



# The Echo

June 2026 Edition

A Publication of Bethany United Methodist Church

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July Newsletter Article Deadline: June 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,**

We have reached the season, in which departures and arrivals, “see you later,” and new adventures are about to commence. As we celebrated our graduates this past Sunday who are stepping into their next chapter, I found myself resonating deeply with our graduates. Years of showing up and putting in the work in the classroom has prepared them for their respective next steps. The friendships and relationships they have formed will change their life trajectory forever. And now they have the skills, abilities, and gifts to go and be a blessing to others everywhere they may go. Like our grads, the people of Bethany have provided me a gracious opportunity to learn the ropes as a pastor and to lean into my calling, as you all provided a gracious space to succeed and also to fail. Bethany has offered me life-changing friendships and given me the confidence to go and serve God’s people for many years to come. My time here at Bethany has been nothing short of a blessing and getting to know each and every one of you is something that I will never forget, nor take for granted. From coffee hours, to summer nights playing softball, to befriending our neighbors through our food pantry, weekly visits with our saints, and mission trips that have been etched into my heart forever; I will leave the Valley with a heart full of gratitude and hope for the church. God is at work here at Bethany, and the Spirit is alive and well in this space. Friends, I hope that you never take this faith community for granted, and I hope you continue to offer your gifts and graces so that Bethany will continue to be a place where we are better together!

And with that I now have the tremendous honor to pass this letter over to my colleague, good friend, and your new pastor, Lori Valentine Martinez!

### **Beloved Bethany Family of Christ,**

May the peace of Christ be with us all in this time of transition. I am so looking forward to joining this vibrant community of faith this coming July. What a blessing to know some of the amazing kingdom work and witness this church family does in the larger community! I am looking forward to sharing, learning, and partnering in mission with you all. I have been blessed to be a partner in ministry with you all over the past few years. For the past six years, my family and I have been blessed to call this valley home. I am so grateful to my friend and colleague Pastor Blaine for all the amazing work you all have done together as a church family. As he and Pastor Ashley transition to life in Richmond, our prayers and hearts go with them.

I can testify to how God is already at work in this transition, even when change is uncertain. I celebrate this new chapter with you all, just like we celebrate the new chapters for each of the college and high school graduates this Spring. Let us all join in prayer during this time of transition, resting assured that God is with us in the days and weeks ahead. We know that the work that Christ has begun in us and will continue in this new season together in ways the Holy Spirit is yet to reveal!

*In Christ's Love,*

*Pastor Blaine and Pastor Lori*





## Prayer Lists...

**Members:** Tom and Jan Gorden, Charlotte Saufley, Barbara Long, Garrett Roller, Jacob Robertson, Sawyer Dunsmore, Pam Lynn

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

**Extended Family:** Katelyn Ecroyd and family, Rolf Dolder, Michelle Hartman, Donna Moomaw, Samantha and Bradley Pittman, Ellen Shank family, Shay Suter, Maggie Rhodes, Tene and Josh Fox, Larry Moyer

We pray for all of our Food Pantry Neighbors, Pastor Lori and her family during the transition, and for all those in our community and world.



## June Birthdays...

3 <sup>rd</sup>	Becky Hawkins	20 <sup>th</sup>	Maggie Huffer
5 <sup>th</sup>	Bettina Ruleman	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Jim Miller
5 <sup>th</sup>	Blaine Oliver-Thomas	26 <sup>th</sup>	Dianna Eicher
7 <sup>th</sup>	Lucy Huffer	26 <sup>th</sup>	Mae Houff
9 <sup>th</sup>	Jac Bridges	26 <sup>th</sup>	Roger Hawkins
14 <sup>th</sup>	Jackson Frease	28 <sup>th</sup>	David Williams
15 <sup>th</sup>	Terri Shifflett	30 <sup>th</sup>	Pete Richards
18 <sup>th</sup>	Jonathan Northrop		

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)



**ANNUAL CONFERENCE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED, June 17-20.....** Annual Conference is the annual meeting when all United Methodist Churches in Virginia come and gather for worship, church business, and fellowship together. This year it is at the Atlantic Bank Center at JMU in Harrisonburg from June 17<sup>th</sup> – June 20<sup>th</sup>. Many hands are needed to put this event together, so if you would like to take a volunteer shift, by providing transportation support (at this time golf carts will not be used) or helping with registration, or other opportunities, please register at this link: [Annual Conference 2026 Volunteer Shifts](#). This will be a wonderful way for Bethany to help support the larger UMC and be hospitable and loving to all of our neighbors as they show up to Annual Conference.



**“MEET YOU AT THE PARK”.....** Our first event is June 10<sup>th</sup> with LEMONADE as the theme. Come join us at the Weyers Cave Community Center playground for games, a craft, a snack, and fellowship with families in our community.



**CHILDREN'S MINISTRY.....** Our Children's Church leaders are taking a short break for the summer (June 7<sup>th</sup> – August 30<sup>th</sup>). Volunteers are needed to come and play Bible Games with our children. Games are provided in the Children's Church classroom downstairs. Prayfully consider volunteering for a Sunday or two by signing up on the sign-up sheet in the Welcome Center.



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

It is June. Happy summer! Hope the kids enjoy their time off from school and everyone gets to go on a vacation at some point this summer. Happy Flag Day, Juneteenth and Father's Day. Thanks to all those fathers and father-figures in our lives.

Congrats to the graduates, Maecy Ann Frizzelle and Garrett Simmons from Fort Defiance High School. Good luck with your next adventures in college. Congrats to Krisalyn Mooney from UVA and heading to Madison, WI to work for EPIC.

Thank you for those of you who donated whole kits or items to make a hygiene kit for the Conference. We appreciate all the donations. We ended up making 32 kits.

We will be helping Love, INC in their warehouse sorting goods for their thrift stores on Tuesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, Monday, July 13<sup>th</sup>, and Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup>. 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" to spread God's word in a different way. We will be having a snack and a couple of tables to do events during the time we are there. The dates for these are: Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, June 24<sup>th</sup>, and July 8<sup>th</sup>. We will be doing it from 6:30pm-7:30pm at the Weyers Cave Community Center/Ruritan playground. Help with donations or help the night of the event. Questions about this, please contact Jackie.

Mission spotlight of the month: Renewing Homes of Greater Augusta. Our nonprofit's mission is to provide critical repairs at no cost to income-eligible homeowners residing in the SAW community, that make homes Safe, Warm, Dry, and Accessible. In 2025, over 3200 volunteer hours provided essential home repairs for 145 low-income residents in 76 owner-operated homes in the Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County. If you would like to make an extra donation, please mark it for Renewing Homes of Greater Augusta.

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)

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



Tuesday, June 2, 2026 - Cline Community Center @ VMRC (Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community)  
 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

**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/summer 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



## **A Message from Your Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee**

### **Saying ‘Good-bye’ to Pastor Blaine:**

Saying ‘Good-bye’ to a beloved pastor is one of the most difficult transitions in our church, especially one who has touched our lives in many awesome and impactful ways. Here are some suggestions for our Bethany Family to consider:

1. Pray for Pastor Blaine as he transitions to a new church in Richmond as an Associate Pastor.
2. Consider a card or letter of appreciation to thank him for all that he has done for you and our congregation. We will provide a basket in the Welcome Center to collect your well wishes.
3. We will have a reception honoring Pastor Blaine after the worship service on Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, which will be his last Sunday with us.



### **Reception for Pastor Blaine Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup>**

### **Welcoming Pastor Lori Valentine:**

1. Pray for Pastor Lori and her family as she prepares to shepherd a new congregation. Open your heart and decide that you are going to love your new pastor.
2. Send cards or letters of welcome and encouragement to Pastor Lori. Again, we will have a basket in the Welcome Center for this purpose beginning on Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup>.
3. Consider gifts of food and restaurant gift cards during the first week or so as she begins her ministry with us on July 1<sup>st</sup>.
4. We will have a reception to welcome Pastor Lori after the worship service on Sunday, July 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Reception for Pastor Lori Sunday, July 12<sup>th</sup>**



## A Letter of Appreciation

Dear Pastor Blaine,

As you prepare to move on to your next calling, we wanted to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude for the time you have spent with us at Bethany UMC.

We remember clearly when you first arrived, fresh from seminary and eager to begin your first appointment. It has been a profound privilege for our congregation to walk alongside you during these formative years of your ministry. Watching you grow from a recent graduate into a confident shepherd has been a blessing to us all.

We will especially treasure the memories and qualities that defined your time with us:

**Your Sense of Humor:** We still laugh thinking about the day you were “slimed” by the youth group. Your willingness to be a “good sport” built a bridge of trust and joy with our students that will not soon be forgotten.

**Your Untiring Leadership:** We are so grateful for your strength and spirit on the Honduras mission trip. Your energy kept us going, and your heart for the global church inspired everyone who served alongside you.

**Your Servant Heart:** Beyond the pulpit, we saw your faith in action as a faithful volunteer for our food pantry. You didn’t just lead our mission; you lived it by showing up week after week to serve our neighbors in need. Beyond the food pantry, you have been involved in every community outreach event we have undertaken. You have been attentive to the needs of the sick as well as our members who are home-bound or in nursing homes.

**Your Courageous Leadership:** Perhaps most importantly, we are profoundly grateful for the courage and forthrightness you showed during the United Methodist disaffiliation process. In a season of deep uncertainty and difficult conversations, your steady hand and honest heart provided the clarity and peace our congregation needed to find our way forward.

Thank you for your faithful preaching, your compassionate presence, and the grace you showed as we learned and grew together. While it is difficult to say goodbye, we know that God is calling you to new possibilities. You leave a lasting impact on our hearts.

You have been a blessing to us, now go and be a blessing to your next congregation. You carry our love and prayers with you.

*“Well done, good and faithful servant!” — Matthew 25:23*

With love and gratitude,  
Your Bethany Church Family



# JUNE 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Young @ Hearts – Noon – Cline Center VMRC  Softball Game – 6:30pm WC Ball Field	3	4 Coffee Hours 9:30am–12pm – Valley Pike	5 Blood Drive 9:00am–2:00pm – Fellowship Hall	6 Church Workday – 8:00am
7	8	9	10 “Meet You at the Park” – 6:30- 7:30pm – WC Park	11 Caring Cards – 10:00am	12	13 Fellowship Hall Reserved 12-5pm
14 Flag Day	15	16	17	18	19 Juneteenth	20
21 Pastor Blaine’s Reception – following service  Father’s Day	22	23 Love INC 9am- 12pm	24 “Meet You at the Park” – 6:30- 7:30pm – WC Park	25	26	27
28	29	30				

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