

December 2025 Newsletter

Monthly Updates from Bethany Presbyterian Church



From our Senior Pastor
Rev. Dr. Brian Janssen

Is there anything better in our world, and especially in our area than Seasons? Seasons help us mark the passage of time and help us tap into life's natural rhythms. If life were always the same temperature, the same daylight, the same feel, it would blur into monotony. Seasons create natural variation—shifts in color, mood, and rhythm—that give the year emotional contour. They keep us from living in a flat timeline.

The church also breaks its life into Seasons, and we are heading into one that is always special for Bethany Presbyterian Church. Advent is a season marked by the diminishing light as the days get shorter yet is also a time when we await the coming of the one True Light that is coming into the world. Our God does not stay distant from us. He comes to us as one of us. Advent is a season of hopeful anticipation. We anticipate the Incarnation, God being with us in Jesus Christ.

We speak about Incarnation a great deal in the church, as we should. At its core Incarnation means “enfleshment.” When we speak about ministry at its best we think about it in incarnational terms. Ministry should be up close and personal. It should be embodied in the movement of the saints into the world to be the light of Jesus themselves. We believe in a God who will not be stopped in his desire to be with us.

We are called to be with one another in this season. We are called to care for those in need, we are called to pick up the phone and call loved ones from whom we might be estranged. We are called to bind up the wounds that we have caused. We are called to be with one another as Christ is with us.

This is the high calling of the church. During Advent we do what the church does best, we sing and we worship. We gather around shared meals and have exciting Christ-filled events that all can participate in. In these pages you will be able to learn about all of these wonderful moments that we will share together as we once again make the journey to Bethlehem!



Yours in Christ,
Pastor Brian



From our Associate Pastor **Rev. Dr. Larry Ruby**



Dear Bethany Friends in Christ,

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, ... Galatians 4:4

Advent is a great season of the year. It is the beginning of the church year because it celebrates the “coming” of Jesus, our Lord, Savior and King. Advent means “to come” and it reminds us that Jesus has come, is present, and is coming again!

One of my favorite authors is J.R.R. Tolkien. Perhaps his most notable work is the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Now I realize that not everyone is a Tolkien fan, but whether you are or not it is a wonderful story with clear parallels to the biblical narrative. Middle earth is being threatened in a life and death struggle between the forces of evil and an unlikely gathering of seemingly unremarkable characters who literally hold in their hands the fate of the world. Aragorn, the rightful king is not who you would expect but rather one who has dedicated his life to protecting others. Only in this final episode, *The Return of the King*, does he rise to become the fulfillment of so many hopes and dreams that had for so long seemed impossible and inevitably doomed.

As I said, it's a great story, but not the greatest. The greatest story is that though we too live in a world where our ultimate hopes and dreams seem always threatened and in which we lack the power to ensure their fulfillment, their fulfillment is secure. The unlikely arrival of a tiny child in an obscure village, born to the most common of parents, in a world determined to destroy him, only makes it more wonderful that He would be the One who would rise to embody the very promise of God! In a world full of earthly kings and tyrants this child would define the reality of *The Return of the King*! We know Him now as King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

This Advent let's celebrate the return of our king in a way that not only honors His birth but also declares His presence today and His glorious return in the fullness of time! The King is Coming! Come, Lord Jesus!

In His Love and Service,
Pastor Larry Ruby



MISSION TEAM -DID YOU KNOW?

Washington City Mission

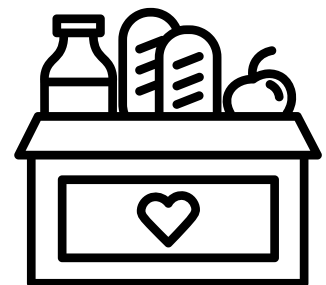
The Washington City Mission is our largest Mission recipient partner. They are a faith based homeless shelter campus in Washington, PA whose sign says "Jesus Saves". They are dedicated to providing hope, healing, and support to individuals in need in the Southwestern Pennsylvania area. Their mission is to shelter, to heal and to restore the homeless to independent living without discrimination by providing food, shelter, case management, biblical based counseling and life-changing programs. Their approach is through Compassionate Care, Life-Changing Programs and Community Outreach.

The Campus has four shelters for their residents and these include the Men's Shelter with 90 beds, a Women with Children Shelter, the Crabtree-Kovacicek Veteran's House and the newly built and dedicated Sally's Sanctuary which is a 50 bed Women's Shelter. In addition, they provide emergency shelter for both Men and Women. Their Community Outreach includes the Samaritan Care food pantry which offers food and clothing assistance for low-income individuals and families, the WECare Street Outreach which provides free medical care, food and other resources to those living on the streets and their Medical Clinic that provides acute medical care and bridges primary care services. In 2024, they provided 84,912 meals, 47,288 nights of shelter, 14,319 medical clinic visits and served 1,453 individuals. Their success rate was 69% for the residents who stayed 90+ days with 129 obtaining jobs and 150 moving into their own homes.

As Sally's Sanctuary is the new addition to the City Mission Campus and just opened in September, we wanted to highlight it in this article. This 50-bed facility was built because the City Mission recognized two years ago that there were not enough shelters and beds for the growing population of homeless women. With its completion, the City Mission can now house over 209 residents in their 4 buildings. Diana Irey Vaughn who is now the President and CEO of the City Mission and a former Washington County Commissioner has been key in raising money (\$180,000 since 2016) for this facility and the whole campus through her long distance charity runs. She was a volunteer at the Mission before becoming President and CEO and said, "It's about loving people back to life."

This facility was a collaboration between Rothschild Doyno Collaborative and a pre-construction team led by women. The goal was for the space to be grounding and peaceful and to help women feel celebrated. Each floor has a washer and dryer and a large community space with lots of natural light and the second level features a shared women and children's courtyard space with a playground. The third level has a balcony with rocking chairs for relaxation and reading. The first floor of the Sanctuary includes a childcare area that was designed with the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh and includes details like the bubble mirror along one wall. It also includes Matt's Maker Space which provides children with the opportunity to explore STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) related projects. Each bed includes a handmade quilt with a patch containing a bible verse and the name of the person who made it. Many include the name of Wendy Hopwood and other volunteers who made them in the memory of Wendy's son, Adrian Foody, who died in May 2024. The goal is for the women to be wrapped in warmth and love from the community. In addition, each bedroom wall includes an inspirational affirmation mounted in gold frames such as, "And for wherever you are on the journey, light will meet you there."

In summary, the Washington City Mission through its resident facilities and community outreach programs is providing hope, healing and support to individuals in need in our area. They are always looking for volunteers to help at their warehouse or seven Thrift Stores in our area and also will take donations at any of these locations. You can receive additional information on their website (<https://w.w.w.citymission.org>) and you can also sign up there to receive their Newsletters.





MISSION TEAM CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

MISSION WILL DONATE THIS YEARS PORTION OF THE CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING TO, MISSIONARY FLIGHTS INTERNATIONAL



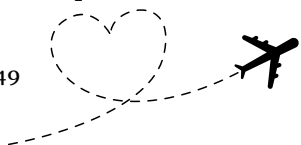
MISSION STATEMENT

TO SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BIBLE-CENTERED MISSIONS BY PROVIDING RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICAL



MFI transports relief aid in partnership with missions when disasters occur – such as disease outbreaks, hurricanes, floods and earthquakes.

Missionary Flights International
4170 Airmans Drive Ft. Pierce, FL 34949
www.missionaryflights.org
mfi@missionaryflights.org
772-462-2395

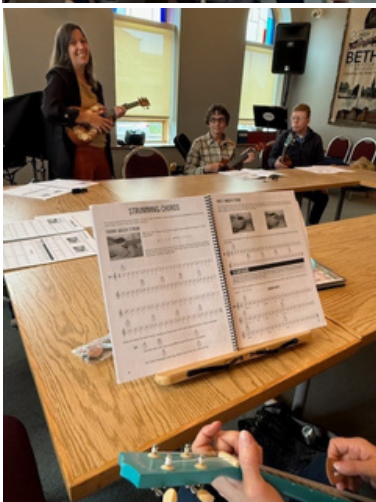
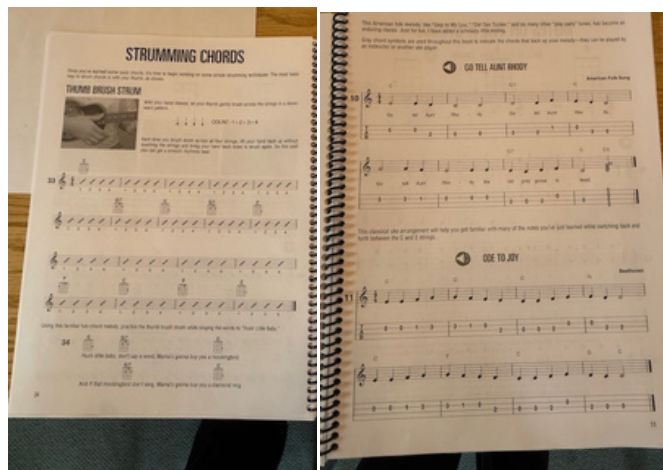


Don Beldin was just one man flying a small single-engine airplane in the 1960s for Youth for Christ evangelism in the Bahamas. Responding to need, Don began transporting other missionaries and equipment in his plane. In 1964, the Lord guided Don to incorporate Missionary Flights International (MFI) to meet the growing needs of Bible-centered missions. The need for air service increased, so MFI acquired larger planes and added new countries.

Missionary Flights International (MFI) is a faith based nonprofit mission aviation organization operating flights between Florida and areas of need in the Caribbean. MFI's mission is to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ in partnership with Bible-centered missions by providing reliable transportation and logistics service. MFI flies missionaries, their families, and household effects to and from the field. MFI also transports work teams and their equipment for short-term ministry. MFI receives mail and cargo for mission work that the staff handles with care and delivers as soon as possible.



Adult Ukulele





From our Music Director Nadina Robusto

It's Advent, already, and every year we return to this season liturgically; preparing, waiting, reflecting, and journeying to the manger together. I always loved this season as a child. Admittedly, opening a daily candy window had something to do with it, but on a deeper level of prayer, our family celebrated with an Advent wreath at the dinner table. My dad made our Advent wreath that we used- he welded it, and I'd always look forward to my turn to light a candle or do a reading at the dinner table, which was far from using a welding tool but it felt like a similar thing for me as a child! It wasn't just the wreath or the candle, though. Is it ever just the things, though? It was family time for us, and dinner time already held substance with a quick prayer over the food as the 6 of us were always ready to eat. It slowed us down and the flickering candle seemed to have something to do with that. The Light of Christ and centering on the beautiful themes of Advent really have a way to set a different kind of table, and thinking back about how that held us together, like the welding job my dad put into the art of the wreath.

A special thank you to all of our families that offer to read here at Bethany! It really marks the moment as we reflect on the themes of Christ's peace, hope, love and joy as we anticipate the birth of our King, again and again. And reflecting on these themes is such a great way to keep that fire burning in each of our hearts. Our Cantata is the third week of Advent- please join us on Dec 14 at the 10:45 service! We welcome our guest instrumentalists- brass quartet, percussion, timpani, woodwinds, and strings- and we are blessed by our already amazing choir with extra volunteers with us to celebrate the good news! "And Glory Shone Around" by Larson, Wagner and Adams, is sure to set your heart ablaze in celebration!

This year, our choir was gifted the treat of having the Cantata professionally recorded for them to each take home to hear, to remember, and to experience it from not only outside of the choir loft, but also in the comfort of their homes, where their hearts will be blessed with the beautiful music that they so freely share with us here at Bethany. Thank you to our Music Associate, Caleb Auldrige, for sharing his passion of sound technology and encouraging this amazing opportunity for us from his professional network of colleagues. (Please see his note about our exciting sound upgrade coming soon to the Sanctuary!)

Other exciting December news- we will celebrate the light up of the manger and beautifully renovated manger creche at Bloom, on Thursday, Dec 4. A shout of both admiration and thanks to Dave Colton and Laura Dugan for their beautiful painting work of the creche during some of our Bloom With a Twist events. We can't wait to see the art work and celebrate together! Laura Dugan, now our Worship Coordinator, will share more news about the event- but from the music side- I can invite you to join us as some of our Bloom musicians will be there to Carol at the Manger and hope you can join us and sing along!

Speaking of caroling- Please keep your eyes open to news about sharing Christmas carols in the community! We will post our caroling events in the bulletin and you can contact me at music@bethanypresby.org for more details as they unfold.

Lastly, we are so blessed to share in Christmas Eve celebrations together!

Our family service will feature our Youth Singers, Cherub Chimes, and Youth Ukulele Choir and a more modern music feel with Bloom sharing in carols that night! The second service will feature our Hand Bell Choir and Adult Chime Choir, along with our lovely Bethany Choir in a beautiful candlelight service that so many of you have cherished for years here at Bethany. I love both services and I know some of you stay for both because they are both so different and lovely in individual ways to celebrate and honor the newborn King! Grace and Peace be with you in your Advent and Christmas celebrations!

News from our Music Associate

The sanctuary sound system will be getting some exciting new upgrades! This will include a brand new audio console and digital stage box that will allow us to greatly expand our microphone and instrument inputs in the sanctuary. These upgrades will enhance control and sound quality for the in person service and livestream. With the new stage box upgrade, we will also be able to use in ear monitors to enhance our Bloom musicians worship by allowing individual control over personal monitor mixes that will allow better communication and musicianship for the band. These upgrades will be fully implemented around the New Year, and we cannot wait to show you the progress!





from Abbie Gardner, Youth Director



I am wrapping up my THIRD year here at Bethany! My first ever event I hosted for Bethany Youth Group was a Christmas Party! So this time of year holds a special place in my heart because of that, but also because I LOVE Christmas! Josh and I are those people who put our Christmas tree up really early, and by early I mean when we were done handing out candy on Halloween Josh climbed into the attic to grab the Christmas tree.

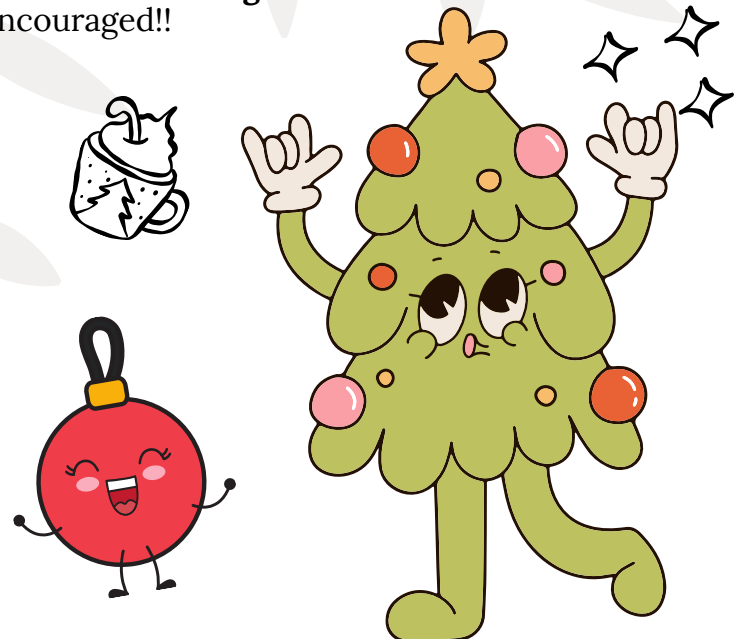
Bethany Youth Group has had a wonderful year this year. We've competed in Escape Rooms, made our own pizzas, filled the youth lounge with black lights for a Glow-in-the-Dark Party, we've had bonfires, we've heard many testimonies, we had an awesome Youth Sunday, we volunteered at VBS (and then went to Wave Pool), we went to Chick Fil A a few times, and we went to Sincerely Yogurt!

We went apple picking and launched a multitude of apples with their slingshot. We saw Brandon Lake, Phil Wickham, and Josiah Queen in concert (and we were stuck in traffic for soooo long). Our dog Oni has also made MANY visits and helped with many rounds of the game Sardines. With all this fun, we have also had so many great discussions about Jesus, about life, about what it means to be a Christian, and so much more.

It has been an honor and blessing to see the growth of this program, but also the growth of the youth. To see them grow in their faith, in their confidence, and grow in their friendships is a blessing I do not take for granted. Looking towards the rest of this year, and starting the next - we have so many amazing things to plan for! We have a busy December month, and you can find more information about those events in this newsletter!

December 5th-7th we will be at Laurelville Mud Weekend! While official registration has closed, if your plans have changed and you'd like to join us, reach out to Abbie ASAP and she might be able to squeeze you in! **Saturday December 13th** we will have a FAMILY Movie Night! We will be watching **The Best Christmas Pageant Ever!** It will be in the Welcome Center. Doors open at 5pm and the movie will start at 5:30pm. We will have concessions and seating, but if you want to bring your own you are more than welcome! **Families of ALL AGES are invited to this event** - children under 12 years old must have an adult with them!

We will be going on a fun adventure on **December 21st**, to various homes as we journey through a Progressive Dinner. We will have multiple courses that include snacks, sides, entrees, and desserts. **This event will serve as our Christmas party, so bring an item from home (or an item purchased for less than \$5), to participate in our White Elephant Gift Exchange.** Christmas PJ's and festive attire are highly encouraged!!



Friendsgiving

The Third Annual Friendsgiving Potluck was a wonderful time of food and fellowship - who knew Bethany Presbyterian had so many wonderful chefs! This tradition was started by Gary Phillips in 2023 with the Discipleship Team to develop an event for the church to come together for fellowship, and to be reminded of the true meaning of Thanksgiving!

On the tables at Thanksgiving, there were centerpieces with a quote from Abraham Lincoln from when he officially made Thanksgiving a national holiday. "The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies...No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy...(it is) proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People." -Abraham Lincoln

Thank you to all who contributed the delicious food for us to share from, those who served, to those who cooked the (amazing) turkeys on Saturday.

And on that day you will say, "Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; make them remember that His name is exalted." Praise the LORD in song, for He has done glorious things; let this be known throughout the earth. -Isaiah 12:4-5



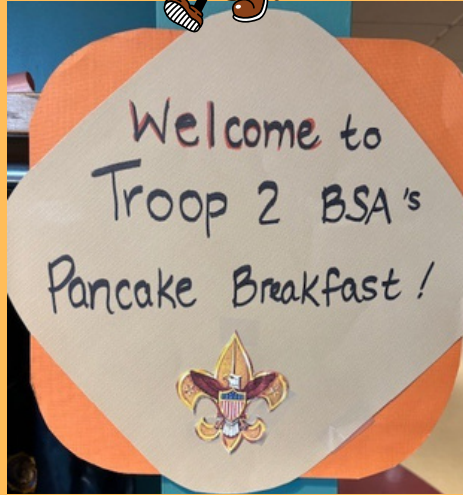


Friendsgiving continued





Pancake Breakfast



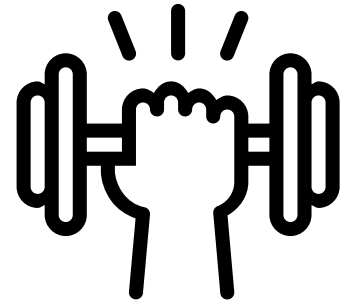
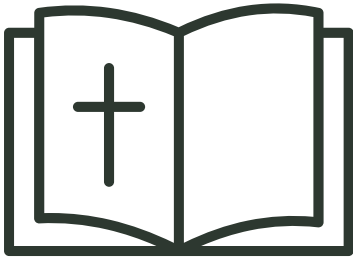


Confirmation Class Coming Soon!

Bethany Presbyterian Church is excited to announce that we will once again be offering a Confirmation Class starting in January of 2026 that will be open to all current eighth and ninth grade students. For the next few weeks, we will be working on the finishing touches to this program and will be ready to start at the beginning of January 2026. We will hold regular classes through April, and students will be confirmed in May 2026.

What is Confirmation Class? The word confirm, from the Latin confirmare, means “to strengthen.” At Confirmation, the Holy Spirit and the church’s prayers strengthen those who are being confirmed. This strengthening includes preparing youth to 1) profess their personal faith 2) declare their intent to take part actively and responsibly in the church’s worship and mission. For those not baptized as children, Confirmation includes both Baptism and a profession of faith!

If you have any questions, please contact our Youth Director Abbie by calling the church office 412 221 5132 or by email youth@bethanypresby.org.

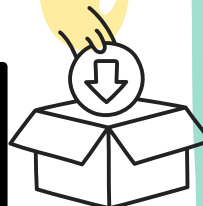


Christmas Backpack Drive -- \$20 Per Backpack

The Bethany Deacons are hosting another backpack drive to gift to the Southwood Boy's home. These bags will be gifted to every new admission throughout the 2026 year. Half of the bags will be brought to the Southwood Boy's for Christmas. You can donate until December 25th! The remaining bags will be distributed as new admissions join.

Each backpack will include everyday essential items. All items will be purchased and put together by the Deacons.

Cash or Checks with **“backpack”** in memo are accepted. Please put cash in an envelope labeled **“backpack”** and place in the offering plate, or give to Sarah Paviol or Edgar Shafer.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	6:30PM – Body Carpenter Workout 6:30PM – Men's Huddle	6PM - Joint Session Deacon Meeting 7PM – ALANON	10AM – Fellowship of Prayer 11:30AM – Knitters 6:30PM - Scouts 7PM – Choir Practice	9AM – Quilters 12PM – Rotary 6:30PM – Bloom LIGHT UP Night 7PM - Dartball 7:30PM – AA	4:30PM – BYG Mud Weekend Retreat	12PM-FOOD BANK kids party setup
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION at 8:15AM & 10:45AM 2PM - BYG Retreat return SUNDAY SCHOOL –9:30AM 12PM – Secret Sister Reveal Luncheon 12PM - Food Bank Kids Christmas party	6:30PM – Body Carpenter Workout 6:30PM – Men's Huddle	7PM – ALANON	11:30AM – Knitters 6:30PM - Scouts 7PM – Choir Practice	9AM – Morning MOMCo 9AM – Quilters 12PM – Rotary 6:30PM – Bloom 7PM - Evening MOMCo 7PM - Dartball 7:30PM – AA		11:00AM - Knitters 12PM – S.W. Boys Christmas Party 5PM – BYG Movie Night
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
CANTATA at 10:45 Service 9AM – 1PM-Advent Breakfast WORSHIP AT 8:15AM & 10:45AM SUNDAY SCHOOL –9:30AM	6:30PM –Body Carpenter Workout 6:30PM – Men's Huddle 7PM - Deacons Meeting	6PM – ALANON Holiday Dinner	11:30AM – Knitters 6:30PM - Scouts 7PM – Choir Practice	9AM – Quilters 12PM – Rotary 12PM – Golden Oldies 6:30PM – Bloom 7PM - Dartball 7:30PM – AA		FOOD BANK
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
4 th Sunday in Advent WORSHIP AT 8:15AM & 10:45AM SUNDAY SCHOOL –9:30AM 4PM – BYG Progressive Dinner and Christmas Party	6:30PM –Body Carpenter Workout 6:30PM – Men's Huddle	9AM – Chartiers Center 7PM – ALANON 7PM – Session Meeting	CHRISTMAS EVE 5PM – Family Service 7PM – Candlelight Service	CHRISTMAS DAY! Office closed	Office closed	DIAPER BANK 11:00AM - Knitters
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
WORSHIP AT 10AM	6:30PM – Body Carpenter Workout 6:30PM – Men's Huddle	7PM – ALANON	NEW YEARS EVE 11:30AM – Knitters	NEW YEARS DAY Office closed 7:30PM - AA		



On Thursday, December 4th at 6:30, BLOOM will hold a **“LIGHT UP”** Night at the Bethany Nativity located on the front lawn of the church. Dave Colton and Laura Dugan spent hours with the Thursday evening Bloom musicians and singers cleaning and painting areas of the Nativity figures that were in need of some “brightening and freshening” and they also painted the roof and sides of the manger. All thought it would be a great idea to have a **“Light Up”** Night dedication ceremony to show-off the revitalized Nativity. Join us for some spiritual words and caroling at the nativity with our Bloom musicians and singers! We also invite you to bring your favorite Christmas Cookies or Dessert for some socializing and additional music after caroling!

• A MESSAGE FROM BETHANY FINANCE •

As the end of the year approaches, please keep in mind that all contributions for 2025 must be received by the church no later than December 31, 2025. IRS general rules state that a check placed in the church offering plate in January 2026 cannot be recorded as a 2025 contribution, even if the check has been dated 2025. The only exception to this rule would be for contributions that are mailed and postmarked in 2025. These contributions would be deductible in 2025 even though the contributions were not received until 2026.



Christmas Eve Services will be 5:00 and 7:00pm!
5pm is our Family service and 7pm is Candlelight
Sunday, Dec. 28 there will be one service at 10:00am!



During the November 15th Thanksgiving Food Bank distribution, 122 families were assisted which included 52 children, 95 adults and 97 elderly.



December Birthdays



12/01	Devin Underwood	12/13	Lauren Butt	12/27	Pamela Petrow
12/02	Landon Smith	12/14	Karl Salvini	12/27	Cindy Kain
12/02	Joyce Bartolomeo	12/14	Meagan Smith	12/30	Thomas Willhite
12/02	Nolan Veneski	12/15	Karalee Nelson	12/30	Cheryl Smith
12/02	Elinor Stout	12/15	Douglas Bovard	12/30	Tyler Nicholson
12/03	Karen Lucas	12/17	Beckie Harbison	12/30	Lori Calgaro
12/04	Naudia Lutz	12/17	Bridget Schneider	12/30	Bonnie Miller
12/04	Louella Campbell	12/17	Ronin Colvin	12/30	Gary Casciola
12/05	Kristen Carlberg	12/18	Rakesh Sepuri	12/30	Lynne Suchoza
12/05	Sheri Darpino	12/19	Thomas Nass	12/31	Charles Edwards
12/05	Mason Gastgeb	12/20	Chris Snatchko	12/31	Kris Sabin
12/06	Karen Harkins	12/20	Kelly Wilhelm		
12/06	Donna Carman	12/21	Nikolas Krieg		
12/06	Thelma Cimarolli	12/21	Michael Talerico		
12/06	Tera Brickner	12/23	James Myers		
12/08	Dawn Salerno	12/23	Carol Cowser		
12/08	Michael Venum	12/26	Maggie Regan		
12/09	Barbara Rahr	12/26	Krista Trimmer		
12/09	Lynne Cawley	12/26	Abby Sysak		
12/09	Elizabeth Lacher				
12/10	Halie Pattison				
12/10	Kelli Pattison				



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