas—school and church performances, festive treats and crafts, opportunities to serve, and the search for the perfect gift, all while finishing the first semester of the school year. There is so much that keeps us busy, yet so much that fills our hearts with joy.

In the midst of the busyness, we invite you to pause and walk through the Crèche Festival. Enjoy the creativity of our KidsCare classes as they use everyday items to depict the birth of our Savior, and take in the beautiful nativity created through the combined efforts of the Ascend Group and our 4th- and 5th-grade students. It has been a joy to witness the Ascend youth serving alongside our KidsCare students. Their enthusiasm brought a meaningful sense of community to this season, reminding us of the importance of giving, serving, and sharing the message of Christmas.

As we search for gifts for those we love, may we also remember the greatest gift ever given—the gift of Jesus, whose birth changed the world forever. The manger was God's way of inviting us into His heavenly Kingdom. Jesus is the REASON for the season, and from God's perspective, WE are His reason for the season. What an incredible gift-giver He is!

This Christmas, may we celebrate the extraordinary gift of grace—love, salvation, and hope. On behalf of the entire KidsCare team, we pray that you and your family are blessed beyond measure and come to know our loving Heavenly Father.

Merry Christmas from all of us at Bethany KidsCare!



CDC

BY TONI PINKARD

Christmas time is truly the most wonderful time of the year at Bethany CDC! The teachers and staff cannot wait to share all the joy of the Christmas season with our students! The children will learn about the birth of Jesus and visit the animals and sets of the Living Christmas Story. They'll sing Christmas carols and make gifts for their families. Our kindergarten class will visit the Timrod Library to listen to holiday stories. Our annual Christmas Program will be held on December 18th and 19 at 9:30 am in the sanctuary. The children have been working hard to prepare for the program and they are excited to share their special songs with family and friends. The love and joy in their little voices is more precious than any gift under the tree.

Registration for the 2026/2027 school year will begin in January and the CDC will have online registration for the first time! The registration calendar is below. If you have any questions, we would be happy to talk with you! Please call the CDC office at 843-821-1946.

CDC Registration Calendar

January 7- Link to application will be made available to Current CDC Families

January 14- Current Families:
Registration Packets Due

January 15- Link to Application will be added to CDC webpage

January 21- BUMC Members:
Registration Packets Due

January 23- Former CDC Families:
Registration Packets Due

January 28- Waitlist Families:
Registration Packets Due

January 30- Community/Public Families:
Registration Packets Due

Youth Ascend

BY KYLE BOCZKOWSKI

As we move through this season of thanks and anticipation, our Student Ministry has been richly blessed with opportunities to grow, serve, and celebrate together.

Over the past month, our students have been active both within our church and throughout our community. We spent an evening volunteering with our partners at Hearts for Summerville, joined our Local Missions Team to help stuff Thanksgiving bags for families in need, and completed our Operation Christmas Child boxes—each one topped with a stuffed animal and a special Scripture passage for the child who will receive it.

On Sunday nights at ASCEND, our students explored the concept of the Butterfly Effect—the idea that small actions can have far-reaching, often unseen consequences. Together we reflected on how even the smallest acts, when placed in God's hands, can move mountains. It was a powerful reminder that our faithfulness—one kind word, one moment of service, one step of obedience—can be used by God in ways far beyond what we can imagine.

We also gathered for our annual Friendsgiving, bringing together Ascend members, friends, parents, volunteers, and guests for a joyful evening of fellowship and gratitude. What a gift it was to share a table and reflect on God's goodness together.

Now our eyes are turning toward Advent and the Christmas season. Our youth will be decorating the Youth House, attending Advent services as a group, and serving in a variety of roles in this year's Living Christmas Story. We'll close out December with our Student Ministry Christmas Party as we celebrate the birth of Christ and the joy of the season.

Beyond our regular gatherings, many of our students helped serve at the Bethany Now Meal.

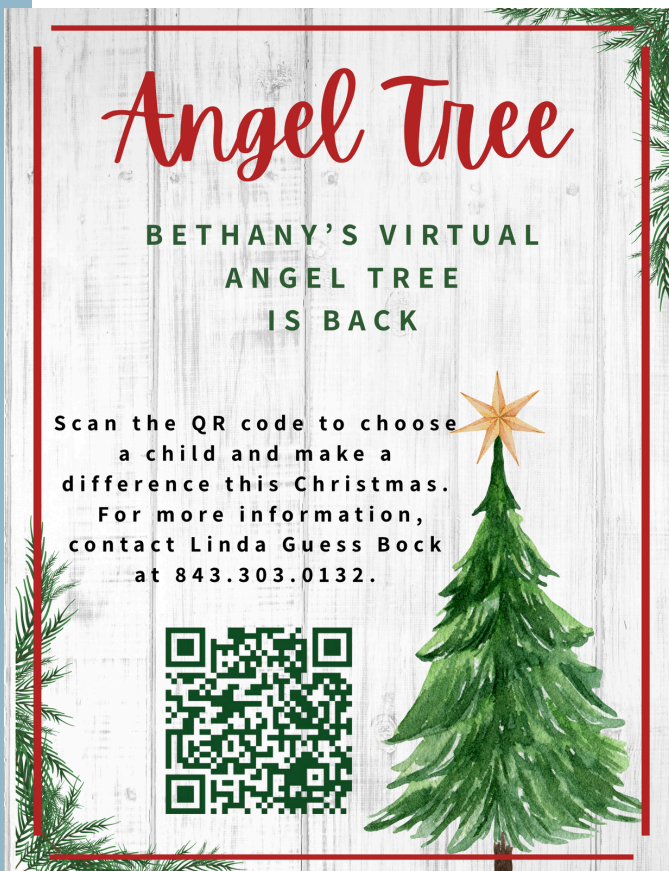
We also want to offer a special word of appreciation to Mindi and Travis Wheeler of the Student Ministries Advisory Committee for once again spearheading the Living Christmas Story. Several of our youth have been faithfully volunteering on Saturday mornings to help prepare for this incredible outreach weekend. As always, thank you for your continued prayers, encouragement, and support. You help create a community where our young people can grow in faith, deepen their discipleship, and live out the love of Christ in real, tangible ways.

We wish each of you a blessed Advent and a joyful holiday season!



*Friends
giving*

Local & Global Missions



Bring joy to a child this Christmas by participating in the Bethany Angel Tree. Simply scan the QR code to select a child's wish and help make their holiday special.

Gifts can be dropped off at the Bethany Business Office from now until December 12. If the office is closed, you may leave gifts outside the door.

The deadline for all drop-offs is December 12.

For questions or additional information, please contact Linda Guess Bock at 843.303.0132.

Thank you for sharing the spirit of Christmas!

United Women in Faith is collecting items for **Lowcountry Orphan Relief** to help bring comfort and care to children in need. Requested donations include boys' pants (all sizes), girls' pants (sizes 14-18), children's toothpaste, men's pajamas, boys' pajamas (sizes 10-18), and girls' and boys' shoes.

Please place items in the collection bin located in the hallway. Donations will be accepted through **January 4**. Thank you for your generosity and support!



Katie's Krops Desserts Needed!

We are in need of individually wrapped homemade desserts to be paired with Katie's Krops meals on **December 11** for the hungry in the local area. Please deliver to the Business Office by Thursday, December 11 no later than 11 am.

To sign up for a spot, please scan the QR code. Thank you for your help with this ministry.



Thank you to our AMAZING Volunteers!

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our hardworking and dedicated volunteers. Your faithful service and commitment are the backbone of our church, helping everything run smoothly and allowing our ministry to flourish. We are truly grateful for each of you and the difference you make in our Bethany family!



Help Us Prepare for 2026 – Send Your Dates!

To help us plan effectively and know what to expect as we look ahead to 2026, we are asking all committees and ministry groups to submit their events, meetings, and activities for the upcoming year. Please send your information to Ann Gill by December 15 at agill@bethany-umc.com.

Altar flowers

Altar flowers are a beautiful way to honor or remember a loved one or celebrate a special occasion.

The 2025 Flower Calendar is now open!

To reserve a date, contact Mandy Killiri at mkilliri@bethany-umc.com or 843.873.1230. You can also sign up on the calendar located on the bulletin board in the Sanctuary hallway.



Dear God,

As we step into 2026, we thank You for Your faithfulness and grace. We are grateful for our Bethany United Methodist Church and the blessing of our church family. Guide our hearts, bless our plans, and lead us as we grow together in faith. Help us to trust You in every moment and to shine Your light in all we do. We look forward with hope and joy to all that You have in store for us in the coming year.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



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mkilliri@bethany-umc.com.
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Office Hours:
Mon.-Thurs. 8:30 AM to 5 PM
Friday 8:30 AM to Noon

Church Office: 843.873.1230 Office Fax: 843.873.1937
Gym Office: 843.873.7261 Child Development Center: 843.821.1946
Emergency Number: If you have an emergency for which you need pastoral care at
night, on weekends, or holidays, call 843.425.1069.