



December 2020

A publication of Bethany United Methodist Church, Weyers Cave, VA



## REDISCOVER CHRISTMAS: GOOD NEWS IN TROUBLING TIMES

This has been a weird year. People have said this year seems like it will never end but other times it has flown by. And all the while we have lived our lives in the shadow of the pandemic and a hotly contested presidential election. Now seems like the perfect time to settle into Advent and Rediscover Christmas which happens to be our theme for Advent this year. **Because no matter how troubling the times, and no matter how heavy our hearts, there is good news. The greatest news!**

As the angels proclaimed it on the night of Jesus's birth long ago:

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

I hope you'll join us.

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If you would like ...  
and currently don't  
receive the church  
newsletter  
and other important  
updates by email, please  
send your email address  
to Cindy Kite at  
[office.bethany@gmail.com](mailto:office.bethany@gmail.com).





## From the Pastor's Desk

### Chrismons

Ruth was a former parishioner who lived across the street from the parsonage. The previous minister told me to watch out for Ruth and never give her the keys to the parsonage. I'll admit that Ruth was a little quirky and I imagine that in her heyday she probably kept more than one pastor on his or her toes, but my family came to love her.

She kept a mannequin named Matilda in her car. Ruth had picked her up when the Miller and Rhodes department store closed. She was a widow by then and thought she would be safer if people thought she was riding with a companion. Ruth passed away some years ago but I like to think that Matilda is still riding with the granddaughter who inherited her.

Ruth was in charge of the Chrismons that decorated the Christmas tree in the sanctuary. They were stored in her house because she felt there wasn't a secure place to lock them away at the church when they weren't being used. She didn't want anyone with grubby fingers poking around among the Chrismons. Ruth also supervised putting up the artificial tree and the placement of the ornaments. According to Ruth they needed to be placed a certain way because they told a story.

Chrismons are the white and gold ornaments first popularized by Mrs. Frances Kipps Spencer in 1957. The ornaments were first used on the Christmas tree of Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia. The designs were different symbols for our Lord Jesus Christ. Because these designs have been used by his

followers since biblical times, they are the heritage of all Christians. Mrs. Spencer is the one who coined the word Chrismon which stands for Christ's monograms.

Mrs. Spencer wrote four books about the making and use of Chrismons. Perhaps one of the books outlines how to arrange the ornaments in the way that Ruth insisted was the only way. I remember the highest ornament on the tree was the crown and next below that was the hand of God. I admit that as much as I cared for Ruth, I prefer Bethany's tradition of having everyone decorate the tree with ornaments that can be handled by people big and small. I love that every ornament has a story and more than one story. Yes, there is the story of the symbol, which we will be

focusing on during the Children's Moments through Advent, but there is also the story of who and when they were made. You can't buy Chrismons. Mrs. Spencer was very clear about that. What she shared were the directions and patterns of the ornaments and the meaning of the symbols.

My favorite Chrismon is the Tau Cross and Serpent. It looks like a capital "T" with a snake coiled around it. A snake seems like an odd addition to a Christmas tree but it comes from John 3:14-15, "And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." It is a symbol of healing. In Numbers 21:9, Moses makes the image of a serpent out of bronze and puts it up on a pole so anyone who is bitten by a snake can look up and be healed. In John's Gospel, Jesus tells Nicodemus that God's son will be lifted up one day because "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Because Christ was lifted up we are all healed of sin. Ultimately, that is at the heart of the Christmas story. We are healed, which seems like a message for our time.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas Season ...

*Pastor Susan*



## Year End Giving by Jerry Sheets

Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me. Psalm 103:2

Greetings Bethany family. I hope you all had a blessed Thanksgiving with much to be thankful for.

In spite of current conditions our church remains a caring and sharing congregation. And it is at this time of year, in particular, that our hearts and minds focus on all that we have been given and with sharing those blessings with others. Our Christmas giving is a way of celebrating the gift God gave to us in his Son, Jesus.

As we all know, there is a great amount of need in our communities, nation and world. And I know also that you are aware of – so I will not repeat- all of the ways God’s mission is achieved through our church. So we encourage you again this year to consider a “second mile” extra gift to Bethany as one of your yearend gift recipients. And if you have a heart for a particular area of Bethany’s mission, please feel free to designate an area for your gift to be used. Your gift can also be given in honor of, or in memory of, a loved one.

In planning for your gift, please ask for a financial report as to our current budget needs. Also, you may contact the



church office if you would like to know what your giving has been so far this year. Yearend special offerings can be placed in the worship service offering baskets, dropped off at the church office, mailed or made online. All amounts received before the end of December will be shown on the 2020 giving tax statements.

Merry Christmas and thank you, as always, for your support of Bethany through your gifts, service and prayers.

Jerry Sheets, Stewardship Chair

Please remember all giving has to be in the office or postmarked by Dec. 31 to be posted on your 2020 giving statement!

## Congratulations, Jac Bridges!

Jac was elected a District Member at Large to the 2021 Annual Conference.

District Members at Large are elected to balance the number of clergy with an equal number of lay members.

Thank you for serving!





## Missions Update

by Lori Mooney

December, WOW, what a year it has been? Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you from the Missions Team. Hope that you get to spend some time with extended family this holiday season. Wishing everyone the best in 2021. It must get better. We will keep truckin' on, no matter what is thrown our way. Keep your chin up and look for a better day on the horizon.

THANK YOU so much for all the donations for Kingsway Missions Apple Tree Project. When the items were all dropped off, Pat was so excited that we were able to fulfill all our envelopes and even buy a couple extra gifts card. So, thank you all for all you do and know that you are making a difference in another child's Christmas this year.

So, the Salvation Army needs bell ringers for this season. If you are interested and feel so led to help with this adventure, you can look on [registertoring.com](http://registertoring.com) or let Lori Mooney know that you are interested and she can sign you up for a time slot.

Mission Focus of the Month: Friends of Barnabas has been our mission outreach for the past several years here at Bethany whenever we did our Christmas services. Unfortunately, this year because of COVID, we were not able to send a group to Honduras to help with the Mountain Medical Team. Not sure when groups will be able to start going again. We wanted to still give focus to this group this month on top of all that is going on. FOB Mountain Medical Mission Teams provide primary and preventative healthcare. They set up anti-parasite & vitamin stations as well as general medicine, eye, and dental clinics in

small schools and churches. The teams travel throughout the impoverished departments of central Honduras and serve between 1,500 and 2,000 people in their traveling clinics each month. Please keep all people from all nations in your thoughts and prayers with this global pandemic, especially the ones that lack medical facilities, doctors, and nurses, like we have here in our backyard.

“Start by doing what is necessary; then do what is possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.” -Francis of Assisi

If you know of anyone who needs help, please let us know.

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820-7394

Maggie Rhodes,  
[r.maggianne@gmail.com](mailto:r.maggianne@gmail.com)  
383-4752



## The BUMS Christmas Post Office is officially OPEN!!

Want to spread some old fashioned Christmas cheer? Send Christmas greetings through the BUM Post Office. All “mail” will be quarantined before delivery. Postage is a donation of .25 cents per card or whatever donation you want to make which goes to the BUM Mission Fund. Please have greetings to the church on or before Sunday, Dec. 20. If you are at the service on the 20th, your mail will be sorted and available for pick up.

We will assemble teams to deliver mail to our shut-ins before Christmas. If you would like to volunteer for delivery please let Julie Ritchie know and she will put you on the list. If there is someone you would like to deliver to, let her know that as well, otherwise she will be coordinating small delivery routes with folks who sign up to deliver. Julie's contact information ... 540-383-9445 or [jaritchie@comcast.net](mailto:jaritchie@comcast.net).

What a wonderful way to share the Christmas spirit with others!



## Waiting ...

Each month I ask a member to write something for the newsletter. (Next month it could be you!) This month I thought I would write it since its Advent ... my favorite time to be in church!

Advent is "the waiting on the arrival of a notable person, thing or event." Waiting is the key word here for me. I don't like waiting!! When I want something, I WANT IT NOW!!! Isn't that how most of us think? I've been told since childhood that patience isn't one of my virtues. I've gotten better at being patient, but its still not one of my virtues, just ask my husband!

I wait all year for Christmas at Bethany! I love the Chrismon tree, the decorations, the worship services, the fellowships, and my favorite ... singing Christmas carols! I have waited all year on something that's not going to happen this year ... or not in the way we are used to. It saddens my heart and soul. It's always a festive and joyful time at Bethany. We have our traditions that we've done since I was a kid here ... yes, I grew up here! And it's what makes celebrating the birth of Jesus so special. And sharing it with my church family makes it even more special!! There's joy and laughter. There's singing and candle lighting. There's Christmas cards and the children's Christmas program. And always lots of food! But more than that, there's an excitement in the air! An anticipation in the air. We are waiting to celebrate ... together ... as a church family, the birth of Christ!

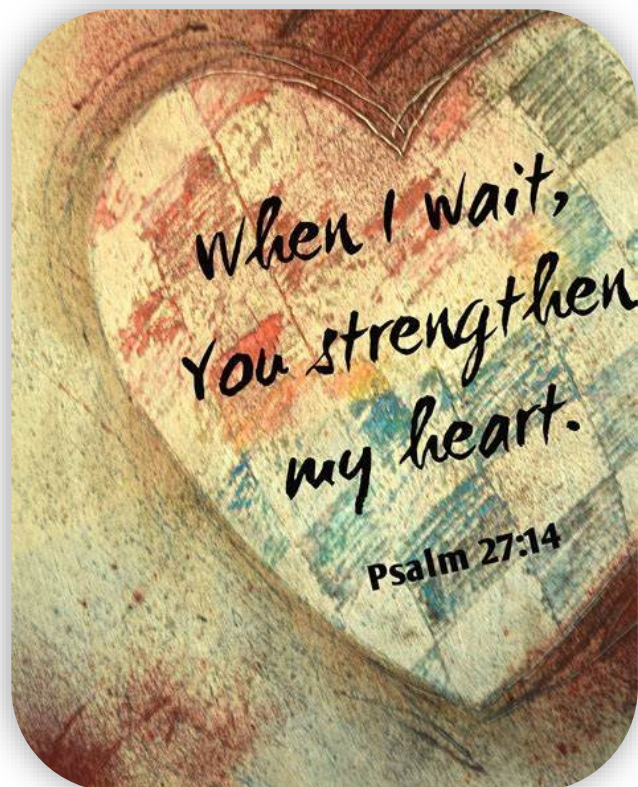
This year is different. Hanging of the Greens happened, but differently. Carols are being sung, but differently. A Christmas program will be held, but differently. Everything this year is

DIFFERENT ... and it's driving me crazy!! But one thing remains the same, Christ comes on that starlit night in a humble stable to save us. His love for us remains the same ... every day. When everything else is different, his love doesn't change. As Psalm 136:1 reminds us ... "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever." That's what we have to remember when we become sad that things aren't like they were last year. And I keep repeating that to myself this year.

So we'll wait. Wait for this pandemic to be over. Wait to throw open the church doors. Wait to worship together. Wait to celebrate once again with laughter and joy. Wait until next year for all the sights and sounds that happen during the Advent season. "Wait for the Lord, be strong, and let your heart take courage, wait for the Lord!" (Psalm 27:14)

I will celebrate the Lord's birth this year, just as always; however, only with my family. My family, whom I take for granted every day. God is giving me this time to spend with my family. To appreciate them. And to celebrate them. As we wait "patiently" for Christmas Day, and we celebrate the birth of our Savior, also celebrate your family. Not to speak for the Lord, but maybe, just maybe, that is the purpose of us having to spend more time at home.

Even though we won't be celebrating with our church family, don't forget to celebrate them! I encourage you to celebrate each other by sending Christmas cards through the BUM Post



Office, by making phone calls, sending emails or text messages, mailing a note or card. Just some little something that lets them know that someone in their church family is thinking about them, missing them, loving them.

Let's wait patiently for God to get us through all the "stuff" that's happened this year, because HE WILL. Let's wait patiently to be together. When we do, it will be an awesome celebration! I pray that time will come sooner than later. Until then, I wish each of you a joyful and blessed Christmas season. I miss and love every one of you! And if you haven't already, you'll be hearing from me soon!!

-- Cindy Kite





## Bethany UMC Officers and Leaders 2021

**Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee:** Jane Elkins, chair

Val Hiner, David Hughes, Dave Williams, Lori Mooney and Bridgett Crawford

Lay Member to the Annual Conference: Rosemary Wagoner & Lay Leader: Julie Ritchie

**Nominations & Lay Leadership: Lay Leader:** Julie Ritchie & Pastor: Susan Reaves, chairs

Brian Shifflett, Scott Williams, Amanda Hughes, Randy Roller and Shawn Cook

**Trustee Committee:** Scott Williams, chair

Steve Schofield, Joe Meek, Brenda Hiner, Gary Lucas, Stephen Metcalfe, Jerry Sheets and Mark Dunsmore

**Finance Committee:** Mark Dunsmore, chair

Financial Secretary: Jeff Ritchie, Treasurer: Cindy Kite, Lay Member to the Conference: Rosemary Wagoner, Stewardship

Chair: Randy Roller, Council Chair, Lay Leader: Julie Ritchie, Trustee Representative, SPPCR Representative: Jane Elkins

**Worship Committee:** Jackie Dunsmore, chair

Music Director: Marguerite McDonald, Musician: Dale Roller, Member at Large: Mary Beth Schwab, Secretary: Cindy Kite,

Technology Director: Dani Marklock and Pastor: Susan Reaves

### Church Council Officers 2021

Council Chair:

Lay Leader: Julie Ritchie

Lay Member to Annual Conference: Rosemary Wagoner

Finance Chair: Mark Dunsmore

Church Treasurer: Cindy Kite

Youth Leader:

Sunday School Superintendent: Rosemary Wagoner

Women's Ministries: Cindy Kite

United Methodist Men: Eddie Moyer

Children's Ministries: Beth Metcalfe

District Steward: Rosemary Wagoner

Audit Committee Chair: Mary Beth Schwab

### Church Council Members 2021

Welcome/Evangelism: Kathy Kile

Communications: Cindy Kite

Website Team: Pam Roller, Dani Martlock, Laura Lucas

Young Adult Member: Jordan Dunsmore

Youth Member:

Small Group Coordinator: Maggie Rhodes

Missions: Lori Mooney & Maggie Rhodes

Food Pantry Representative: Jeff Ritchie

Visitation Team Representative: Geneva Burns

Food & Fellowship:

Nursery:

Membership Secretary: Stanley Houff & Cindy Kite

Newsletter: Cindy Kite

Disaster Relief Coordinator: Rosemary Wagoner

District Steward: Rosemary Wagoner

Bereavement Coordinator:

Voted on and approved at the November 17, 2020  
Church Council meeting.

If you are interested in filling any of the vacant positions,  
please contact Julie Ritchie or Pastor Susan.

Thank you to all who served in 2020 and to those  
who have stepped up to serve at Bethany in 2021!



Step out in faith to the  
places God is calling you  
to go, even when it's out  
of your comfort zone!

## Christmas Video Collage

We are trying to put together a Christmas Collage with short videos of members sending a Christmas blessing or message or just a "Merry Christmas" to share with all. It will be very much like our Easter collage. Please send videos via email (danimartlock@gmail.com) or by text (540-383-3357).



Make sure to tune into Facebook on Sunday, December 20 at 7 pm for the

Bethany Family Christmas Special "Away in a Manger."

If you would like to help, please contact Dani Martlock at danimartlock@gmail.com.

### December Birthdays

1st Jeff Ritchie & Gerald Fulton

3rd Kristen Kile

5th Annie Roller

9th Hudson Dunsmore

16th Shawn Cook

19th Layne Shifflett

20th Elizabeth Williams

21st Amber Casey

23rd Jane Elkins

25th Alexander Carter

26th Garrett Roller

29th Jake Frizzelle

15th Sharon Northrop

17th Rhylan Metcalfe

18th Abe Smith

21st Barbara Miller

Pam Roller

Randy Roller

27th Jean Houff

28th Peggy Lucas

30th Lloyd Meadows

### January Birthdays

1st Kim Moyer

7th MacKenzie Crawford  
Jake Dunsmore

8th Krisalyn Mooney

11th Liam Howard

12th Billy Ryan

13th Abby Michael

15th Mark Whitecotton



## Prayer List

### Members

Tom & Jan Gorden

Eddie & Pat Lynn

Lloyd Meadows

July Faby

Audrey Bradshaw

Dan & Suzanne Harrell

### Extended Members:

Don Smiley - brother of Carolyn Swartz

Tom Lee - former pastor at Bethany

Donna D, Edward P, Mary Ann K,

Ricky S, Margaret & Randall K,  
and Sara A - food pantry neighbors

If you would like to take a meal to  
Susan & Lloyd Meadows,  
please go to

<https://www.TakeThemAMeal.com/>  
LXLH6159.

## Bethany United Methodist Church

3700 Lee Highway  
Weyers Cave, VA 24486

[www.mybethanyumc.org](http://www.mybethanyumc.org)



Facebook  
Family Christmas Special  
Dec. 20 @ 7 pm



### *"The Echo"*

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Marguerite McDonald, Organist & Choir Director  
Dale Roller, Praise Band Leader  
Cindy Kite, Secretary/Treasurer  
Phil & Ruth Ann Mikesell, Sextons

January Newsletter Deadline: Dec. 20, 2020  
Please submit articles to Cindy Kite at  
[office.bethany@gmail.com](mailto:office.bethany@gmail.com)

Webmaster: [bethanyumc.website@gmail.com](mailto:bethanyumc.website@gmail.com)



connect. grow. serve.

At Bethany we ...

**Connect** with God in community  
**Grow** in our likeness to Jesus Christ  
**Serve** our neighbors