



February 2024

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

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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.

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, Feb. 14

Lent is almost here!

It's that time before Easter that we prepare our hearts and minds for Easter! We reflect on our lives and relationship with God.

We remember our sin and the price Jesus paid for us to be forgiven. We look forward to the celebration of Easter and the promise of eternal life.

All this starts on Ash Wednesday.

Come be a part of our Ash Wednesday event.

Yes, it's Valentine's Day, but what better place to be than with your church family!

We are providing a wonderful pizza and salad dinner at 6:00 with desserts provided by our youth.

Following dinner everyone will create a Lenten grass garden for your home that you can nurture and watch until Easter. After this activity there will be a very brief time in the sanctuary where we will receive ashes.

This event is being planned for ALL ages. Bring yourself, your family and even invite a friend!

From the Pastor's Desk ...

Dear Bethany UMC Family,

Somehow, somehow, we find ourselves entering into February and leaving January in the rearview mirror. For your sports loving pastor, that means bye [bye](#) football season (which was not kind to my Ravens or Seminoles) and hello baseball season. It also means we are getting closer to warmer and longer days, and that is worth celebrating my friends. But before we do transition into February, I want to give a shout of praise to God, on the behalf of our church family. This past month reminded me that the narrative that we are losing God and faith in our communities might not be completely true. God refuses to be boxed in and God is still in the business of transforming lives and setting hearts ablaze. This past Sunday we welcomed 17 new members into our congregation, and there is more to come. Our food pantry is reaching more families by the day and our youth are gearing up for their summer mission trip. God's love is on full display, and we thank God that we get to play a role in sharing it with the world and our community.

As January passes, we move into the Lenten Season that begins 40 days of fasting and preparing our hearts for Easter. It also serves as a time to repent of our sins, and to work on ourselves as we continue to be transformed in and through Jesus Christ. I hope that during this season of lent whether you give up something that you like to indulge in, or you add something new to be intentional about becoming more like Christ, that you find yourselves pondering what the cross means in your own life. As a church family during this season of Lent we will be focusing on the final words that Jesus spoke from the

cross, and how those words inform our own understanding of who Jesus truly was and how that impacts us today. I hope you will sign up for the book "Final Words from the Cross," and even join our study every Wednesday of Lent at 10 am and 6:30 pm. I also hope that you will join us for Ash Wednesday on February 14 at 6 pm for dinner, a Lenten activity, and conclude with the imposition of ashes. This evening will be one that sets our hearts and mind on the journey that is to begin, as we are reminded of our humanity and fragility, and emphasize our need for a Savior.

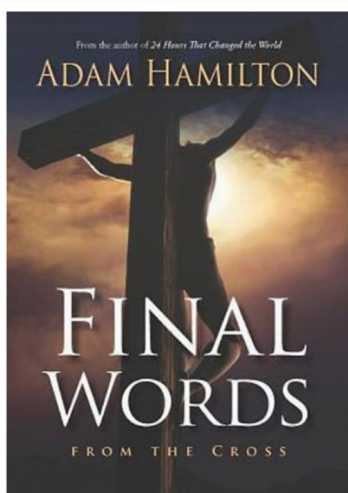
I want to leave you all with a quote from N.T Wright, as he offers a beautiful way of reminding us of what the Lenten season is all about, when he says:

"Lent is a time for discipline, for confession, for honesty, not because God is mean or fault-finding or finger-pointing but because he wants us to know the joy of being cleaned out, ready for all the good things he now has in store."

May this season be one of being cleaned out, purified, and restored into God's beautiful and loving creation.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Blaine



February means that the Lenten Season is upon us. This Lenten Season we will be reading together Rev. Adam Hamilton's "Final Words From the Cross." Pastor Blaine will be leading a study on Wednesdays beginning February 21 at 10 am and 6:30 pm. This six week study will complement the Sunday sermons, so even if you cannot attend, get a book.

All books have been ordered for those who signed up to get one. If you would still like to have one for the book study or just to follow along during the sermons, you can order one from Amazon yourself.

Missions Update ... by Lori Mooney

February is when we celebrate LOVE. So, the adult mission team wants to say thank you to all the people who help us out throughout the year and that we love you so much. Keep up the good work helping missions and different groups that need our love and support.

Happy Valentine's Day to all of you!

We hope everyone is staying warm and safe with the snow and ice we have recently had. Take care of yourself.

Mission spotlight of the month: Open Doors.

Open Doors Mission Statement is: As the area's only low-barrier shelter, we are dedicated to providing an inclusive and safe place for individuals experiencing homelessness to be. In collaboration with partners, we ensure a warm and nourishing meal for each guest. Utilizing this collaborative approach, we work diligently to provide

access and navigation to the many great community resources that can help our guests achieve success. This includes organizing partners to bring vital services to the shelter. In addition to shelter, we also "hit the streets" to meet individuals where they are with support services. If you would like to help out Open Doors, please note in memo section of your check or put a note with your donation.

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

Lori Mooney, co-chair, Brownsugarcookie@yahoo.com
540-820-7394,

Nancy Colvin, co-chair,
nwcolvin@gmail.com,
540-910-0272,



2024 by Elizabeth Williams

In a recent sermon, Pastor Blaine challenged the children to choose one word as our focus for 2024. Many of us adults were enthused to think and search our hearts for a single word. What will your word be? I have chosen purposeful. I need to have guidelines, tasks, and direction for my retirement time. For me, purposeful means setting goals for the day, weeks and months ahead. My plans include more Bible study, preparing better lessons for the range of ages in children's church on the Sunday I teach, and expanding the activities when I volunteer for nursery to include music and art. I also am committed to becoming a more active Church Council chairman, and attend the various committee meetings when asked.

We have wonderful church resources and volunteerism throughout our congregation is our greatest asset.

Please consider serving our church family by joining one of the many committees we have (examples include: Worship, Evangelism, Finance, Missions, Youth, Young Adult, Young At Heart, Food Pantry, Women's Ministries, Men's Ministries, Caring Cards, and Stewardship). Committees welcome new members and new ideas! Please let Cindy Kite, our church secretary, or myself know where your interests are. Volunteering is a wonderful way to discover and use your interests and talents. I would like to compare the volunteer challenge I am asking you to undertake to the Girl Scout "try it" badges. The Girl Scouts (thank you Bethany for sponsoring Girl Scout Troop 373) participate in activities in a specific area. It's an introduction and a wonderful opportunity to explore and grow. Will you be willing to "try it" at Bethany?

During the New Year, I hope you will enjoy personal time reading the Bible.

Some interesting books from the New Testament that I have found to be quick reads include **Titus** (early church organization), **Timothy** (includes building church leadership), **Colossians** (Christ as the head of the church and direction for us as the church's body), **Galatians** (Chapter 5: The Holy Spirit produces fruit in us in the form of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, and in Chapter 6: God's justice) and **Ephesians** (Blessings for us plus removing bitterness, anger, harsh words, and slander from our lives). There is so much more to these books than the brief information I have listed. What are your favorite Bible readings?

I look forward to 2024 and wish blessings to you and your family. Thank you for being a part of the Bethany family.

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The Power of Prayer

by Cindy Kite

Ten years! I can't believe it's been ten years!! Some days it seems like it, and other days it seems like last Monday. February 25 is the day I had surgery to remove a brain tumor at John Hopkins. I remember going to the hospital to get registered and have lots of tests run the day before. I remember getting to the hotel and eating dinner. Well, my family ate dinner. I drank tea. I remember thinking I'm not going to sleep at all tonight. I remember getting many text messages and phone calls from family and friends all day and late into the night. So many people praying for me! Believe it or not ... I SLEPT LIKE A BABY THAT NIGHT!

I got up, got ready to head to the hospital the next morning and felt completely CALM! **CALM!** I should have been anything but calm. No one else in the family was and they weren't having their brain cut on! I remember meeting Pastor Brad at the hospital and him praying with me and my family. I so appreciated having my pastor there with me for such a huge surgery. I remember the nurse who got me ready for surgery. A Christian lady who drew an angel on my IV tape and prayed for me. I remember the tears of all of us as I was rolled into the OR. I also had some Christian nurses in the OR who prayed with me. When they asked if I had any questions, I said "please, whatever you do, put me to sleep before you shave my hair off." I was still CALM ... except thinking about my hair!! God put all those people in my path that day to help me remain CALM. I know he did!

That's pretty much the last thing I remember until waking up in the ICU over twelve hours later. And Randy's face, up close and personal, being the first thing I saw telling me I needed to wake up. Wake up!? No, I just needed to keep my eyes closed so the pain would go away. Then I remember trying to turn my head so I could see my boys and I couldn't. That really freaked me out! Wait a minute! Nobody said anything about cutting my neck!! My neck muscle had to be cut to get all the tumor out. Needless to say, it was a rough night. But once again, God came through and gave me a Christian ICU nurse!

I didn't sleep at all. Between the nurses checking my vitals and asking me the same dumb questions every hour and the pain, there was no sleeping. Plus I was thirsty and they wouldn't let me have any water. I did get a little vocal about that!! During that night I had time to

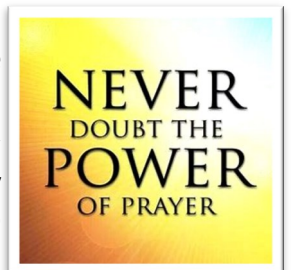
wondered why I was so calm going into surgery. And it came to me ... it was all the prayers that were said on my behalf. I had had ankle surgery a few years before and as they were getting me ready, my knees shook and knocked together like a cartoon character. And that's no lie. This time was entirely different.

The difference was the prayers! Besides my church family, I had people praying for me that I didn't even know ... people from other churches and other states. **I actually FELT the prayers.** I still remember it and it still gives me chill bumps. I remember saying "God if its your will that I don't make it through this surgery, I'm okay with that, just take care of my family. If it's your will to let me come through, you must have some plan for my life and I'm okay with that too."

That February, ten years ago will forever remain in my mind. February is the month of love. For the many folks who loved on me ... thank you!! It's been a struggle. Some days were really hard and I thought it would have been easier if I had died. And then I would tell myself, God has

a plan for you so stop whining!! It's gotten a little easier over the years. I've learned to adjust to losing the hearing in my right ear and also losing my right balance nerve. Losing my balance nerve and the dizziness have been a lot worse than losing my hearing. If you see me walking like I've been in the communion wine, I really haven't. It's just the way I roll these days. The headaches have been the worst thing to deal with ... still today. Thank you to all those who are still praying for me these days when I'm having migraines or am so dizzy I can't walk without walking into walls, furniture, shrubbery, etc. Your prayers have carried me through some tough days.

February ... a time of sharing our love with our valentine and many other folks. I have become a huge believer in the power of prayer and sharing the love of God with all I come in contact with. If I have touched just one person's life telling them about that day and feeling all those prayers, it's been worth all the pain. I lost the "old me" that day ... in many ways. I've become a difference person than I was before the surgery. The "new me" has become more outgoing and vocal about sharing God's love and the power of prayer. God did have more plans for me. I hope in the eyes of my gracious and loving Father, I am doing a good job.



Financial Update by Cindy Kite

As the new year begins, the old one has to be reconciled and closed. W-2 forms printed, taxes filed, giving statements mailed and year-end financial statements printed. As I work on all these things, I want to share with you how the year-end financial statement looks for Bethany.

Revenues:

General Fund Giving	\$170,971.76
Online Giving	\$ 35,164.04
Interest Earned	\$ <u>100.58</u>
TOTAL REVENUE	\$206,236.38

Expenses:

Total Salaries	\$95,736.27
District Ministries	
District	\$ 3,696.00
Apportionments	\$ 32,256.00
Conference Expenses	\$ <u>1,199.68</u>
Total District Ministries	\$ 37,151.68
Church Office	\$ 8,073.63
Building & Maintenance	\$ 42,087.54
Ministry Programs	\$ 6,491.77
Mission Outreach	\$ <u>6,675.01</u>
Total Other Ministries	\$63,327.95
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$196,215.90

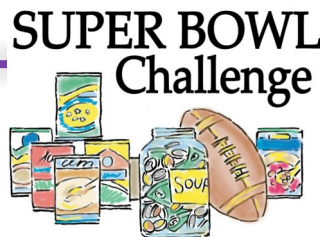
We paid all apportionments to the conference, along with the District apportionments. All expenses for 2023 were paid and there was nothing owing at the end of 2023. Thank you for continuing to support Bethany and it's ministries! Here are a few other ministries you supported throughout 2023:

Adult Mission Fund	\$ 775.25
Friends of Barnabas	\$ 3,613.99
Food Pantry	\$12,779.56
Pastor Discretionary Fund	\$ 7,325.76
Youth Mission Fund	\$ 6,974.25
Michael's Love Offering	\$ 4,915.00
Lahaina UMC in Hawaii	\$ 2,995.50
Memorials	\$15,390.00
Capital Building Fund	\$ 6,932.26
Other Misc Special Offerings	\$ 7,117.75

Overall it was a good year for Bethany! We had a surplus of \$10,020.48. If you would like a more detailed year-end financial statement, please contact the office. They will be available upon request once the Finance Committee and Church Council approves them.

Thank you for supporting your church! If not for your generosity, we wouldn't be able to offer all the ministries and outreach programs that we do. We wouldn't be able to feed our neighbors. We couldn't help our members in their time of need! YOU did all that in 2023! Let's get moving on 2024 and do even better!!

Super Bowl Sunday Food Pantry Challenge



Sunday, Feb. 11, wear your favorite football jerseys, t-shirts, or other apparel to church.

It's SUPER BOWL SUNDAY!! So Missions and Food Pantry got together and decided to partner together to receive donations for the Food Pantry, as there has been an uptick in the number of neighbors visiting each week.

SUPER BOWL SUNDAY CHALLENGE: Bring in 1,000 food items to donate to the Food Pantry in the next two weeks, Feb. 11 - Feb. 18. There will be a Food Bank canister in the foyer for your donations. If you bring a case of Ramon noodles, that's 12 items. If you bring in a case of soup or a

case of juice boxes, that's another 12 items. If we all bring in a case of something, we'll hit the 1,000 item mark in no time! So ... if we reach our goal, Pastor Blaine won't be kissing a goat, but ... he will be ... **SLIMED!!**

Most needed items are ... soup with meat (chicken noodle, vegetable beef), cans of pasta with meat (Spaghetti-Os, Ravioli, etc.), canned vegetable and fruit, white rice, diapers (size 4,5, or 6) and wipes, syrup. Pull tabs/lids would be really nice, especially nice for our unhoused neighbors.

You can also donate money. Each dollar will count for one item. There will be a box in the foyer for monetary donations.



Let's meet our goal so we can see the preacher slimed!



BUM BITES by Bridgett Crawford

We celebrate our Confirmed Youth this month! Back in October, they attended confirmation classes to learn more about the Methodist Church and how it relates to building a relationship with God and deepening their faith.

In Bible Exploration, we discussed how eating a meal together is sacred and the perspective of Jesus when he ate with his disciples and followers. We looked deeper into Matthew, Luke, and John for stories of Jesus working miracles with loaves of bread and fish for the thousands.

February will pick back up with making desserts for Ash Wednesday service, another Bible Exploration, and our 30 Hour Famine.

30 Hour Famine will be on Friday, February 23 - Saturday, February 24. The youth are raising money for World Vision to help end hunger around the world. Our goal is \$500. Make sure to see one of them for how you can donate! We are looking for inside mission projects to do on Saturday, February 24 morning to early afternoon. Please contact Lori Mooney to be put on the list.

In addition, we will be having a potluck dinner at 6 pm Saturday evening as the end of our famine and beginning of new eyes for the needy. You are invited to celebrate with us and bring a dish to share. We are also looking for adults to hang and support us during the 30 Hour Famine, particularly when we spend the night at church. Contact Bridgett if you could volunteer some time during the 30 Hour Famine to support our youth! Volunteer and Pot Luck Sign up sheets will be in the foyer.



70 Years & Counting

What a better way to commemorate our 70th year anniversary than with a 30-oz Bethany UMC travel mug! This is one way to remember our church's history and hopefully will also be a wonderful starting point to invite others into the Bethany family! They can be found on Sunday in the foyer and we are asking for a \$20 donation per travel mug. If you have questions, talk to Cindy Kite or Pastor Blaine.

Coffee with the Pastor



Want to talk with Pastor Blaine outside the church? Maybe get to know him a little better, and a little more about what makes him ... well ... him? **He will be at Valley Pike Rumor Mill on Thursday, Feb. 15 from 9:30 am - 12 noon.** Come by and say hello. Enjoy a cup of coffee or tea and some good conversation!

30 Hour Famine



The youth will be having the 30-hour famine February 23-24. The BUMS will be spending Friday night at the church and do service projects on Saturday. Volunteers to help "watch over" kids are needed. Volunteers are also needed to provide food for the meal on Saturday to break the fast. If you can help, even for a couple hours, please sign up at the Welcome Center.

They would like to have 4-5 hours of projects to do on that Saturday. If you have an INSIDE project that the youth can help you do (for a donation to their mission trip over the summer), then please let Lori Mooney know at Brownsugarcookie@yahoo.com or 540-820-7394. She will be putting together the list of people who need projects done and exactly what needs to be accom-

plished. Since it is February and we expect it to be cold, we are mainly focusing on inside projects. If you have outside projects that you need help with, please let Lori Mooney know this, however, they will not be done on this day. The youth will try to find another day to do the outside projects when it warms up.

Their goal is to raise \$500 through service project donations for our folks and through donations from our church family.

Church Council Meeting

There will be a Church Council meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 20 at 6:30 pm. All church officers and committee chairs are encouraged to attend to provide reports for the council. If you can't make the meeting, please let Elizabeth Williams or Cindy Kite know in advance. All others are always welcome to attend council meetings.



Thank you for the many thoughts and prayers, visits and cards since I have come to Woodland Park at UMRC. It has been a nice second home. You have been in my thoughts and prayers. Your thoughtfulness has been especially appreciated. I miss seeing each one of you.
Love,
Carolyn Roller

February

1st Jackie Dunsmore
Megan Kile

2nd Reid Hill

3rd Gary Ruleman

4th Pam Lynn
Ron Castle

6th Dylan Snyder

11th Paige Crawford

13th Rebecca Castle

14th Bradley Dunsmore

18th Laura Lucas

21st Sandra Campbell

13th Kelli Huffer

14th Chuck McCarty

15th Lisa Cox

Laura Hittie

16th Rose Campbell

17th Jared Kile

18th Sidney Moyer

23rd Cheryl Richards

26th Barbara Long

Libby Riddle

27th Tim Schnittger

March

2nd Jan Gorden

5th Ken Elkins

7th Becky McCarty

8th Ken Shifflett

10th Bobbie Meek

Lindsay Williams
Steele Caricofe

12th Katelyn McLaughlin

Lily McLaughlin

If your birthday is listed on the wrong day, or has been missed, please notify the office at office.bethany@gmail.com.



Prayer List

Members

Carolyn Roller, Peggy Lucas,
Hazel & Don Truslow, Nadine Moore,
Jean & Sidney Moyer

Extended Family

Alma & Neese Spitzer - aunt & uncle
of Barbara Long,
Glenda Western - friend of Dale Roller

If you have someone you would like placed on the prayer list, please call or email the office.

Or fill out a "Prayer Request" card found in the back of the pews and place it in the offering plate or the secretary's mailbox.

All prayer requests will be removed after 4 weeks unless otherwise requested.

Sunday, Feb. 4 was a celebration Sunday for Bethany! We 2 baptisms, 4 confirmands, and 15 new members join the Bethany family!

Welcome New Members

Lois Baker, Tina Morris, Joe Morris,
Megan Kile, Maggie Huffer, Mike Huffer,
Lucy Huffer, Sarah Huffer,
Jeremy Dornon, Karie Dornon,
Harrison Dornon & Katherine Dornon.

Confirmands

Amelia Simmons, Garrett Simmons,
Camden Huffer & Laiken Huffer

Baptisms

Megan Kile & Layla Unger

February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 
4 Youth Bible Exploration after Church	5	6 12 pm - Young @ Hearts (O'Neils) 6 pm - Worship Meeting 7 pm - Trustee Meeting	7 Pastor Blaine Out of the Office for a Conference →	8	9	10 9:30 am - 1 pm - Fellowship Hall Reserved
11 SUPER BOWL CHALLENGE!! Youth will be making desserts for Ash Wednesday Dinner ↑	12 	13 10 am - Caring Cards	14 6 pm - Ash Wednesday Meal & Service 	15 9:30 am - 12 pm - Coffee with the Pastor 	16	17 8 am - Donuts & Devotions 
18 ↓ SUPER BOWL Challenge 	19	20 6:30 pm - Church Council Meeting March Newsletter Articles Due	21 10 am & 6:30 pm - Lenten Book Study	22	23 Youth 30 Hour Famine Begins →	24
25 	26 Pastor Blaine Out of the Office	27	28 10 am & 6:30 pm - Lenten Book Study	29 3 - 4:30 pm - Coffee with the Pastor 		



ASH WEDNESDAY WORD SEARCH

B	L	E	W	W	N	F	K	Y	C	V	E	J	F	F
G	A	Y	P	O	S	H	N	D	S	F	N	Y	L	S
I	H	K	J	C	T	I	V	E	B	I	H	A	W	J
A	O	Y	E	N	A	W	Q	A	V	E	N	M	E	X
N	Y	C	D	T	M	R	J	X	Q	B	O	E	D	N
B	L	A	S	Z	U	C	H	D	X	A	L	Z	N	K
Q	I	B	C	G	S	F	A	S	T	W	O	E	E	T
L	A	T	O	S	C	L	P	I	H	P	F	W	S	L
G	U	D	O	P	D	F	O	R	E	H	E	A	D	S
N	S	R	C	R	Q	R	L	J	N	G	X	Y	A	O
B	C	N	G	R	E	C	E	S	J	V	V	U	Y	K
C	L	S	D	T	F	Q	N	R	E	P	E	N	T	Q
Z	L	L	S	L	E	U	T	D	W	Y	V	J	S	X
Z	H	A	S	H	E	S	E	D	F	L	K	V	F	Y
C	E	D	L	J	Y	M	C	V	V	I	K	W	V	W

**ABSTAIN
ASHES
BLESS
CROSS**

**EASTER
FAST
FOREHEAD
LENT**

**REPENT
WEDNESDAY**



Bethany United Methodist Church

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The Echo

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blaineoliver-thomas@vaumc.org

Dale Roller, Music & Praise Band Leader
Bridgett Crawford, Youth Leader
Cindy Kite, Secretary/Treasurer
Danny Perry, Sexton

March Newsletter Deadline: Feb. 20, 2024

Please submit articles to Cindy Kite at
office.bethany@gmail.com

Webmaster: 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