



The Echo

January 2026 Edition

A Publication of Bethany United Methodist Church

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February Newsletter Deadline: January 17th, 2026

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...

Dear Bethany Family,

Let me be one of the first to wish you all a Happy New Year! We have made it to another year, as 2026 comes and meets us with all the hopes, dreams, and aspirations very much in front of us! And with those new hopes, dreams, and aspirations; also comes new fears, worries, and uncertainties. As the calendar switches over this year, I too am deeply experiencing all of these feelings. As many of you know by now, my beloved partner and spouse, Ashley, has accepted an amazing opportunity as a Pediatric Staff Chaplain at the Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU. Ashley will be starting this new opportunity on January 19th, and will be moving into an apartment in the next coming days. As for me, I will continue to be your pastor through the New Year and through the end of June, as that decision every year is up to the Bishop and her cabinet, which is composed of the Virginia United Methodist Church's district superintendents. With this news, there is much joy and excitement. If you know Ashley, you know this is one of those opportunities that comes in life and seems like a perfect fit. And with this joy and excitement, also comes the fear of the unknown and the fear of what is to come next in this new season of change.

I am relieved though that we are reminded all throughout Scripture that God DOES indeed care about us, and that Christ came to Earth, not just to save us, but also to encounter all the things that we may encounter, in life. When we feel like we are in the middle of a storm or in life's boat that keeps taking on water, we can be reminded that Jesus has been there and is with us. When death, illness, and disease take over and we feel like healing seems so far off, we can hold onto the hope that Jesus is certainly with us in our waiting. And so I know that Jesus is very much present in the life of all things Bethany UMC, in Ashley and I's journey, and ultimately for the future that is yet to come. So in the meantime, I would ask for a multitude of prayers, praying for what is to come at Bethany, praying for this new season for Ashley and I, and praying that God will continue to reveal Christ to us, in all that we do!

But as we kick off the New Year here at Bethany, I am very excited about this upcoming series! Starting January 4th we will be kicking off an exciting, and hopefully helpful six-week Sermon Series, called: "How Do We Share The Gospel?" After our listening sessions during the month of September, I heard a number of voices truly asking, What are the best practices when it comes to sharing one's faith in Jesus with a stranger, a neighbor, or a friend? So to hopefully give us some guidance in being more equipped to share the Gospel in the places and spaces we find ourselves, we are going to follow Jesus and his followers to see how they shared the Gospel 2,000 plus years ago! I hope you will take the time in 2026 to allow the Holy Spirit to challenge you and encourage you to be a people who are serious about taking the Good News of the Gospel out into our community, neighborhoods, and our world!

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Blaine



Prayer Lists...

Members: Tom and Jan Gorden, Barbara Long, Lois Baker, Charlotte Saufley, Gary Ruleman

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

Extended Family: Mike Morris, Kathy Kile's brother-in-law; Clifford James, grandfather of soon to be son-in-law of Gary and Laura Lucas; Heather, sister of Josh Unger.

We pray for all of our food Pantry Neighbors, all of our unhoused friends in our community living out in the cold, and for all those in our community and world.

January Calendar...

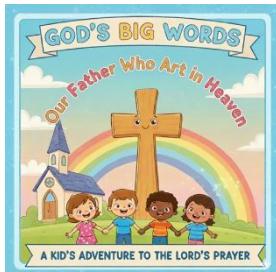
- **Sunday Service: Every Sunday at 9:30 am**
- **Food Pantry: Mondays from 4:00 – 5:30 pm**
- **Church Office Closed:** January 1st
- **Gideons: Sunday,** January 4th – final day to make donations to The Gideons
- **Young at Hearts:** January 6th at 12:00 pm – O'Neill's - Harrisonburg
- **Coffee Hours with Pastor Blaine:** January 8th from 9:30 am – 12:00 pm - Valley Pike
- **Fellowship Hall Reserved:** January 8th from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
- **Donuts and Devotions:** January 17th at 8:00 am – Fellowship Hall
- **February Echo Articles Due:** January 17th
- **Coffee Hours with Pastor Blaine:** January 22nd from 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm - Valley Pike
- **Fellowship Hall Reserved:** January 22nd from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
- **Young Adults Gathering:** January 25th from 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm – Alpine Goat Brewery, Weyers Cave



January Birthdays...

2 nd	Judy Smith	21 st	Barbara Miller
8 th	Krisalyn Mooney	21 st	Pam Roller
13 th	Abby Unger	21 st	Randy Roller
15 th	Mark Whitecotton	21 st	Garrett Simmons
15 th	Sharon Northrop	25 th	Edie Smith
18 th	Abe Smith	28 th	Peggy Lucas
19 th	Beth Drobinski	30 th	Sarah Simmons

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



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY..... Children's Church Focus for the New Year: **The Lord's Prayer.** We're kicking off the new year with something truly special for our kids! Beginning in January, the children of Bethany will be diving into The Lord's Prayer during Children's Church. Each week, they'll explore a new part of this beautiful prayer — learning what it means, why it matters, and how it connects to their everyday lives. Through hands-on activities, creative storytelling, and interactive lessons, our kids will discover that prayer isn't just words we say—it's a conversation with our loving

Father. We can't wait to watch their understanding and excitement grow as they learn to pray with confidence and joy. Let's pray for our little ones as they embark on this meaningful journey together!



CHRISTMAS CARD POST OFFICE..... The Bethany Christmas Card Postal Service will continue to be open in the fellowship hall until Sunday, January 6th. Skip the stamps and leave your cards for your Bethany family members and if you choose a small donation that will go to our next Friend of Barnabas Mission Team.



JOIN THE PRAISE AND WORSHIP TEAMS!..... Ever thought about joining? Does it look scary? Believe us, it's not! It's a great time to come check out being a part. We will be starting to practice some new music soon. We have a lot of fun together and it will be even more fun with you! IF you are interested please talk to Dale Roller or any member of the singers or band.



MORNING REFRESHMENT HELP NEEDED!..... Many enjoy our morning coffee and refreshments after the services each week, especially the children. We really need some folks to commit to helping with this simple and meaningful task. We need folks to help put the food out before the service, but even more so, help with cleaning up afterwards. Food is provided and we have coffee makers so this part is already covered. As we begin the new year, could you commit to one Sunday each month? If we have folks for each Sunday, then if there is a Sunday when someone cannot be there, we can simply trade with someone else. In addition, donations of food items such as cookies, brownies, cut cheese, doughnuts, boxes of crackers, muffins or fruit are always appreciated and welcome.



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.

YOUNG ADULTS..... Our Young Adults will be beginning a new thing in the New Year, as we gather and invite other young adults to come and fellowship, and also wrestle with all things involving life and God, in our young adults lives. In January we will be meeting on Sunday January 25th from 3-4:30 pm at the Alpine Goat Brewery in Weyers Cave. We hope our post high school aged folks through 35 year old will join us! If you have any questions please reach out to Jac Bridges.

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

January is here and another new year is upon us. Hope everyone has a great year in 2026.

May God bless each and everyone of you. During the Advent season, we do so many things here within our church. Thank you to everyone for all their contributions.

Thank you to those folks who rang the bell for the Salvation Army at the Shenandoah Valley Heritage Market. Thanks to Jackie and all who helped with the Christmas Program and the brunch that followed. It was amazing.

Thank you to Trae and all his helpers that prepared the food for the Food Pantry Meal. Those that stayed for the meal only had good things to say. The food was delicious and they were so appreciative.

Thank you to everyone who gave Jesus a birthday gift by purchasing Bibles through the Gideons to be given out to those that may need them.

Thank you everyone for making the Pew-ew challenge a fun event while giving our neighbors diapers that are needed daily. I knew you all would exceed expectations (like always). Anything that is put before you, you always conquer and meet our needs. Keep up the good work. We ended up having 40 sleeves or boxes of diapers donated by you. Thank you so much!

Mission spotlight of the month: Friends of Barnabas. We have been sending a group to Honduras for the past several years. There is already a group ready and excited for the one in August 2026. All donations will be taken throughout the year. We will be having fundraisers throughout the year, so look out for those. If you are interested in going on this trip, please talk to Gary Lucas. Any extra end of the year donations can be made to the church. Be sure to note Honduras Mission trip so it goes in the right designation.

Any ideas on mission related events, please contact us and let us know what you want to do. Thank you for an amazing year of donations of money and time during the year 2025. Keep up the good work. Let's have another great mission-oriented year ahead.

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

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