



BETHANY BEACON

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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

January 2026 Volume 1

From the Pastor

A minister wrote in the church newsletter that he was setting goals for the New Year. One of his goals was to clean up his desk. Another of his goals was to find last year's goals. Some of you probably keep desks like that. Unfortunately, some of you know I do. Some of you will remember the Calvin and Hobbes comic strip. In one strip, Calvin and Hobbes are talking about the New Year. Calvin says, "I'm getting disillusioned with these New Years. They don't seem very new at all. Each New Year is just like the old year. Here another year has gone by and everything's still the same. There's still pollution and war and stupidity and greed. Things haven't changed. I say, what kind of future is this? I thought things were supposed to improve. I thought the future was supposed to be better."

Hobbes replies with his usual keen insight, "The problem with the future is that it keeps turning into the present."

The New Year is traditionally a time for reflection. We look back over the year and assess our successes and failures. We gain some satisfaction over our successes, and we experience some grief and guilt over our failures. Each time we face a new beginning. We have hopes that things will be different and hopefully better. But as Hobbes says, the future just keeps turning into more of the present.

Exodus 23:20 states, "See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared."



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I sometimes think New Year's Day comes at the wrong time of year. I'm usually facing a bunch of tasks left over from the old year, like taking down the Christmas tree and putting away all the decorations. I am also trying to catch up with all the work I put off during the holidays. I'm behind before the New Year even starts.

Who can think about new beginnings or inspirational goals in the midst of old concerns? How am I going to accomplish all that needs to be accomplished? But then I remember that I am not in this game of life by myself. I have a God who has never left me. How soon we forget? We just celebrated His birthday, but we allow the "world" to creep back into our lives with all the doubts and roadblocks that life can throw at us.

There is a card that someone gave me a few years back at Christmas (that I am sure I have around my desk somewhere) that states just this message that I need not forget. It was handwritten in calligraphy. The message read: "Michael, trust Me. I have everything under control. —Jesus"

When I received that card, I sat there staring at it for some time. Slowly, those words began to change my frame of mind. If I needed something to help me carry my old concerns into the New Year, I'd just found it—the determination to face each day's concerns, trusting in the words of this promise from the Source of all comfort and strength.

The fact is, we need to place ourselves in God's hands now more than ever. With all that is going on in our world, we need to trust that God is with us. May this new year be a time when you can let go of the past, embrace the present, and prepare for the future that God has in store for you! Happy New Year!!!

Altar flowers

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

The 2026 Flower Calendar is now open and there are **MANY** available dates.

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.

The Flower Team is in need of small-sized vases for arrangements prepared for our homebound and hospitalized members. If you have any vases you would like to donate, please drop them off in the box located downstairs by the Welcome Center. Thank you for helping us share care and encouragement through this ministry!



Katie's Krops Desserts Needed!

We are in need of individually wrapped homemade desserts to be paired with Katie's Krops meals on **January 15** for the hungry in the local area. Please deliver to the Business Office by Thursday, January 15 no later than 11 am.

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



Bethany NOW

BY EMILY VICK

The spring session of Bethany NOW begins Wednesday, January 21. The schedule includes four weeks of classes, followed by Lenten worship, and then four additional weeks of classes after Easter.

Epiphany: The Holy Interruption

Room TBD

Led by Rev. Richard & Chris Rogers-Berry

Epiphany is not quiet or polite. It is God breaking into the world—interrupting journeys, naming belovedness, dazzling us on mountaintops, and finally choosing to dwell among us. In this four-week series, we follow the moments when God is revealed and discover how these holy interruptions transform not only what we see, but how we live.

The Study of Revelation

Room 128

Led by Stan Petrohovich and Joan Naugle

The book of Revelation is one of the most complex—and often misunderstood—books of the Bible. Its vivid imagery and symbolism can sometimes feel confusing or even intimidating. In this class, we will explore Revelation together, seeking to better understand its message, context, and meaning, and what it offers us as people of faith today.

Please read the first two chapters of Revelation and bring your Bible to class.

Threads of Grace

Room 119

Led by Nancy Wiley

A welcoming class for anyone interested in knitting or crocheting—whether you're just starting out or have years of experience. You'll learn or build on your skills in a supportive and creative environment. As part of the class, you'll also have the chance to join our Prayer Shawl Team, creating handmade shawls that bring comfort and care to those in need.

Plarning: Crafting with a Purpose

Room 122

This class introduces you to the creative and eco-friendly art of turning plastic bags into "plarn" (plastic yarn). In this hands-on class, you'll learn how to cut, connect, and crochet or knit plarn into useful items like sleeping mats for those in need. No experience is necessary—just bring your willingness to learn and help the environment while making a difference in your community.

Bethany
NOW
Nurture • Outreach • Worship

Creative Sewing

Room 127

Led by Penny Limehouse

A relaxed and welcoming group for anyone who enjoys crafting, no matter the skill level or project type. Whether you're mending, crafting, or creating something entirely new, bring your work-in-progress and enjoy a time of creativity and connection. This group is all about fellowship—sharing ideas, encouraging one another, and enjoying the joy of making things together.

Youth (6th – 12th grades) Activities

6:00-6:45 Youth Choir Practice Spell Chapel

6:15- 7:30 Small Group Youth House A dynamic youth program that blends small groups, mission projects, and fun events to build faith, friendships, and a heart for serving others.

Kids (ages 4 by Sept. 1, 2025 – 5th grade) Activities

6:00 – 6:45 4-year-olds - Kindergarten Cherub Choir Practice - Room 233

1st – 2nd Grade Melody Choir Practice - Sanctuary or Bible Adventures - Room 124

3rd – 5th Grade Crafting Faith - Art Room 121

6:45 – 7:30 4-year-olds - 2nd Graders Crafting Faith - Art Room 121

3rd – 5th Grade Wesley Choir Practice - Sanctuary or Bible Adventures - Room 124

All children should be signed into their first activity. Volunteers will walk them to their second activity and children can be picked up promptly at 7:30 pm from there. A nursery is available for children under 4.

Dinner Costs

\$9 Adults

\$7 Seniors 65 & Older

\$5 Kids 12 & under

\$25 Family Max (immediate family)

We are deeply grateful to all the classes, small groups, and volunteers who provided meals for the Fall Bethany NOW session. Your generosity, teamwork, and delicious food created a welcoming space where families could gather, connect, and focus on growing in faith together. As we look ahead, we are now seeking classes and groups to help provide meals for the Spring Bethany NOW session, which begins in January and runs through April. If your group is interested in serving in this meaningful way, we would love to have you be part of making Bethany NOW a continued success. Contact Emily if you can help.

The Living Christmas Story

BY EMILY VICK

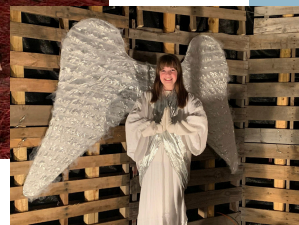
Thank You for Bringing the Living Christmas Story to Life

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Living Christmas Story such a powerful and meaningful experience. From planning and preparation to serving on event nights, this ministry was truly a church-wide effort, and we are deeply grateful to all who participated in any way.

While we were disappointed to cancel Saturday's presentation, the decision was made with care for the safety of our participants and guests due to weather conditions. Even so, we were blessed to welcome over 2,000 people in just two nights, offering thousands in our community a beautiful way to experience the story of Christ's birth. The food was a highlight for all, and we extend sincere thanks to everyone who worked in the kitchen or brought food to share. Your generosity and hospitality made the cast and crew feel warmly welcomed from the moment they arrived.

Behind the scenes, nearly 50 volunteers worked tirelessly each night to make the Living Christmas Story run smoothly—from costume helpers and animal care to traffic direction, cast check-in, and countless other essential roles. We are especially grateful for the dedicated leadership and coordination team who brought it all together: Travis Wheeler and Seth Woolwine, whose vision and countless hours guided the entire event. Special thanks to Minde Wheeler (Costumes), Karen Eubanks (Food), Jennifer Horres (Animals), Rebecca Dunlap (Props and Set Design), Anthony Perietti (Security), Joey Herring (Trams), Chuck Lewis and Shane Kersting (Traffic), Jennifer Herring and Ann Gill (Casting), and Cori Woolwine (Plants).

We also want to recognize the committee members who devoted countless hours to setup, breakdown, and on-set support: Greg Horres, Melanie Hay, Patrick Brickman, Rachel Brickman, Mark Watson, and Emily Watson. Your behind-the-scenes faithfulness made all the difference. Because of each of you, the Living Christmas Story once again shared the hope, joy, and love of Christmas with our community.



Thank You for Making the Crèche Festival a Success

Thank you to everyone who participated in our first-ever Crèche Festival and helped make it such a meaningful and memorable event for our church and community. Because of your generosity and creativity, more than 100 nativity sets were shared and displayed, representing an incredible variety of styles, materials, cultures, and places of origin.

We were thrilled to welcome over 300 visitors, many of whom took time to slowly walk through the displays, read the descriptions, and learn the personal stories behind each crèche. Hearing the history and meaning connected to each set added depth and beauty to the experience.

While every display was special, the clear crowd favorites were the nativity scenes created by our CDC and KidsCare classes. Their joyful, creative interpretations of the Christmas story brought smiles to many faces and reminded us all of the wonder of the season through the eyes of children.

Thank you again to everyone who loaned a crèche, helped with setup and hospitality, volunteered during the festival, and came to support this new tradition. Your participation helped bring the story of Christ's birth to life in a powerful and welcoming way.



O Lord, let my
New Year's resolution
be to
follow you
more closely
and to
trust in your
loving guidance.

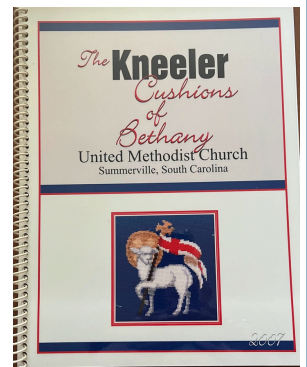
YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES

KICK OFF EVENT

January 29- more details coming soon!!

Ages 19-30

Bethany has numerous copies of this book about our kneelers in the sanctuary, a 2007 project completed by our members. Should you be interested in receiving a copy, please call Shirley 843-329-2447.



United Methodist Men – Volunteers Needed

United Methodist Men is partnering with PGA HOPE to support Special Olympics athletes, EMTs, and veterans. We are seeking a few volunteers to help serve breakfast at an event at Wescott Golf Course on Saturday, **January 3**. If you are able to assist, please contact Rodney at 843.709.0953.

Children's Ministries

BY EMILY VICK

Behind every joyful Sunday morning, meaningful Wednesday night, and special children's event is a dedicated group of volunteers working together to help our children grow in faith. The Children's Ministries Team plays a vital role in the life of our church by planning children's events, overseeing ongoing programs, and recruiting and supporting volunteers who serve our youngest members.

This team helps ensure that our children experience a safe, welcoming environment where they can learn about God's love, build friendships, and grow as part of our church family. From seasonal celebrations to weekly programming, their behind-the-scenes work makes a lasting impact.

The Children's Ministries Team will meet next on January 4 at 4:00 p.m. in the conference room. If you have a heart for children, enjoy planning and organizing, or are simply looking for a meaningful way to serve, we would love to have you join us. For more information or to get involved, please contact Emily.

Bridges Special Needs Ministry – Volunteers Needed!

Bridges Special Needs Ministry exists to support and encourage families by creating a welcoming, safe, and loving environment for children with special needs and their siblings. Our goal is to ensure that every family knows they belong and is supported within the life of our church.

On Sunday mornings, Bridges provides care so parents and caregivers can attend worship and Sunday School with peace of mind, knowing their children are cared for by trained and compassionate volunteers.

In addition, Bridges Respite Nights are offered monthly for children with special needs and their siblings. These evenings give parents and caregivers the opportunity to enjoy a much-needed night out while their children participate in a fun, safe, and supportive experience at church.

This ministry is only possible because of dedicated volunteers who share their time, compassion, and gifts. As the ministry grows, additional volunteers are essential to continue offering safe, high-quality care and to ensure Bridges can serve families consistently and effectively. If you are interested in serving or learning more, please contact Jennifer Horres at jbhorres@hotmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE



VBS Save the Date

June 15-19

If interested in volunteering, contact Emily at evick@bethany-umc.com

CDC

BY TONI PINKARD



Do you have children or grandchildren going into preschool/kindergarten? We would love to tell you more about the programs we offer at Bethany Child Development Center! Our mission is to provide a high-quality early childhood program in a safe and nurturing environment which promotes the physical, social, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual development of young children. Bethany CDC's play-based program offers small class sizes in a warm, nurturing Christian environment. Our teachers care about every child and they work hard to create exciting learning activities that are appropriate for the children's age and developmental level. We offer music classes, art classes, chapel time, and more for children ages 2 – kindergarten.

Registration for the 2026/2027 school year is underway now! If you have any questions, please call the CDC office at 843-821-1946. We would be happy to talk with you!

Ministry Spotlight

Congregational Care

Congregational Care is the heart of Bethany—quietly present, deeply compassionate, and grounded in Christ’s call to love one another. Through this ministry, care is extended in meaningful ways to individuals and families during seasons of grief, illness, transition, and need.

Grief Support

Walking with those who mourn is a sacred calling. Our Congregational Care ministry offers grief support to remind individuals that they are not alone and that God’s love surrounds them even in the hardest moments. The Grief Support group meets twice a month.

Visitation, Encouragement & Care

Through hospital and home visits, thoughtful check-ins, flower deliveries, and home communion, trained volunteers offer a listening ear, prayer, and the comforting presence of the church. These tangible expressions of care remind recipients that they are remembered, valued, and deeply connected to the Bethany family—no matter where they are.

Loving Hands Funeral Meals Team

During times of loss, the Loving Hands team provides meals for families following funerals. This ministry offers nourishment, hospitality, and grace, allowing families space to grieve while being surrounded by love and support.

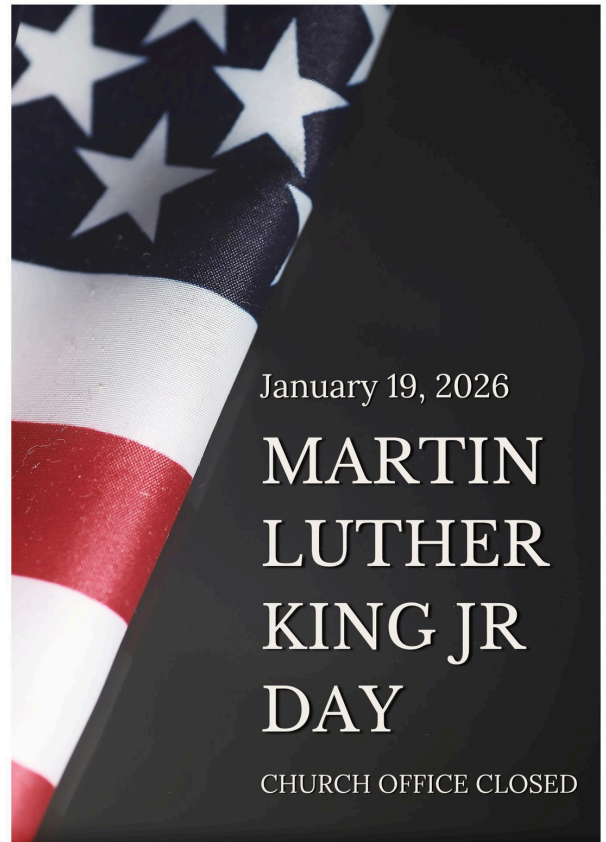
Prayer Shawl Ministry

Hand-crocheted prayer shawls are lovingly created and delivered to those in need of comfort. Each shawl is a physical reminder of prayer, warmth, and God’s abiding presence during difficult seasons.

Congregational Care is made possible through faithful volunteers who serve with compassion, humility, and love. If you feel called to serve—or if you or someone you know could benefit from this ministry—please contact the church office. Together, we continue to be the hands and heart of Christ to one another.

Happy Hearts

Happy Hearts Luncheon will be held on **Friday, January 23**, and everyone is invited to join us for a delightful time of food, fellowship, and entertainment. We are excited to welcome back Jesse Cockcroft, the strolling accordion player who also plays the piano—always a crowd favorite and returning by popular demand! Meal reservations are due by January 18 for a delicious lunch featuring fried chicken, mac n’ cheese, green beans, rolls, dessert, and iced tea, all for \$10.00, served promptly at 12:00 noon (please note the updated meal information). To reserve your meal, contact Dot at 843-343-5450 or email dmprevatte@yahoo.com. Doors open at 11:15 am for fellowship, so come early, enjoy wonderful entertainment, savor a great meal, and be sure to invite a friend—this event is open to all ages!



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Office Hours:
Mon.-Thurs. 8:30 AM to 5 PM
Friday 8:30 AM to Noon

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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.