



BETHANY BEACON

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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

November 2025 Volume 11

From the Pastor- State of the Church

“Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing, now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” Isaiah 43: 18–19

“There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind.” - C.S. Lewis

“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty” - Maya Angelou

As we look back on this past year at Bethany United Methodist Church, we celebrate a season of transition, renewal, growth, and faithful service. The season that we find ourselves in at Bethany continues to be difficult, but at the same time uplifting. Seeing how God is working and God’s people are stepping up to serve, minister and witness is encouraging. God has continued to bless our church with opportunities to share His love, deepen our discipleship, and strengthen our outreach both locally and globally.

Worship remains the heartbeat of Bethany. Across our traditional and contemporary services, our congregation continues to gather to glorify God and experience His transforming presence. After the separation from the schism, attendance has remained somewhat the same. From the Chancel choir to the Praise Team, from bells to children’s sermons, from prayers and scripture to the preached word, God is being glorified.

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From the pastor....continued

I am thankful to a worship committee that is committed to providing an all-around meaningful service. The work that is put forth by our music staff and laity is shown each and every service.

From our vibrant Sunday School classes to our Wednesday night “Bethany NOW” programming, opportunities for spiritual growth abound. Bible studies have strengthened connections across all ages. Bethany Child Development Center and Kid’s Care continue to provide a Christ-centered foundation for our youngest learners, while our adult small groups and studies have encouraged spiritual maturity and fellowship. We have Women of Faith and Methodist Men that is open to all. We also have six different Bible studies that one can choose from. I would encourage all to get active in these other areas beyond worship because this will strengthen your foundation. As I have said on many occasions, “If you think that you can get everything that you need from a hour worship service on Sunday morning, you are mistaken.”

Bethany continues to live out its mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world through hands-on service and compassionate giving. Holy City Missions, our Blessing Box ministry, and partnerships with local organizations such as Meals on Wheels and Epworth have made tangible impacts in our community and beyond. This Thanksgiving, our Local Missions team will once again provide hundreds of meals to families in need—evidence of what can happen when a church works together in love.

Our missions of the Angel Tree and Operation Christmas Child continue to make huge impacts at home and far away. Next summer we are currently looking forward to the return of the Summerville Salkehatchie. After several year absence due to Covid, we look forward to hosting our friends from around the state.

Our youth program has flourished under dedicated leadership, offering middle and high school students a place to grow in faith and friendship. From summer retreats to Sunday night worship, ASCEND is empowering the next generation of disciples. I have gotten to visit with our wonderful youth several times at their meetings and to say the least, I am impressed.

Not only is our future bright, but our present is bright. I, along with Kyle, led our Confirmation Class this year and walked away with an awesome experience. Our youth are special people which is a testimony to a strong foundation.

Our Children’s Ministries have continued to thrive with creative events like Vacation Bible School, the Fall Festival, and Children’s Sabbath, helping our youngest members understand that “Jesus is with you everywhere you go” and “you have a green light to share his love” as you go on your Road Trip.

Bethany’s community spirit has been on full display through events such as the Gift & Gourmet Market, the Fall Festival, and church-wide fellowship meals. These gatherings not only strengthen relationships within the congregation but also open our doors to neighbors who may be encountering Bethany for the first time.

I would be remiss if I did not speak briefly about Bethany’s staff and lay leadership as a whole as well.

To mention all the areas above would be missing something if I did not say how they came together. Bethany is blessed with an outstanding staff whose dedication, creativity, and servant hearts make every ministry possible. From our administrative team keeping the church running smoothly to our music, communications, and childcare staff enriching our worship and programs, the contributions of our staff are invaluable. I cannot stress enough how much goes into making sure this ship keeps moving in the right direction. Every member of the team goes above and beyond, demonstrating excellence in service and modeling Christ’s love daily. Our committees and ministry teams have also worked diligently to ensure the church’s mission and operations remain strong. To that I say a huge Thank You!!! As we move into a new year, we do so with hope and expectation. We believe God is calling Bethany to continue being a beacon of light in Summerville—welcoming all, serving our neighbors, and proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. With hearts full of gratitude and faith, we look forward to what God will do next in and through this church family. To God be the glory, great things He has done—and greater things are yet to come.

--Michael Ritter



Bethany UMC will honor our church family who became Saints this past year. We will recognize their names on **Sunday, November 2** during both services.

The All Saints' Banner will be in all services each Sunday until All Saints' Day. Please print the names of loved ones you want to be remembered on this special day. If you have a name that you want on the banner, and you are not here, you can call 843.873.1230 or email the office mkilliri@bethany-umc.com to have it added.



Bethany's First Ever Crèche Festival – December 10–14

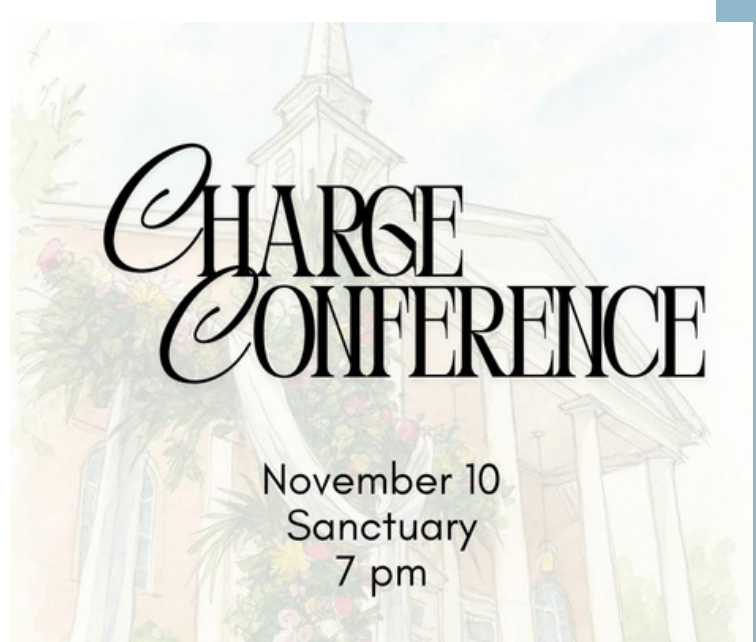
Bethany is excited to announce our first-ever Crèche Festival, a special event celebrating the beauty and meaning of the Nativity! This walk-through exhibit will feature crèches (Nativity sets) that hold special significance to our members and families.

To help us plan and prepare, we need to know how many members wish to participate. Please scan the QR code to complete and submit the participation form as soon as possible.



This festival is our gift to the congregation and the community, a meaningful way to share the story of Christ's birth through your treasured displays.

Instructions for drop-off and pick-up will be shared soon.



The Living Christmas Story

December 4-6, 2025

BY EMILY VICK

Join us for The Living Christmas Story!

- December 4: Starting at 6:30 pm – Last car in line by 8 pm.
- December 5: Starting at 6:30 pm – Last car in line by 8 pm.
- December 6: Starting at 5:30 pm – Last car in line by 8 pm.

Bethany's parking lot will once again transform into Bethlehem, as we celebrate the night our Savior, Jesus Christ, was born. Experience the wonder of that holy night through a captivating drive-through reenactment that brings the story of Christmas to life.

This beloved event takes over 200 volunteers each night, and there are many ways to be part of the story! Casting sign-ups begin November 2—you can sign up in person or online.

Ways You Can Help:

- **Set-Up:** Beginning **November 8**, we will be assembling sets and scenes every Saturday at 8:30 am. Our big set-up day is on Sunday, November 30, starting at 12 pm. Many hands are needed!
- **Food Prep/Serving:** We will serve soup and sandwiches each night. We need help with preparing, setting up, serving, and cleaning up for our cast and crew.
- **Costumes/Props:** Assist with organizing costumes, managing props, and helping cast members get ready.
- **Traffic Coordination:** Help direct cars and ensure smooth operations—15–20 volunteers needed each night.
- **Security:** On-site security is essential while the sets are up, starting from November 30. Your presence will help keep everything safe.
- **Take-Down:** After the final performance on Saturday, December 6, we'll reset the Fellowship Hall, disassemble sets and get things ready for Sunday morning starting at 7:30 pm.



- **Donate Food:**

Help provide sandwiches, chips, desserts, and drinks for our cast and crew. Sign up through your Sunday School class or contact Karen Eubanks at kareneub9561@bellsouth.net.

- **Promote the Event:**

Spread the word about the Living Christmas Story! Tell your neighbors and share on social media. The community looks forward to this event, and your help in promoting it will ensure its success!

Thank you for your support as we prepare to celebrate this meaningful story together. Scan the QR Code for volunteer opportunities. We can't wait to see you there!



Thank You for Supporting the Gift & Gourmet Market

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated in the Gift & Gourmet Market in any way! Whether you crafted, cooked, baked, volunteered, or shopped, your involvement made this year's event our best yet—with more crafts, casseroles, and desserts than ever before. It was truly heartwarming to see the wonderful support from our church family.

All proceeds from the Market will support Bethany mission programs and local charitable organizations, including Thanksgiving Food Bags, the Blessing Box, Meals on Wheels, HELP of Summerville, and more. Thank you for helping us share God's love through service and generosity!

Bethany NOW

Nurture • Outreach • Worship

BY EMILY VICK

Bethany NOW keeps the excitement going into November with fantastic classes for all ages—and it's never too late to jump in! Whether you're eager to learn something new or want to enjoy a fun game of pickleball, there's something for everyone. Come early and enjoy a delicious meal with friends before the activities begin. Wednesday evenings at Bethany are the perfect way to recharge, connect, and have fun—don't miss out!

Dinner is served each Wednesday evening from 5-6pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Prices are \$9 Adults, \$7 Seniors 65 & older, \$5 kids and family max of \$25

November Menu:

November 5: Hotdogs, baked beans, chips & coleslaw
(Sue Knight/Charles Peace class)

November 12: Fried chicken, mac & cheese, green beans
(Local & Global Missions)

November 19: Hamburgers & hotdogs (Youth)

November 26: NO BNOW



Photo Credit: Linda Grant

Pictured are members of our SALT Sunday School class, who graciously hosted one of our delicious Bethany Now (BNOW) meals. We are so thankful for our dedicated and hardworking volunteers who make these evenings of fellowship possible!



Bethany NOW

Nurture • Outreach • Worship

Wednesday Nights
Supper begins at 5 pm
Classes for everyone start at 6:15 pm

Special Bethany NOW Class – November 5

Join us on Tuesday, November 5, for a special Bethany NOW evening focused on Internet Safety for both adults and youth.

For Parents, Guardians & the Community:

Kay Phillips Child Advocacy Center will lead a one-time class, *Internet Safety: Parents, Guardians & Community*, developed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Learn what kids are doing online and how to help keep them safe from digital dangers.

Room 118 at 6:15 pm.

For Youth (6th Grade & Up):

At the same time, students are invited to the Youth House for *NetSmartz: Online Safety*, a comprehensive program also developed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, focused on smart online habits and safety awareness for teens.

Don't miss this important evening designed to keep families informed and safe online!



Global & Local Missions

Thanksgiving Bags for Our Community

Bethany is once again sharing the spirit of gratitude by providing Thanksgiving Bags for Hearts of Summerville and other local families in need.

Our Local Missions Team is requesting financial donations to help make this meaningful outreach possible.

Please make your donations by **November 16**, and be sure to mark payments with “Thanksgiving Bags” in the memo line.

Thank you for your continued generosity—your support helps ensure that families in our community can enjoy a warm and joyful Thanksgiving meal.



Katie's Krops Desserts Needed!

We are in need of individually wrapped homemade desserts to be paired with Katie's Krops meals on **November 13** for the hungry in the local area.

Please deliver to the Business Office by Thursday, November 13 no later than 11am.

To sign up for a spot, please scan the QR code.

Thank you for your help with this ministry.



United Women in Faith: Partnering with Lowcountry Orphan Relief

The United Women in Faith is hosting a collection to benefit the Lowcountry Orphan Relief Center.

They are seeking ethnic hair care products, new or gently loved stuffed animals, and new or gently used boys' pants (any size).

Donations may be placed in the collection box located in the hallway through **December 7**.

Thank you for your continued kindness and generosity—your giving spirit truly makes a difference in the lives of children in need!



Global & Local Missions

Operation Christmas Child

It's that time of year again when God gives us the opportunity to love our neighbors and witness to children. Operation Christmas Child, led by Samaritan's Purse, is an international mission that shares God's love with millions of children in more than 170 countries through simple shoebox gifts.

Shoeboxes are available throughout the church—feel free to pick one up, fill it, and return it to the same location by **November 14**. Scan the QR code below for ideas of what to pack.



Our youth will help prepare the boxes for local pickup at Crossroads Community Church. They will also add a small stuffed animal with a Bible verse attached, so please do not seal your box. Each box will be prayed over before being sent.

If you would prefer to donate financially, please mark your gift for Operation Christmas Child. As always, every mission at Bethany is sustained by your prayers and would not be possible without God's provision. This is a wonderful opportunity to share the love and grace of Jesus Christ across the world.

For questions, please contact Benjie and Kelly Rodgers at kbrodgers1@aol.com.



CDC

BY TONI PINKARD

In November, the students at Bethany CDC will have special Thanksgiving celebrations with their classmates and talk about the many blessings in their lives. They will continue to learn about the wonders of fall, take nature walks, and make the quintessential preschool craft... handprint turkeys.



All of us at the CDC are thankful for our many blessings including:

- Wonderful students and families
- Caring, dedicated teachers who love their students like their own children
- A church community that supports our mission and ministry
- And of course... God's grace and love

As we are called to do in 1 Thessalonians 5:16 – 18, we will rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances.

KidsCare

BY MAKALA BOCZKOWSKI

November is a time for us to reflect on all that we are grateful for here at KidsCare! We thank God for His many blessings during this past summer camp and throughout the current school year. He has provided us with caring, qualified counselors and drivers, and continues to guide us as we share with our children each day that God always has a plan. When something feels wrong or missing in life, turning to Him brings calm and understanding.

We truly enjoy pouring our hearts into this program and thank God for every blessing He brings our way.

A big *thank you* to everyone who headed out to Hutchinson Square to vote for our Scarecrow on the Square! At the time of writing this, we don't yet know the winner—but we're so grateful for the opportunity to share that that just like God had a plan for Jonah—He has a plan for you!

We are excited to offer **Thanksgiving Camp** on **November 24–25** and half a day on **November 26**.

Looking ahead, we'll also hold **Christmas and New Year's Camps** on **December 22–23** and **December 29–30**, with a half-day on **December 31**.

Contact us soon if you'd like your child to join in the fun!

We'll also be holding a **Food Drive** from **November 10–21** to help stock the Bethany UMC Food Pantry. In addition, KidsCare will be partnering with Bethany's Ascend Youth Group to create a nativity scene for the first-ever Crèche Festival here at Bethany. This special collaboration will bring together our middle and high school youth with our elementary students to create a young person's version of the Greatest Story Ever Told—a wonderful way to share faith and creativity across generations.

If you'd like to learn more about KidsCare—or know someone who might—please reach out! We currently have some openings available.



Children's Ministries

BY EMILY VICK

A Great Big Thank You

The Children's Ministry Team would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped make Children's Sabbath so special. From our young participants to the volunteers, musicians, and congregation—your support and enthusiasm made the day shine. It was a joyful time of worship centered around our theme: "Life is Sweet with Jesus".



Children's Church

Children's Church is offered during both the 8:30 and 11 am worship services for children ages 4 years through 2nd grade. After the Children's Moment, the kids are invited to room 214, where they'll explore a Bible story, watch a short video, and enjoy crafts or games that reinforce the lesson. It's a fun, hands-on way to learn about God's Word and how it applies to everyday life! If your child participates, please remember to attach a sticker with your contact information.

We're always looking for volunteers to help lead these meaningful sessions at either service. If you'd like to be part of this ministry, please contact Emily Vick.



Youth ASCEND

BY KYLE BOCZKOWSKI

October was an exciting and full month for our Student Ministry! We kicked things off with a trip to a Jacksonville Jaguars game on October 12 and spent an evening exploring the West Farm Corn Maize during Bethany Now. One of the highlights of the month was hosting and facilitating Bethany's Annual Fall Festival. This event was a major undertaking and a meaningful service project for our group. It was incredible to see our students, families, and church community come together to make it happen.

A huge thank you goes out to all of our amazing Bethany families, Sunday School classes, the Summerville Police and Fire Departments, and the many local businesses who helped make the day such a great success. We wrapped up the month with our annual ASCEND Halloween Party and finished a month-long teaching series called Science and Our Faith, exploring how our belief in God and our curiosity about the world work together.

As we move into November, our schedule remains full of opportunities for fellowship, service, and growth.

🔦 **November 8:** Ghost Tour of Downtown Charleston

🐔 **November 16:** Annual Friendsgiving Party

♥ **Service Projects:**

- Working with local missions to fill Thanksgiving Bags (Nov. 16)
- Volunteering with Hearts for Summerville (Nov. 12)
- Packing and sealing Operation Christmas Child boxes (Nov. 19)

As always, thank you for your continued support and prayers for our students. God is doing great things through the youth of Bethany, and we can't wait to see how He continues to move as we enter this season of gratitude and service.



Youth ASCEND

BY KYLE BOCZKOWSKI



Ministry Spotlight

Ministry Spotlight: Missions at Bethany – Sharing God’s Love in Our Community

As we enter this season of gratitude, Bethany’s Missions Team is especially thankful for the many ways our church family reaches out to our neighbors in need. Through your generosity, we are able to share Christ’s love in practical, meaningful ways all year long.

This Thanksgiving, our **Thanksgiving Bag Ministry** will provide over 200 local families with everything they need for a special holiday meal. Your monetary donations help fill these bags with love and nourishment. We are working with Hearts for Summerville to provide Thanksgiving meals to their families.

As the Christmas season approaches, our **Angel Tree** brings joy to children and families by providing gifts to those who might otherwise go without. Each angel represents a life touched by your kindness and a reminder that we are called to be Christ’s hands and heart in the world. Look for information on the Angel Tree and how you can adopt a child soon.

Our **Blessing Box**, located in front of Spell Chapel, is a year-round mission of compassion—offering food to anyone in need, any time of day. Every item placed in the box is a small act of faith and hope for someone facing hard times. Donations are always accepted, both monetary and in-kind. Especially helpful are canned meats, pop-top canned pastas, and crackers. Items can be placed directly in the Blessing Box or brought to the Business Office.

Through **Plarning**, volunteers turn plastic grocery bags into durable sleeping mats for those experiencing homelessness. It’s a creative ministry that transforms what might be discarded into something life-giving and filled with care. Bring your plastic grocery bags anytime and donate to this ministry.


And through **Hands of Christ**, Bethany helps ensure children start the school year ready to learn. Each backpack, notebook, and pencil provided is a tool for success and a tangible sign of love for our community’s students.

Together, these ministries reflect the heart of Bethany—serving God by serving others. Thank you for giving, volunteering, and praying. Your hands and hearts make a difference every day.

“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

– Matthew 5:16






**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

If you or someone you know would like to speak with a Stephen Minister, please contact the church office or Rev. Isaac Dusenbury.

Scan to learn more about Stephen Ministry



Get Connected



Interested in Joining Our Church Family?

Are you ready to make Bethany your church home—or simply want to learn more about who we are and what we believe?

Join us for our next Bethany Basics Class on Sunday, **November 16**, from 3–5:30 pm in the Friendship Circle Classroom.

Come meet our pastors, learn about Bethany's ministries, and discover how you can get connected!

Sunday School Highlight:

Daily Bread Sunday School Class

The Daily Bread Sunday School Class invites you to join them on a fascinating journey through the Apocrypha—the ancient writings found between the Old and New Testaments. These books offer unique historical insight, wisdom, and faith stories that help deepen our understanding of Scripture and the world of early Christianity.

The class enjoys open discussion, thoughtful reflection, and plenty of good fellowship as they explore how these lesser-known texts connect to our faith today. Whether you're new to Bible study or a lifelong learner, you'll find a welcoming group ready to learn and grow together. The Daily Bread Class meets each Sunday during the Sunday School hour in Room 237. Bring your Bible, your curiosity, and maybe even a cup of coffee—there's always room at the table!



Deck the Halls with Christmas Greens and Poinsettias!

One of the highlights of the season at Bethany is decorating our worship spaces with beautiful Christmas greens and poinsettias for Advent and Christmas.

Greenery and Poinsettias may be purchased in honor or in memory of a loved one. Look for order forms in your bulletin and around the church starting **November 9**. Poinsettias are \$20 each and the deadline to reserve yours is November 30.

Celebrate the season and help make our sanctuary shine!

Get Connected

Happy Hearts

There will be no Happy Hearts Meeting in November due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

We look forward to gathering again in December!



Dennis Circle Fun at the Craft Fair!

Dennis Circle had a wonderful time making Blondie recipe jars for the Gift & Gourmet! Everyone had so much fun that now everyone wants to try the recipe at home.

Our crafty ladies were thrilled to contribute 12 jars to sell at the fair—what a sweet success!

Photo credit: Linda Grant

Something for Everyone at Bethany!

Did you know Bethany offers a variety of groups and programs for all ages and interests? Join one of our men's or women's Bible studies, which meet weekly for fellowship and spiritual growth.

Our **United Methodist Men** gather on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7 pm for a delicious steak dinner and great fellowship. **The United Women of Faith** have several active circles that focus on missions, social outings, and meaningful connections.

And don't miss Happy Hearts, our monthly lunch group filled with laughter, fellowship, and fantastic entertainment!

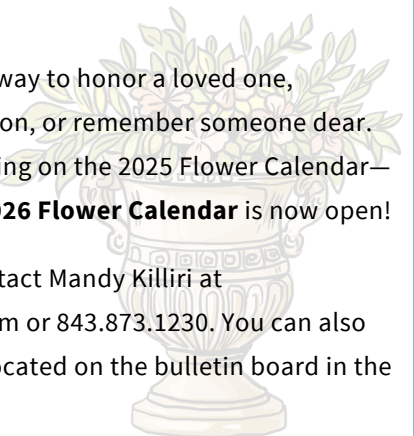
There's truly something for everyone at Bethany. For more information about any of these groups or programs, contact the church office at 843.873.1230.



Altar flowers

Altar flowers are a lovely way to honor a loved one, celebrate a special occasion, or remember someone dear. We have one date remaining on the 2025 Flower Calendar—**November 23**, and the **2026 Flower Calendar** is now open!

To reserve your 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.



Recreation Ministries

BY KYLE BOCZKOWSKI

It's been an exciting season for Recreation Ministries at Bethany! We recently wrapped up another incredible year of Girls' Volleyball, with over 100 players participating this fall. It was a fantastic season filled with learning, teamwork, and growth. The championship games were intense and highly competitive, showcasing just how far our athletes have come.

A huge thank you goes out to Coach Abby Whitworth and her dedicated coaching staff for their hard work, leadership, and passion for helping our young ladies grow in both skill and character.

Looking ahead, basketball registration is now open! All Bethany families are eligible for a special discount—just enter the code Wesley at checkout. You can register today using the link below and secure your spot for another great season on the court.

We're also gearing up for our Annual Member-Guest Golf Tournament on Saturday November 15th at the Summerville Country Club. The cost is \$200 per team (two-man teams), and it's shaping up to be a wonderful day of fellowship and friendly competition. You can register using the link below, or call me directly at 843.469.5917 to sign up your team.

Golf Registration:



Basketball Registration:



In addition to our youth sports, we have several ongoing adult recreation opportunities each week:

- 🏐 Adult Volleyball – Sunday nights, 7:30–10 pm
- 🏓 Pickleball – Monday and Thursday mornings
- 🧘 Yoga – Tuesday and Thursday mornings, 8:30–9:30 am

Each of these adult programs is open to everyone and costs just \$5 per session to participate.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support and participate in our recreation ministries. Through sports, fellowship, and faith, we're building a stronger, more connected Bethany community—one game at a time!



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118 West 3rd South Street
Summerville, SC
29483 - 5997

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The Bethany Beacon is published monthly by Bethany United Methodist Church.
Articles, story ideas, questions, comments, news or photos may be sent to Communications at
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Please email your address changes or if you would like to be removed from the Bethany Beacon Newsletter
mailing list. Submissions are due the 15th of each month.

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Friday 8:30 AM to Noon

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night, on weekends, or holidays, call 843.425.1069.