



# The Echo

APRIL 2025 Edition

A Publication of Bethany United Methodist Church

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May Newsletter Deadline: April 17, 2025  
Please submit articles to the church office at [office.bethany@gmail.com](mailto:office.bethany@gmail.com)

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Our Mission is to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our Vision is to  
CONNECT with God in community,  
GROW in our likeness to Jesus Christ,  
SERVE our neighbors.

## From the Pastor's Desk....

### Dear Bethany Family,

During this Season of Lent, I was asked to write a devotional for a Lenten Devotional, that included pastors and others associated with the Virginia Annual Conference. This year's theme was centered around finding a song (secular or spiritual) and then connecting that song to an idea or scripture in Lent. For my song I picked "Rise Up" by Andra Day, and I wanted to take this time to share it with you, as we continue to travel this Lenten Road to Holy Week, together as the body of believers.

*"You're broken down and tired  
Of living life on a merry go round  
And you can't find the fighter...  
When the silence isn't quiet  
And it feels like it's getting hard to breathe  
And I know you feel like dying"*

How many of us can relate to those lyrics? Life is brutal. It certainly is not fair. And oftentimes it is just plain exhausting, and maybe even debilitating. I remember over four and a half years ago: I was recovering in the ICU at Duke Hospital from being shot in a drive-by-shooting. In the weeks and months following that wrong place, wrong time shooting, I did feel like dying and I did experience what it felt like when it got hard to breathe. I learned in the deepest sense that the feeling of "silence not being quiet" and the fear and constant replaying of the terrifying night in my broken and damaged soul. It was in those holy, haunting, and sacred moments that I clung to the hope of a savior who had come to this Earth, was broken and defeated, and claimed victory over it all. It was in those moments of relearning how to walk and how to get out of a chair that I was surrounded by a cloud of witnesses, the faithful people who had built up a community around me despite being in the first six months of COVID. It was not until I lived in the valley of the shadow of death and felt like literal dust that I recognized that I was not alone, not even for a second. God and God's people have a tendency to show up in the darkest and most exhausting of circumstances. And they certainly did. And they certainly will.

The season of Lent brings a lot of emotions, feelings, and responses. Maybe you "feel like you are a plastic bag, drifting though the wind, wanting to start again" ...or maybe another not so-Christian way of explaining the Lenten season comes from the infamous Rocky Balboa, who stated so clearly, "The world ain't all sunshine and rainbows. It is a very mean and nasty place, and it will beat you to your knees and keep you there permanently if you let it." The season of Lent echoes these statements, but the season of Lent is not where the story ends. Although Lent may leave us on our knees, the promise keeper, way-maker, eternal redeemer, does not leave us there. In fact, just like all difficult seasons in our life, it ends. And what replaces it...well, we will cling to the hope and promise that it is better than where we were. But praise be, we do not have to do this alone. The Body of

Christ is in this season together. Just as the Body surrounded me four and half years ago, the Body is surrounding us in this journey. For as Andra Day finishes in her song:

*“And we’ll rise up  
High like the waves  
We’ll rise up  
In spite of the ache  
We’ll rise up  
And we’ll do it a thousand times again”*

As we journey this Lenten Road together, know, friends, that we will rise up together. We can rely on Christ who walks the road to Calvary for you and for me, and who never leaves us to walk that road alone. We can rise up out of our dust in spite of the ache, not by our own doing, but by the love, grace, and mercy of our Redeemer. For Jesus will do it a thousand times again, for you and for me; so, take heart my friends.

**In Christ’s Love,  
Pastor Blaine**

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### **Prayer Lists.....**

**Members:** Tom and Jan Gorden, Barbara Long, Trae Elkins, Kathleen and Mike Stump

**Extended family:** Halle, the grandchild of Kelli Huffer’s co-worker; Tyler Michael, son of Jeff and Amie Michael, relation to the Moyer’s family; Carl Ruleman, brother of Gary Ruleman; Molly Ruleman, daughter-in-law of Gary Ruleman

### **Inspirational Quote.....**

During Lent, let us find concrete ways to overcome our indifference. – Pope Francis

### **Dates to Remember.....**

- **Sunday Service: Every Sunday at 9:30am**
- **Food Pantry: Every Monday from 4 – 5:30pm**
- **Young at Hearts: April 1<sup>st</sup> at 12:00pm - Wood Grill, Harrisonburg**

- **Choir Practice:** Wednesdays – April 2<sup>nd</sup>, April 9<sup>th</sup>, April 16<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 - 7:45 pm
- **Coffee Hours with Pastor Blaine:** April 10<sup>th</sup> from 9:30am - 12:00pm, Valley Pike
- **Lenten Book Study:** April 7<sup>th</sup> & April 14<sup>th</sup> – 10:00am & 6:00pm
- **Community Easter Egg Hunt:** April 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:00, Weyers Cave Community Center
- **May Echo Articles Deadline:** April 17<sup>th</sup>
- **Good Friday Service:** April 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm
- **Holy Saturday Hike:** April 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am
- **Easter Sunrise Service:** April 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00am, Weyers Cave Community Center Parking Lot
- **Church Council Meeting:** April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30pm
- **Coffee Hours with Pastor Blaine:** April 24<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 – 5:00pm, Valley Pike
- **FOB Fundraising Night:** April 28<sup>th</sup>, Texas Roadhouse, Harrisonburg

### **April Birthdays.....**

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Joey Frease	17 <sup>th</sup>	Rick Northrop
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Easton Moyer		Jennifer Williams
5 <sup>th</sup>	Sawyer Dunsmore	18 <sup>th</sup>	Susan Meadows
	Trae Elkins	25 <sup>th</sup>	Nash Colvin
7 <sup>th</sup>	Jordan Dunsmore		Carrie Dunsmore
	Mitch Gibson	28 <sup>th</sup>	Amelia Simmons
9 <sup>th</sup>	Susan Thacker	29 <sup>th</sup>	Gail Reese
10 <sup>th</sup>	Chuck Schwab	30 <sup>th</sup>	Nadine Moore
13 <sup>th</sup>	Lois Baker		Sarah Williams

If your birthday is listed on the wrong day, or has been missed, please notify the office at [office.bethany@gmail.com](mailto:office.bethany@gmail.com)

### **Bethany Community Easter Egg Hunt.....**

Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup> from 10:00-11:20am

In our society today many children do not know anything about Easter other than a big white bunny and the candy he brings. Although there is nothing wrong with that fun part of the Easter celebration, WE know that there is something so much more important! Please help us present the GOOD NEWS about Jesus to the children in our community. Through puppets, crafts, snacks and egg hunting, we hope to provide a fun event with an eternal message. We need lots of folks to help. Please see the sign up sheet on

the Welcome Center and volunteer to assist wherever you feel led...crafts, hiding eggs, serving refreshments or greeting families as they arrive. Thanks to the folks who are heading up each area. Their names are on the sign up sheet so if you have questions, just ask!



**EASTER CANDY NEEDED** for our community event as well as the egg hunts we do here at church. Pre-wrapped candy or small items (stickers, rings, tattoos) that will fit **INSIDE** an Easter egg. Questions, see Julie Ritchie, leader of the egg stuffing team!

**Palm Sunday, April 13** will be a day of celebration as we remember Jesus' triumphant entrance in Jerusalem.



The worship service will include our children's parade of palms with special music by our Easter Choir. After the service we will enjoy a wonderful brunch together. Please plan to be a part of this special day as we begin the journey through Holy Week.

**Palm Sunday Brunch** - We invite everyone to stay after the service for our Brunch.

Folks are also needed to help receive food and stay afterwards to clean up. Table set up and other preparations will be covered. Please see the sign up for food and to assist at the

Welcome Center. Thanks so much for your participation!



**Good Friday Service, April 18th @ 6:30pm-** Come and join us in the Bethany Sanctuary, as we gather alongside some of our neighboring churches, as we travel to Golgotha together, praying, singing, and listening to what Good Friday is all about. This evening is a must, because there is no Easter without Good Friday!

**Holy Saturday Hike, April 19th @ 10am-** We will gather on this day of silence and darkness, at the Blue Ridge Tunnel East Trailhead to walk together, and journey into darkness; as we contemplate what the day after Jesus' death may have felt like.

**Easter Sunrise Service April 20th @ 7am-** We invite everyone to join us at the Weyers Cave Community Center Parking Lot, as we watch the sunrise on our Resurrection Sunday! Pastor Blaine will be bringing a brief reflection as we celebrate this Glorious Day with our neighboring Weyers Cave churches!



**Easter Sunday, April 20 @ 9:30am -** We look forward to this glorious day of joyous celebration! The worship service will include wonderful music, inspiring messages, delicious refreshments and an egg hunt for the children. THIS is a great opportunity to invite friends and neighbors. Let us share the joy of this most important day with everyone we know!

*Thank you!*

A special thank you to all the folks who have done the extra things to make our Lenten season meaningful. Gerald Fulton constructed the cross outside our doors. Cheryl Richards and Mae Houff used their artistic talents to paint or write words on our “trash” and rocks. Kathy Kile creatively decorated our front hall and the wreaths on the doors. Elizabeth Williams and the Bethany kids have provided spring flowers. Thank you to all!

### **Mission Opportunities.....**

Many folks have asked about donating funds to help those affected by the California Wildfires. During the Lenten Season we will be receiving donations, alongside the whole Virginia UMC family, to show financial and missional care for our neighbors in California, as they rebuild and recover from the devastating wildfires. All checks can be made out to Bethany with the memo line: California Wildfire Relief.

### **Summer Mowing.....**

It's that time of year again!! Time to mow! We are looking for folks to sign up for a month (April - October) to mow the church lawn. We have a zero-turn mower and gas will be reimbursed (with receipts). You can mow when it suits you (except on Sunday mornings). If you enjoy being outside, please prayerfully consider if this is something you can do. There will be substitutes if you need to miss a week. Contact Mark Dunsmore if you are willing to help keep our church lawn looking beautiful and inviting for members and visitors!

## **Missions Update ... by Lori Mooney**

Happy Easter to everyone. He has risen!! It is getting warmer, the grass is growing, flowers are starting to pop up, so spring is finally here.

If you can bring candy or help with the Easter Egg Hunt at the Weyers Cave Community Center, please sign up. We need everyone that can help.

During this Lenten Season, we are collecting donations to help those affected by the California Wildfires. If you feel led to help, please mark your donation for the CA Wildfires.

Since we are without a youth director, the youth participating in spring sports will have their games highlighted each week. Please try to go and support the young people by attending one of their games. Supporting our youth and all that they do is so important because they are the next leaders of our community.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the next Bethany Blood Drive and that date is Friday, June 6<sup>th</sup>.

Mark your calendar for the Christmas in July Yard Sale on Saturday, July 26<sup>th</sup> from 8am – 1pm. Amy Michael is still taking donations. Bring them in and leave them in the social hall. Rilo will be selling BBQ sandwiches that day. We will also be having a bake sale at the yard sale. So, if you love to bake and want to make some items for the bake sale, then be sure to let Lori Mooney know what you plan on donating. If you can donate your time to volunteer to help that day, please be sure to let us know. All proceeds will be going to the Honduras Mission Trip in September.

Mission spotlight of the month: Renewing Homes of Greater Augusta. They have been a non-profit since 1994. Their mission is to accomplish, at no cost to a homeowner, critical home repairs and modifications to improve the health and safety of the home. They serve low-income elderly, disabled or disadvantaged homeowners in the SAW (Staunton, Augusta, Waynesboro) region. They have been able to provide help to 55-70 homes in recent years. If you would like to make an extra donation, please mark it for Renewing Homes of Greater Augusta.

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

Lori Mooney, 540-820-7394, [Brownsugarcookie@yahoo.com](mailto:Brownsugarcookie@yahoo.com) & Sarah Simmons, 540-292-0956, [sarahsimmons4@aol.com](mailto:sarahsimmons4@aol.com)

### **A Closing Note from Pastor Blaine**

On behalf of the Bethany UMC Staff Parish Relations Committee, I am delighted to announce that we have hired Laura Lucas as our new Office Manager and Treasurer. After a series of interviews and spending many hours discerning what would be best for Bethany, we are grateful to have Laura coming on board into this role. She has done a fantastic job volunteering in our church office over the last couple of months. Laura will finish up the school year in her current position at Rockingham County Schools, so she will be at the church on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoon beginning around 12:30pm for the time being. I hope that you all will welcome Laura into this position, as we look forward to what is in store at Bethany!

In Christ's Love,  
Pastor Blaine