



# The Echo

September 2025 Edition

A Publication of Bethany United Methodist Church

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October Newsletter Deadline: September 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 Beloved Bethany Community,

As September rolls around, school is back in session, and college football has kicked off; we here at Bethany are preparing to move from our two months of intentional prayer, into a time of sharing what this season of praying has brought forth in everyone's heart and mind. To do this we have scheduled two listening sessions in the month of September. One will be Sunday September 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am, right after our worship service, and the other will be Wednesday September 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. My hope is that in these sessions, we will be able to answer the following three questions:

1. Where did I hear God speak to me the most in this season of prayer?
2. What did God put on my heart to be more passionate about in my own life and in the life of Bethany UMC?
3. How can we move towards where God is leading us as a church?

I hope that each and every one of us can at least answer one of these questions, and maybe all three of them, as we gather together to listen to one another. These listening sessions will be our starting line, as we seek to truly respond as a church, to what God has been placing on all our hearts, in this season of discernment. So, what do we need from you? We need you to SHOW-UP and be ready to share your own prayer journey and be ready to listen to others. My friends, we are better when we are together and through this season of discernment, we are truly going to be better together! So, show up, share authentically what God has been doing in your heart over the last couple months, and let us be gracious and kind listeners as we partner with the Holy Spirit, which is certainly on the loose at Bethany!

*In Christ's Love,*

*Pastor Blaine*

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And when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left,  
 your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying  
 "This is the way; walk in it."  
 Isaiah 30:21 (NIV)

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## Prayer Lists...

**Members:** Tom and Jan Gorden, Barbara Long, Carolyn Cobb, Lois Baker

**Extended Family:** Nicole, friend of Sarah Simmons; Dale, friend of Libby Riddle; Marsha, daughter of Eddie and Pat Lynn; Family, friends, and school community of Holly Hatcher who was murdered during a home invasion. Holly was a colleague of Earl and Cathie Sue King's daughter Danielle; family and friends of Vicky Lily on her passing, friend of Joe Morris; Michael, son-in-law of Bettina and Gary Ruleman; Betty June Reed, friend of David and Elizabeth Williams; Camden Ray Kite, grandson of Randy and Cindy Kite.

**Our Shut-Ins:** Carolyn Roller, Nadine Moore, Sidney Moyer, Audrey Bradshaw, Ramona Garrison

Pray for peace in our Community, our Country, and our World.

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## Dates to Remember...

- **Sunday Service: Every Sunday at 9:30am**
  - **Food Pantry: Mondays from 4:00 – 5:30pm**
  - **Young at Hearts:** September 2<sup>nd</sup> at 12:00pm – Thomas House, Dayton
  - **Friends of Barnabas Team Meeting:** September 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm – Virtual and/or Sunday School Classroom
  - **Coffee Hours with Pastor Blaine:** September 11<sup>th</sup> from 9:30am – 12:00pm, Valley Pike
  - **Young Adults Event:** September 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm – Aldersgate UMC, Charlottesville
  - **Discernment Listening Session:** September 14<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am
  - **Youth Gathering:** September 14<sup>th</sup> at Bethany UMC, Details to follow.
  - **Love INC Workday:** September 16<sup>th</sup> from 9:15am – 12:15pm - Waynesboro
  - **October Echo Articles Deadline:** September 17<sup>th</sup>
  - **Friends of Barnabas Team in Honduras:** September 20<sup>th</sup> – September 27<sup>th</sup>
  - **Youth Gathering:** September 28<sup>th</sup> at Bethany UMC, Details to follow.
  - **SPPRC Meeting:** September 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm – Sunday School Classroom
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Listen!  
 I am standing at the door, knocking;  
 if you hear my voice and open the door,  
 I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.  
 Revelation 3:20 (NIV)



### September Birthdays...

6 <sup>th</sup>	Lakin "Happy" Huffer	15 <sup>th</sup>	Grant Simmons
7 <sup>th</sup>	Abby Riddle	18 <sup>th</sup>	Hattie Castle
9 <sup>th</sup>	Autumn Johnson	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Ben Michael

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)

### Children's Ministry News...

Children's Church: A Harvest of Fruit!



We are excited to announce that this fall, our Children's Church will be focusing on a special theme: the Fruit of the Spirit! As we move into the new season, our children will be cultivating their hearts and minds to understand what it means to live a life filled with God's blessings. Each week, they'll explore a different "fruit" from Galatians 5:22-23, from the sweetness of love to the strength of self-control.

This is a wonderful opportunity for our kids to not only learn these concepts but also to see how they can put them into practice in their daily lives. We are so grateful for the dedicated teachers who will be leading this journey: Mary Beth Hill, Elizabeth Williams, Karie Dornon, and Tabby Steed. Please keep them and our children in your prayers as we begin this new and exciting series!

**Youth and Children Activities ...** To encourage involvement with our youth and children, the church office would like to hear from our parents. For our youth parents and youth please send your fall schedules as they come available to our youth director, Kaitlin Bower at ([kaitlinbower@veronaumc.com](mailto:kaitlinbower@veronaumc.com)). If you are willing to share your children's fall schedule please send to the church office at ([office.bethany@gmail.com](mailto:office.bethany@gmail.com)).

**Mission Opportunities ...** We will be volunteering at Love, Inc. Thrift Store in Waynesboro on Tuesday, Sept. 16th from 9:15-12:15. This will be different than sorting at the donation center, like the 2 previous workdays. We will be bringing the delivered items from the back stockroom out to the selling area and stocking things out there, we will be helping the staff bag items that people are buying, etc. Our contact wanted us to see the full circle of working the donation center and then taking those items into the store for people to purchase. If you might be interested, please contact Lori Mooney, 540-820-7394 or [Brownsugarcookie@yahoo.com](mailto:Brownsugarcookie@yahoo.com)

### **Candy Donations Needed ...** Stay tuned for details on our Truck or Treat event that will be on Sunday



October 26 from 3 til 5. Please consider how you can be a part of this community outreach that will require the whole church family's support! We will need greeters, food servers, folks to run the games, folks to hand out candy at some of the trucks and lots of pre-event help. What we can all start doing in September is donating candy! A basket will be in the front hall each Sunday for candy donations.

### **One Call Now ...** For those who are not currently on our automated phone system and would like to be, please



send your phone number and name to Laura Lucas at the church office, so she can add you to the system. For those who are already signed up and would like to add an extra phone number to get calls from the church, feel free to do so at this time, by emailing or letting Laura know. This tool is a helpful way to stay up to date on all things Bethany related.

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

September is here and good luck to all the students, teachers, and staff! The seasons will be changing soon and hopefully, we can leave all these 90+ days behind us. Give us that cooler fall weather.

Thank you to those that donated their time to help at Love, Inc. for a second time this summer. This was an eye-opening experience for many of us since we really didn't know what we were getting into. Keep your eyes open in case we set up one for September or even more.

Christmas in July Yard Sale was a huge success. Thanks to everyone for their help. The mission team has accomplished their goal for this year.

Mission spotlight of the month: Friends of Barnabas. Our church has partnered with Friends of Barnabas for many years with Gary Lucas doing the Honduras mission trip. Their trip is this month, please keep them all in your prayers. Members of our congregation that are going on the trip this year include: Gary Lucas, Blaine Oliver-Thomas, Audrey Overton-Youngblood, Amy Michael, and Jeremy Dornon. Others going with them include: Frieda Driver (Sarah Simmons' mother), Jack Garber, Jan Hinkle (Pastor Blaine's aunt), Michelle Crow, Alianna Crow, Dave Hudgins, Chelsea Suche, and Julie Wade. Friends of Barnabas has been going to Honduras since 2000. This group empowers families in Honduras through healthcare and education. If you would like to make an extra donation, please mark on your donation for Friends of Barnabas and this will go to the group that is going next year. This year about one fourth of the money for the drugs and medicine was raised from our Christmas in July fundraiser. So, thank you!

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)

## Virginia Annual Conference Report..... by Rosemary Wagoner

### The 243rd Virginia Annual Conference June 12th-14th, 2025

This year the Annual Conference was held at the Berglund Center in Roanoke. For the next three years, the Annual Conference will be held at the Atlantic Bank Center on the campus of JMU. This will save Bethany money as we won't have to pay for a hotel for the delegate, and it will also provide an opportunity for any folks who may want to come and see what Annual Conference is all about.

Martha Stokes is a wonderful Conference Lay Leader as she works alongside the Bishop and at Conference she reminded the laity that we are the Church. It is the laity (fancy term for all of us in the local church congregations) job to be supporting our pastor in the work of Bethany and not expecting the pastor to do all the work. We do a pretty good job of this at Bethany, but we can always improve. Martha explained our task like this: *"God calls each and every one of us to use our talents in ministry. We must be partners in ministry. It is not about doing the work. It is about responding to God's call to the movement of the Spirit and following Jesus. Our call is to the unimaginable movement of the Holy Spirit."*

For those interested in learning how to serve as a lay preacher or lay servant, there is a training coming up in our District on September 13th. To learn more visit this website,  
<https://www.shenandoahriverdistrict.org/layservantministries/>.

The Virginia Annual Conference will be hosting a trip to London next spring to visit the places where Methodism began. I'm sure we will hear more about this later.

There were some great sermons delivered during the Annual Conference. This was a time of encouragement, while the challenge to be the hands and feet of Christ was issued for all in attendance.

A Journey In Understanding Task Force was formed. This task force did a lot of listening to those around the conference that have unsettled feelings about changes we have undergone. It was an enlightening time for everyone involved.

One ministry that is close by that you might not be aware of is the Embrace Center in Waynesboro. When Wayne Hills UMC could no longer operate as they were and needed to close their church, the Embrace Center was born. While it is hard to see churches close, it is nice to see ministry to continue. This ministry was highlighted in the exhibits this year. To learn more about Embrace, you can visit their website at: <https://embracewaynesboro.org/>

The Constitutional Amendments from the General Conference were voted on. We voted for each amendment by secret ballot, and we won't know the results until all Annual Conferences have voted.

1st - Create Regional Conferences. This is a lengthy amendment. To see the entire text of the amendment visit, <https://doc.vaumc.org/AC2025/ProposedConstAmend.pdf>.

2nd- Article IV. Inclusiveness of the Church- The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth.

3rd- Article V. Racial Justice- The United Methodist Church proclaims that from God's goodness and love, God created all persons as God's unique and beloved children.

4th- Article IV. The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from 74 the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their Ratification Ballot #3 Ratification Ballot #4 Latest version: September 6, 2024 educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an Master of Divinity degree from a University Senate-approved theological school or its equivalent as recognized in a central conference and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election. *(For those that didn't know, not all Clergy get to vote on the clergy who go to Jurisdictional and General Conferences. I have long thought this wasn't fair. This amendment would allow those who aren't Elders in Full Connection but have a Master of Divinity degree to vote. This would allow pastors like Blaine to be able to vote. While I don't think it goes far enough, it is an improvement.)*

As you can see, at the Virginia Annual Conference, it is a good mix of worship, church business, and fellowship time. If you have any questions related to the Annual Conference please talk to myself, or Pastor Blaine. And we look forward to participating as a church in assisting with the Annual Conference next year in Harrisonburg!



**Community Announcement ...** Mt. Sidney Ruritan Club will be preparing BBQ Chicken Saturday September 20th to benefit Weyers Cave Fire Company. It will be ready at 9am for sale at the Mt. Sidney Ruritan grounds, the Carillion/Weyers Cave pharmacy parking lot or at Verona Walgreens parking lot.