



# The Echo

March 2026 Edition

A Publication of Bethany United Methodist Church

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April Newsletter Article Deadline: March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
Please submit articles to the church office at [office.bethany@gmail.com](mailto:office.bethany@gmail.com)

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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday – 8:30am – 2:30pm

**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 Family,

There's a scene in one of my favorite movies, "The Green Mile" where the wrongly convicted murderer, John Coffee, who is about to get the electric chair, is having a conversation with the empathetic prison guard, played by Tom Hanks. Coffee looks at Hanks, deep in his eyes, and exclaims "I'm tired boss." He then continues by saying, "I'm tired of people being ugly to each other." And friends, I resonate with that wholeheartedly. Maybe you too, feel tired and worn out by the world and the constant barrage of ugliness from people on every side of every issue. Maybe you too are saddened and grieved for those friends that you have lost because of the ugliness and division in our world. I believe it is good to name this grief that we might feel. And in this same tension, I witnessed something so heartwarming and beautiful just last week when our loving and gracious Bethany family came together to fill thirty-eight Bags of Love that will bring a reminder to some of our local foster children and youth that they are in fact deeply loved. That evening was capped off by a memory that I will treasure forever, as one of our beloved Bethany children etched a precious cross out of ashes on my forehead. Talk about a night full of Christ's redeeming love and bountiful grace that reminded me of just how special this church and the people that make it up are.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 12:25, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand." We must stand strong and steadfast together, acknowledging our differences but not allowing them to tear us apart. Over the years people have been welcomed through Bethany's doors, and people have left our doors for a number of reasons. Although this does happen everywhere, I wonder what it might look like if we as the church became the prime example in our world of how to deal with conflict and tension in a healthy manner. In order to do this I feel it might be helpful to name a few things:

- 1. There is no perfect institution, perfect church, or even perfect denomination on Earth.**
- 2. The reason why there isn't, is because the church is made up of imperfect people.**
- 3. We do not have to agree on everything that is preached, communicated, or implied.**
- 4. And we must continue to embody God's redemptive love in all of our words and deeds.**

Friends, we do not have to agree on everything. Heck, I doubt I could get everyone to agree that vanilla is better than chocolate, which is the obviously correct choice. But I do believe that we can gather with grace and humility to listen to one another, and if disagreements arise let our love for one another outshine those differences.

Bethany, my hope and prayer is that this congregation is healthier and more loving now than when I got here in 2022. My hope and prayer is that in the next five years, this congregation will be even healthier and more loving than it is right now. This ought to be all of our continual hopes as we journey the road of becoming more like Jesus each and every waking moment. Let us continue this journey, leaving behind the ugliness of the world, and leading forward with grace and humility towards one another and all those we encounter.

*In Christ's Love,*

*Pastor Blaine*





## Prayer Lists...

**Members:** Tom and Jan Gorden, Barbara Long, Charlotte Saufley, Peggy Lucas, Pam Lynn, Sandra and Rosa Campbell

Pam Lynn is at Monroe Health & Rehabilitation Center, 1150 Northwest Dr, Rm 111, Charlottesville, VA 22901

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

**Extended Family:** Beverley Miller, Jordan Dunsmore's mother; Deacon Whitson, student at Jackie Dunsmore's school; Jim Miller's sisters and families; Kaitlin Bower's boyfriend's grandmother; Robert Priest, friend and co-worker of Bill Kile; James, Jac Bridges' father; Jane, friend of Randy and Annie Roller; Nelda, grandmother of Pastor Blaine; Isaiah, acquaintance of Nicole Carter; staff, families, and children of the Preschool where Tabby Steed works; Roger Hawkins, Becky Hawkins' husband; PJ, Pastor Blaine's first youth pastor; Lorna Frizelle's best friend's father; Keelan Jones, Randy and Annie Roller's grandson

We pray for all of our food Pantry Neighbors and for all those in our community and world.



## March Birthdays...

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Jan Gorden	15 <sup>th</sup>	Lisa Cox
5 <sup>th</sup>	Ken Elkins	15 <sup>th</sup>	Cathie Sue King
5 <sup>th</sup>	Earl King	16 <sup>th</sup>	Rosa Campbell
7 <sup>th</sup>	Becky McCarty	17 <sup>th</sup>	Jared Kile
10 <sup>th</sup>	Bobbie Meek	20 <sup>th</sup>	Allen Drobinski
10 <sup>th</sup>	Lindsay Williams	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Cheryl Richards
13 <sup>th</sup>	Kelli Huffer	26 <sup>th</sup>	Barbara Long
14 <sup>th</sup>	Chuck McCarty	26 <sup>th</sup>	Libby Riddle

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)



**APPLE DUMPLINGS - Wednesday March 4.....** Making apple dumplings has always been a Bethany thing. Well, the Dumpling Squad is back on Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> and you are needed! We will start at 12:00 noon. We need folks to peel, make dumplings, bake, remove from pans, wrap and wash dishes. There is a job for all and we have A LOT of fun making them! We are making 500, available for pick-up starting at 2:00 p.m.. Proceeds are going to our summer Friends of Barnabas medical team to Honduras to purchase medical supplies. Thank you ahead of time for your help and PLEASE sell dumplings to your friends, family and work colleagues!



**NEW MEMBER CLASS.....** Whether you have been attending Bethany for a while or if you have just begun to attend, we want to offer a two-week class for those who may be interested in officially joining Bethany UMC! We will be offering this New Member Class for those who are interested in officially joining our church family on Sunday March 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> after Sunday Morning Worship. If you are interested, please talk to Pastor Blaine.



**EASTER FLOWERS.....** Please help adorn our sanctuary on Easter as you honor or remember a special someone in your life or in the life of our church. We are offering pots of tulips for \$10, regal geraniums for \$9 and hydrangeas for \$20. All can be planted in your home gardens. Order forms will be at the Welcome Center Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. Please place in the secretary's mailbox or in the offering plate. The deadline is Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>. Thank you!



**PALM SUNDAY, March 29.....** 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. 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, March 29.....** 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, April 3.....** You are invited to a special Community Good Friday Service on April 3<sup>rd</sup> 6 p.m. at Bethany United Methodist Church. At noon on Friday, Jesus Christ died in Jerusalem, crucified as a criminal on a cross. His funeral will take place that evening. All are welcome to attend and grieve his death. Those sharing in a time of witness will be Jesus' friends and family: Mary Magdalene (Rev. Jenny Day), John (Rev. Stan Farthing), Mary, Jesus' mother (Rev. Amy Pannell), and Peter (Rev. Blaine Oliver-Thomas), with Rev. Tommy Crosby presiding over this service.



**EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE, April 5.....** We will gather with our beloved Weyers Cave Community at 6:30 a.m. for our Easter Sunrise Service in the top parking lot at the Weyers Cave Community Center. We look forward to worshipping our Risen Savior together as the sun rises on our Holy Easter morning!



**Thank you to all who contributed to our BAGS OF LOVE** that we put together at our Ash Wednesday event. We presented 38 bags full of personal items to the Harrisonburg/Rockingham County Department of Social Services for many children and youth who will be removed from their homes and placed in foster care. Thank you Bethany family as once again we have sought to be the hands and feet of Jesus!



**REACHING INTO OUR COMMUNITY.....** For many reasons most families in our community are not a part of a church family and they probably are not going to show up at a church either. How do we reach these many families with the love of Jesus Christ and the gospel message? We meet them where they are at! We are exploring doing several “Meet You at the Park” events at the Weyers Cave Community Center playground this summer. It might involve providing some simple and fun activities, games or even a hotdog picnic. Who knows? But we are seeking God’s direction in reaching out to families in our community and truly making a connection. Interested in being a part? Maybe one on one discussion or doing stuff with kids isn’t your thing? There will be many roles that need to be filled. Is God tugging at your heart? Come be a part of the discussion and planning. A date will be chosen soon. Sign up in the Welcome Center if you are interested.

**WOMEN’S MINISTRY.....** Women’s Ministry members are presented the following Winter/Spring 2026 schedule. Open to all Bethany ladies and their guests. Please bring money for your purchases when a cost is indicated for the event. Posters with more details can be found throughout the church.

March 18: Bible Study on Creation from 1:30 – 3:00 pm at Barbara Somer’s home (date and time change)

March 26: Pizza and a journal activity at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall

April 16: Dinner at the Galley at 6:00 pm, South Main Harrisonburg

April TBA: Lunch and local hike organized by Gail Reese

May 20: “Tasting the Bible” lesson and planting activity from 1 – 2:30 pm at the home of Nicole Carter

May 21: “Tasting the Bible” and planting activity at 6:00 pm at the home of Elizabeth Williams

**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)).

### **YOUNG AT HEARTS 2026 LUNCHEON SCHEDULE**

Tuesday, March 3, 2026 - The Thomas House- 222 Main Street, Dayton

Tuesday, April 7, 2026 - Kathy’s - 705 Greenville Avenue, Staunton

Tuesday, May 5, 2026 - The Galley Diner - 2430 S. Main Street, Harrisonburg

Tuesday, June 2, 2026 - Cline Community Center @ VMRC

Tuesday, July 7, 2026 - The Thomas House - 222 Main Street, Dayton

Tuesday, August 4, 2026 - O’Neills - 221 University Blvd, Harrisonburg

Tuesday, September 1, 2026 - Wood Grill - 1711 Reservoir Street, Harrisonburg

Tuesday, October 6, 2026 - TBD

Tuesday, November 3, 2026 - The Thomas House - 222 Main Street, Dayton

Tuesday, December 8, 2026 - Kathy’s - 705 Greenville Avenue, Staunton

### **MISSIONS UPDATE... by LORI MOONEY**

March is coming soon and we hope it is more like spring. Man, what a winter we have had. We have made it through the worst, we hope. Keep your fingers crossed so that the weather stays positive and the temps keep moving on up.

A BIG THANK YOU to all the donations that you gave during the “Bags of Love” Ash Wednesday service. It was a generous outpouring of love. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts and we know that the kids that will be using these “bags of love” will be so grateful for your generosity. We were able to put together 38 bags and we had a box of leftovers that were also donated.

Don’t forget Apple Dumplings on March 4<sup>th</sup>. If you can sell to co-workers and neighbors, there are forms in the front lobby. If you know how many you want to purchase, there is also a list where you can write that down, just so we know how many we have pre-sold. If you need more and we have them that night, then you can purchase more. We are only doing 500 for this event. So, plan accordingly. They are \$5 a dumpling. This money will go towards the Friends of Barnabas trip in August this year.

Mission spotlight of the month: Habitat for Humanity. We donate money to Habitat, so they can build homes for those who need them. Their mission is: Building and restoring homes, lives and communities through faith. They strive to create homes and environments where families can thrive, feel safe, and build a promising future. By supporting SAW (Staunton, Augusta, and Waynesboro) Habitat, you contribute to foundational change that offers generational benefits. If you would like to make an extra contribution, please mark it for Habitat for Humanity. Everyone deserves a safe place to live.

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)



March Calendar on the next page.

 <b>March 2026</b> 						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Lenten Book Study 10am & 6pm	3 Young @ Hearts – Thomas House	4 Apple Dumplings – noon  Laura out of the office	5 Coffee Hours 9:30am – noon, Valley Pike  Fellowship Hall Reserved 6-8pm	6	7 Fellowship Hall Reserved 5-7pm
8	9 Lenten Book Study 10am & 6pm	10	11	12	13	14
15 New Member Class 10:30-11:30am, Family Meeting Room	16 Lenten Book Study 10am & 6pm	17 Caring Cards 10am	18 Women's Bible Study 1:30-3pm Barbara Somers' Home	19 Coffee Hours 3-5pm, Valley Pike  Fellowship Hall Reserved 6-8pm	20	21 Donuts & Devotions 8am
22 New Member Class 10:30-11:30am, Family Meeting Room	23 Lenten Book Study 10am & 6pm	24	25	26 Women's Ministry 6pm – Pizza & Journal	27	28
29 Brunch after service	30 Lenten Book Study 10am & 6pm	31				

- Sunday Service: Every Sunday at 9:30 am
- Food Pantry: Mondays from 4:00 – 5:30 pm