



The Echo

December 2025 Edition

A Publication of Bethany United Methodist Church

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January Newsletter Deadline: December 17th, 2025
Please submit articles to the church office at 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...

Warm Advent Greetings to you all! The season of sparkling lights, all things red and green, and an abundance of nativity scenes is finally upon us! For some of us, these reminders bring anxiety to our hearts and minds, as we begin to think about all the things that need to be done in the next thirty days. For others, this season of Christmas greetings seems darker than years before, as loss and grief have stricken our hearts and souls. And for others, this Advent season of hope, promise, and light is needed more than ever before! So, as we enter this season of awaiting Christmas morning, I recognize that people may be feeling a hundred different ways. I would deeply encourage you to look for opportunities that bring you peace, hope, love, and joy during this Advent season.

We at Bethany will have ample opportunities to get connected, to serve, or to just bring your authentic self to be present with God; and I hope you will jump in the places that make sense to you. During the month of December every Monday at 10am and 6:30pm we will begin our Advent Study “The Redemption of Scrooge” by Matt Rawle. This is a great opportunity if you are looking to be more intentional with God in this Advent season, or if you want something deeper! If you missed the sign-up sheet to get a book, you could get one from Amazon, or if you need help with that, let the church office know.

I personally find that when I need to be recharged or refocused on being a faithful follower of Jesus, that serving others oftentimes provides that spark for me. So, during this Advent season we at Bethany want to make sure that you too have those chances to spark a light in your own heart and in others. On Friday December 5th we are hosting our Red Cross Blood Drive and still need people to sign up to give between 9am-2pm. If this is not something you can participate in, come out on Monday afternoons and check out our faithful food pantry volunteers as they serve and welcome our neighbors every Monday from 4-5:30pm.

If you find yourself in this season of Advent feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or even just in darkness, I'd encourage you to plan on attending a special Advent Service at Weyers Cave UMC on Sunday December 21st at 6pm, titled “Waiting for our Savior to be Born in our Sadness, Stress, Struggle, Suffering, and Sorrow.” As your pastor and friend, I hope you do not miss out on the multiple ways that you can be reminded and filled with the Advent hope and promise that the baby born in the stable brings to all of humankind!

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Blaine





Prayer Lists...

Members: Tom and Jan Gorden, Barbara Long, Lois Baker, Charlotte Saufley, Dale Roller, Kathleen Stump, Alex and the Stump family on the passing of Mike Stump.

Celebration of Life Service for Mike Stump will be held on December 6th at 2:00 PM at Bethany UMC.

Our Shut-ins: Audrey Bradshaw, Ramona Garrison, Carolyn Roller, Nadine Moore

Extended Family: Declan, friend of Sawyer Dunsmore; Shay Suter, Dale Roller's friend's granddaughter; Marsha Hammond, daughter of Pat and Eddie Lynn; Michael, Gary and Bettina Ruleman's son-in-law; Kay Gum, Dale Roller's neighbor; Shirley, Pam Lynn's aunt; Tim Vanderwarker, Barbara Long's brother-in-law; Bobby Gilkerson, friend of Jan Fulton; Lisa Begoon Ruleman, Robbie Saufley's cousin; Jane Landis and Tony Gorden, community members.

December Calendar...

- **Sunday Service: Every Sunday at 9:30am**
- **Food Pantry: Mondays from 4:00 – 5:30pm**
- **Choir Practice: Wednesdays at 6:30pm**, December 3rd, 10th, and 17th
- **Advent Book Study: December 1st** at 10:00am and 6:30pm – Sunday School Classroom
- **Young at Hearts: December 2nd** at 12:00pm – Mrs. Rowes, Staunton – Christmas Party
- **Fellowship Hall Reserved: December 4th** from 6:00 – 8:00 pm
- **Blood Drive: December 5th** from 9:00am – 2:00pm – Fellowship Hall
- **Mike Stump Celebration of Life Service: December 6th** at 2:00pm – Sanctuary
- **Salvation Army Bell Ringing: December 6th** 10:00am – 6:00pm – Heritage Market, Harrisonburg
- **Christmas Sweater Sunday: December 7th** – ugly or not wear your favorite Christmas attire
- **Advent Book Study: December 8th** at 10:00am and 6:30pm – Sunday School Classroom
- **Coffee Hours with Pastor Blaine: December 11th** from 3:00pm – 5:00pm - Valley Pike
- **Family Christmas Celebration: December 14th** at 9:30am – Sanctuary – Brunch to follow service
- **Advent Book Study: December 15th** at 10:00am and 6:30pm – Sunday School Classroom
- **SPPRC Meeting: December 15th** at 5:45pm – Sunday School Classroom
- **January Echo Articles Due: December 17th**
- **Blue Christmas Service: December 21st** at 6:00pm – Weyers Cave United Methodist Church
- **Advent Book Study: December 22nd** at 10:00am and 6:30pm – Sunday School Classroom

- **Christmas Eve Services:** December 24th at 4:00pm and 8:00pm – Sanctuary
- **Office Closed:** December 25th
- **Cozy Casual Sunday:** December 28th – wear your favorite cozy casual Christmas attire to worship



December Birthdays...

1 st	Jeff Ritchie	20 th	Elizabeth Williams
	Gerald Fulton	23 rd	Jane Elkins
3 rd	Kristen Kile	25 th	Alexander Carter
5 th	Annie Roller	26 th	Garrett Roller
9 th	Hudson Dunsmore	29 th	Jake Frizzelle
19 th	Layne Shifflett		

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



BETHANY FAMILY CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION..... Please plan to attend our Bethany Family Christmas Celebration on December 14th during our regular service time at 9:30am. “Christmas Present” will include a shortened version of the Christmas Carol with ole’ Scrooge himself, as well as special music, the retelling of the Christmas story and more. Plan to arrive a few minutes early as our Praise and Worship band will perform some favorite Christmas tunes! Following the program, stay for a wonderful finger food brunch as we celebrate together. Food sign-ups for the brunch can be found in the Welcome Center. What a great opportunity to invite a friend or neighbor, share the joy of the season and allow them to experience the gift of Jesus’ love for them!



CHRISTMAS CARD POST OFFICE..... Skip the stamps! Our Christmas Card exchange area will be located in the Fellowship Hall. Leave your cards for your Bethany family and if you choose, a small donation that will go to our next Friend of Barnabas Mission Team.



CHRISTMAS EVE AT BETHANY..... Please bring your family and a neighbor to one of our two Christmas Eve services. The 4:00pm will be a brief service planned especially for our families with children and all young at heart. The 8:00pm candlelight service will be filled with music and holy communion. We hope

that one of these services will be a part of your Christmas celebrations as we are reminded of the gift we have in Jesus Christ.



LEND A HAND..... For several weeks we have been praying for Luther Law who tends to our cemeteries. Luther recently had a couple of strokes and is now back home. Some of his neighbors have fixed his trailer so he is safe and more comfortable. One of his neighbors has set up a fundraising site to accept donations to help with his financial situation. If you are led to help Luther go to <https://giveahand.com/fundraiser/for-luther-with-love-helping-him-heal-at-home> or scan the QR code at the Welcome Center to make a donation. If you would prefer to write a check out to BUMC or give cash, mark them for Luther Law and we will make sure it gets to the proper place.



REIMBURSEMENTS..... If you have receipts and need to be reimbursed for purchases made in 2025 that provided items needed for our Ministry Programs please complete a Check Request form (located outside the church office door). These forms need to have the proper signatures and returned to the office by December 15th.



YOUTH.... A big thank you to all the youth and parents who came out to Staunton Lanes for our bowling night! We look forward to having a lot more fun events like this in the New Year. If you have suggestions of what you would like to do please email them to Kaitlin at kaitlinbower@veronaumc.com.

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). If you are willing to share your children's fall schedule please send to the church office at (office.bethany@gmail.com).

MISSIONS UPDATE... by LORI MOONEY

December is approaching fast. Where did 2025 go? Hope you are ready for this joyful time of the year and then looking forward to the start of a new year. Merry Christmas to everyone. I hope this month finds you in awe and praising the Lord for all you have. Enjoy this time with loved ones and make some more special memories.

Thank you to those folks who donated their time at the Love, Inc Christmas Extravaganza. I heard it was a great time had by all.

Thank you to everyone who took an Apple Tree envelope and purchased a gift. These gifts will be a blessing for those children at Christmas. You are the 'apple of our eye' since you helped with this event.

"Happy Birthday, Jesus" tree is up and you can put your donations in the beautiful red box, then grab a purple ornament and put your name on it and hang it on the tree. All donations will be going to the Gideons for them to purchase bibles to hand out to those who need the word of Jesus. Remember, \$5 purchases 3 small new testaments. Let's beat last year's 117 bibles donated. Let's spread the word of Jesus Christ.

The "Pew-ew" Challenge is in full effect. Thank you to those who have already donated diapers for this challenge. This is a get-to-know your neighbor in your pew. We are asking you to go together and purchase a sleeve or box of diapers that will be donated to our Food Pantry neighbors. We are trying to get at least 33 sleeves/boxes, so that we can have a bow on each pew. We have 2 half pews, so really 34. Carrie Ashton, our Food Pantry diaper guru that buys the diapers has said that the cheapest and best diapers are Parent's Choice from Walmart. The most used sizes right now are 5, 6, and 7. But, we will take any size and any brand that you are willing to purchase.

Bethany's Annual Blood Drive will be on Friday, December 5th. Put it on your calendar and you can sign up online through the Red Cross Blood website or there is a sign-up sheet in the Welcome Center.

On Saturday, December 6th, we will be ringing the bell for the Salvation Army at Shenandoah Valley Heritage Market from 10am until 6pm. The sign-up sheet with hour sign-ups is out. If that date and/or those times don't work for you, please let Lori Mooney know and I can find you a date and time that will work for you and/or your family. The Salvation Army is always in need of help to ring the bell.

Mission spotlight of the month: Build United. Build United is part of United Way representing Augusta, Staunton, Waynesboro, Harrisonburg, and Rockingham County. Build United will help provide a stable and safe environment for low-income homeowners in all these communities through home repairs. Build United meets a numerous number of needs in our community. Some of the services they provide include window and floor repair and completely remodeling a bathroom to make it wheelchair accessible. If you would like to help, please earmark your donation with a note that says Build United.

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

Lori Mooney, 540-820-7394, Brownsugarcookie@yahoo.com
 Sarah Simmons, 540-292-0956, sarahsimmons4@aol.com

"BIRTHDAY FOR JESUS" is a project of The Gideons and is intended as a wonderful project for Youth to understand that Christmas Day is also Jesus's Birthday. While we all look forward to receiving Gifts on that Day, we should give Jesus a Birthday Gift. One of Jesus's requests for his followers to do to honor him and his Holy Father, is to spread God's word among those that have not yet developed a relationship with him. We Gideons believe that one way to Gift Jesus on this Birthday, is to provide our pocket size Testament to others among us.

These Testaments cost \$1.70 each, and our "BIRTHDAY FOR JESUS" project is on display in the Welcome Center with its Christmas Tree, and allows those that contribute \$5.00 or more, to also fill out the back of a carded Purple Ornament and hang it on that tree. A box is there for you to deposit your check, or cash into. 100% of all funds are used to purchase Testaments for "free" distribution among jails, hospitals, senior living facilities, schools, and among the public, by our Gideons. Each of our Gideons purchase Testaments for our own distribution, as we are committed to giving out 1 per week to someone we come across that may have a need to read "God's Word". Last year in Northern Augusta County and Staunton, we distributed 2,318 Testaments, so you can see where your donated money is being used to spread "God's Word" among our Neighbors!

This is the 4th year that BUMC has provided space for this project. In our 1st year, donations totaled \$230.00, in 2023 it totaled \$355.00, and last year we fell back to just \$195.00. Our Gideons are no longer included in BUMC's annual Budget, so your 2025 Giving is most appreciated, and needed!

Make Checks payable to The Gideons, and you will receive a receipt in the mail recognizing your donation in helping to spread "God's Word" in celebration of Jesus's Birthday!

H Ken Elkins, Gideon

BUMC Member