



The Echo

April 2026 Edition

A Publication of Bethany United Methodist Church

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May Newsletter Article Deadline: April 17th, 2026
Please submit articles to the church office at office.bethany@gmail.com

Webmaster: bethanyumc.website@gmail.com

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 Bethany Family and Friends,

Hope is on the horizon. In a few days we will move from the cruel and traumatic crucifixion tool of a cross, to an empty tomb, where our sin, shame, regret, and guilt have been left behind, and where freedom, hope, and redemption meet us. We will move from darkness and a season of fasting and hoping, into a season of renewal and spring light full of new birth. Easter is creeping towards us, and the promise of Jesus defeating death and us proclaiming that Jesus lives is so so close my friends!

And in that same breath, I deeply feel the weight that some folks might be holding as we at Bethany enter into a season of transition and change. As most of you know by now, Ashley started her dream job as a chaplain at the Children's Hospital of Richmond in mid-January, so we have been living apart since then. With this change, we knew the likelihood of an appointment change for me was incredibly high. With that being said, I want you to know something: I see you, I hear you, and I hold your fears, anxieties, and worries. I recognize that for some, you are excited to welcome a new change in pastoral leadership, as I know I certainly would be ready after putting up with me for almost four years. For others you feel sadness and grief, as you have invited me into your deepest and closest relationships, which has been such a beautiful gift. For some of you, you may be worried about what is to come and you are concerned with how well Bethany will handle this transition. Change brings a number of emotions and feelings, and I hope you will honor them and recognize that they are a natural part of this transition. Friends, you are not alone in this!

For those of you who may be unfamiliar with the appointment system in the United Methodist Church, I think it will be beneficial to explain a bit of it. Pastors are appointed by the Cabinet which is made up of the eight District Superintendents and the Bishop of the Virginia Annual Conference. A pastor is appointed to serve a local church on a one year basis from July 1st through June 30th. The cabinet does everything in their power to match a pastor's strengths and gifts to the gifts and graces of the local church that they are appointed to. The SPPRC (Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee) here at Bethany has done a tremendous job to communicate Bethany's hopes, dreams, and needs for its next pastor. Sometimes the appointment fits like a glove, and other times it is not always as flawless. The main hope in the appointment process is that pastors are called to come alongside churches, not to be the church, but to come alongside the church to equip and empower the congregation to do the work and mission of Jesus Christ in their own specific and unique contexts.

And so as we enter into this new season brimming with hope AND fears and worries, I want to remind you that YOU are the backbone of this church. The Holy Spirit is at work in and through you in this space, and that my friends is good news. Your steadfast faithfulness at Bethany has been what has made this place a flourishing community of Christ-centered folks. The people of Bethany who have called this place home, is exactly what makes this place a welcoming and friendly place to encounter Jesus. This place has brought hope and comfort, joy and praise, life and new beginnings to so many people in its almost 75 years of existence. And Bethany will continue to be a beacon of hope and a shelter for those seeking something more in their lives. So I hope you will join me in continuing to pray for the cabinet as they discern the next pastor at Bethany. I also hope you will join me in praying for that next pastor, their family, and the church they are leaving behind. Friends, we are in this thing together and I am holding you all deeply in my prayers day and night as we walk this road together.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Blaine



Prayer Lists...

Members: Tom and Jan Gorden, Charlotte Saufley, Betty Stroop

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, Barbara Long

Extended Family: Dwayne, Tabby Steed’s friend’s father; Riannon, Garrett Roller’s friend; Donald and Ginger, Mary Beth Schwab’s friends; Camden Kite, Cindy and Randy Kite’s grandson; Pattie, Maggie Huffer’s mom; brother of Amber, Tabby Steed’s co-worker; teacher at Turner Ashby HS, co-worker of Maggie Huffer; Carrie Ellgren, daughter of Mark and Jackie Dunsmore; Cecil Wright, a Weyers Cave neighbor; Mike Morris, Kathy Kile’s brother-in-law.

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



April Birthdays...

2 nd	Joey Frease	18 th	Susan Meadows
5 th	Sawyer Dunsmore	25 th	Nash Colvin
5 th	Trae Elkins	25 th	Carrie Dunsmore Ellgren
7 th	Jordan Dunsmore	28 th	Amelia Simmons
9 th	Susan Thacker	29 th	Gail Reese
10 th	Chuck Schwab	30 th	Nadine Moore
17 th	Rick Northrop	30 th	Sarah Williams
17 th	Jennifer Williams		

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



GOOD FRIDAY, April 3..... You are invited to a special Community Good Friday Service on April 3rd 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 next to the playground at the Weyers Cave Community Center. We look forward to worshipping our Risen Savior together as the sun rises on our Holy Easter morning!



EASTER SUNDAY.....APRIL 5...IT'S HERE!! The highest and holiest day of our Christian year is upon us. Our celebration service will be filled with special music, welcoming new members, and communion. After the service there will be an Easter Egg Hunt for the kids and refreshments for all. We all have friends and neighbors who may not have a church to attend on Easter Sunday. Let's all commit to inviting one or two folks/families to join us on Easter Sunday. Hearing the message of God's love for each of us through the death and resurrection of Jesus is the best Easter gift you can give!



EASTER EGG HUNT! Hey kids, after the Easter worship service we will have our usual Easter Egg Hunt for you! Bring your basket and be ready for some fun. Do you have a friend you could invite to church that day? Wouldn't it be great to share some fun and the love of Jesus with a friend? Think of someone YOU could invite!



Thank you to all who have and will contribute to our Lent, Palm Sunday and Easter activities and services! Whether it was purchasing flowers, making food, providing special music, assisting in decorating, planning various activities or just faithfully attending during this Holy season it has been meaningful and challenging. A special thank you to Pastor Blaine for choosing a wonderful book and theme, An Unlikely Lent. May we carry the messages from this season into our daily lives as we follow Jesus in our journey of faith.



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 on Wednesday, April 15th at 6:30 p.m. 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.

April 11: Meet at noon at Harvest Table in Dayton. After lunch we will hike up Mole Hill. Signup in the Welcome Center by April 8th. Cost

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

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 spring schedules as they come available to our youth director, Kaitlin Bower at (kaitlinbower@veronaumc.com). If you are willing to share your children's spring schedule please send to the church office at (office.bethany@gmail.com).

YOUNG AT HEARTS 2026 LUNCHEON SCHEDULE

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

April is coming on strong. Let's hope it stays getting warmer and spring flowers start showing up. Happy April's Fool's Day, Happy Easter, and Happy Earth Day! The Lord has risen!

Thank you to everyone who donated ingredients for Apple Dumplings, sold them to neighbors and co-workers and ate them themselves. It was a great starter fundraiser for Friends of Barnabas trip to Honduras in August. What will be the next one? Keep your eyes peeled.

We will be helping Rosemary with the Kits for Annual Conference. Look for her article to let you know which one we are focusing on this year and let's get those numbers up to what we did last year and maybe even a couple more.

We are working on dates for this summer to help at Love, Inc in their warehouse sorting goods. Please look for these dates, so you can go ahead and pencil them in on your calendar. The dates are the following: Tuesday, June 23rd, Monday, July 13th, and Tuesday, August 4th. We will work at the warehouse from 9-12 each morning. If you have any questions, please contact Lori Mooney.

Please prayerfully consider helping with "Meet You at the Park" in Weyers Cave to spread God's word in a different way. There is a sign-up in the front lobby, if you are interested. Questions about this, please contact Jackie.

Mission spotlight of the month: CASA. Blue Ridge CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) for Children located in Harrisonburg. They are a nonprofit organization that advocates for the best interests of abused and neglected children in the counties of Augusta, Page, Rockbridge, Rockingham, and Shenandoah and the localities of Augusta, Buena Vista, Lexington, Harrisonburg, Staunton, and Waynesboro. They recruit, screen, train, and support volunteer CASAs who serve as the voice for these children in court proceedings and help ensure they are placed in safe and permanent homes. They work tirelessly to promote the well-being and stability of vulnerable

children. Over 300 children in our service area are waiting for a CASA. If you would like to support this great cause, please make out a check and put CASA on the memo line.

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

ANNUAL CONFERENCE KITS.....This year we will be collecting and assembling Hygiene Kits for Annual Conference, which will be held in Harrisonburg, June 17th – 20th. These kits will go to areas affected by natural disasters and other emergency relief efforts through the UMC. Directions and items needed are below and we ask that the kits be at church by May 10th. There will be a box for collecting them in the Welcome Center on April 12th. For those who do not want to put an entire kit together, feel free to bring items that go in the kit. If you have questions you can contact Rosemary Wagoner at 540-256-8066 or roswag13@gmail.com.

Hygiene Kit Materials



One hand towel (15 x 25 –17 x 27 inches)

No kitchen, cleaning, or microfiber towels

One washcloth - No kitchen, cleaning, or microfiber towels

One comb -Must be sturdy with at least 6 inches of teeth. No pocket combs or picks or Rattail and combs without handles are acceptable but must have

at least 6 inches of teeth

One toenail or fingernail clipper -No emery boards or metal nail files.

Bath-size soap (3 oz. bar or larger) - No Ivory or Jergen's soap. Do not remove from packaging.

One adult toothbrush - Do not remove from packaging. Personal advertising is not acceptable

10 adhesive bandages (¾ by 3 inches)- Common household bandages acceptable.

One one-gallon size resealable bag

Assembly Instructions •

Lay hand towel flat on a table. • Lay the washcloth in the center of the hand towel. • Place all remaining items on top of the washcloth (except the plastic bag). • Fold the sides of the hand towel to cover the items. • Grasp the bundle tightly and roll over the remainder of the towel. • Place the tightly rolled bundle in the plastic bag, remove air, and seal.



April Calendar on the next page.



April 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Coffee Hours 9:30am – noon, Valley Pike	3 Good Friday Service 6pm – Sanctuary Laura in the office	4
5 Easter Sunrise Service 6:30am – W.C. Community Center Softball Practice 3pm – WC Ball Field	6	7 Young @ Hearts noon – Kathy’s, Staunton Laura in the office	8 Laura out of the office	9 Laura out of the office	10	11 Women’s Ministry Hike noon – Harvest Table, Dayton
12 Softball Practice 3pm – WC Ball Field	13 Laura out of the office	14 Caring Cards 10am	15 Community Outreach Meeting 6:30pm	16 Women’s Ministry 6pm – The Galley, Harrisonburg	17 Laura in the office	18 Donuts & Devotions 8am
19 Softball Practice 3pm – WC Ball Field	20	21 Church Council meeting 6:30pm	22	23 Coffee Hours 3- 5pm -Valley Pike	24	25
26 Softball Practice 3pm – WC Ball Field Young Adults 3- 4:30pm – Alpine Goat Brewery	27	28	29	30		

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