



BETHANY ROAD

DECEMBER 2023



WHAT'S INSIDE

- **PASTOR'S MESSAGE**
- **OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD**
- **WHAT I'VE LEARNED**
- **YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY AND EPIC RETREAT**
- **FUN ACTIVITIES**
- **RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS**
- **12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS**
- **A NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM**
- **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**
- **MEN'S BREAKFAST**
- **NEW BABY CONGRATULATIONS**
- **OUR DAILY BREAD**
- **DECEMBER CALENDAR**

Bethany Family,

The snow is falling and Christmas music is playing in all retail stores. Lights are going up everywhere. Parties are being planned, presents are being bought, and cheer can be found just about everywhere. We are busy, busy, busy! It's that time of year again. Culturally speaking, the Christmas season is opposite of what we celebrate in Advent. Advent is a time traditionally to wait, fast, and contemplate the arrival of Christ. I want to encourage you to reject at least some of the cultural expectations of the season and instead embrace the Advent. Embrace the waiting upon the Lord. Consider fasting and certainly contemplate the arrival of Christ, both in the past and His second coming, which we look forward to with great expectation! Reflect on the blessings and the sorrows in your life and remember that we hope for more when Christ returns.

We have our traditions in the church such as: Advent wreath lighting, decorating the church, the Christmas Eve Service, and everyone looks forward to the wonderful Christmas music! All of these traditions have a purpose and should help us focus upon God. The Advent wreath lighting reminds us each week of the different aspects of God and what Christmas means to us. Hope, faith, joy, and peace are all the result of Jesus and His sacrifice for each of us on the cross. The reality of God coming to earth to redeem His people is unique and begins in Bethlehem in a manger. Take time to remember and reflect upon God this Advent season! Consider lighting an Advent wreath at home.
(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

Take the time to stream your favorite Christmas hymns, carols, and songs. It can be easy to get caught up in all the busyness and miss Jesus. He is the point of all the extra things we do to begin with.

We have two exciting, unique ways you can stay focused upon God this Advent season. The first way is to pick up the devotional called “Unwrapping the Names of Jesus” by Asheritah Ciuciu. Each day of December there is a different name of Jesus and about ten minutes of reading. This devotional can bring new insight and focus to your entire season.

Each Sunday during Advent, I will be preaching on a different name of Jesus as well. This devotional will tie into the theme of “Advent at Bethany Church” while also bringing deeper context to many of the different names of Jesus in Scripture. No single name could possibly explain all the different aspects of God. When we study these names, we get a clearer picture of who Jesus is.

Starting Sunday, December 3, the first Sunday of Advent, we will also have ornaments available with the different names of Jesus on them. These ornaments will correspond with the names being taught about each week. It is our prayer that you will use these ornaments as a second way to uniquely focus upon God. They are created by the ladies of Bethany as a project to bless everyone. Much like the Advent wreath, I suggest you look over the various names and place each ornament on your tree on the Sunday with which it corresponds. Week one is “Messiah”. Week two is “Bread of Life”. Week three is “The Resurrection and Life”. Week four is “Prince of Peace”. Christmas Eve is “Immanuel”. As you go about life in your home and around your tree, use these ornaments as reminders to engage with God, to put Him first, to breathe new life into what you already know about God and what you are learning for the first time. Let us keep Christ central together this Advent season.

~Pastor Bob



Advent





Samaritan's Purse

Operation Christmas Child

THANK YOU BETHANY CHURCH!

This year's Operation Christmas Child collection week was a great success! Over 1,500 shoeboxes were collected from nine local churches, many individuals, and our Bethany family. In fact, Pastor Bob had the privilege of dedicating over 75 shoeboxes donated by Bethany Church members during the Sunday November 19 service.



Operation Christmas Child is a wonderful opportunity to share the Good News of the love and saving grace of Jesus Christ through these simple shoeboxes. Since 1993, over 209 million shoebox gifts have been distributed to children in more than 170 countries worldwide. Bethany Church members and friends have been part of this program for many years. Bethany has donated hundreds of shoeboxes, as well as, donating towards The Greatest Journey, a 12-week lesson and discipleship program for shoebox recipients. Through this program, children learn about Jesus Christ and many have prayed and accepted Him as their Lord and Savior.



Please continue to pray for Operation Christmas Child and the children that will receive shoeboxes this year!

This Month in Bethany Youth

Hey everyone, the Christmas season is fast approaching and Haley and Eric are having a Christmas party at the church for the youth on Saturday, December 23rd at 6:30, one week after Night at Bethlehem. The evening will start in the decorated Church basement for fun games, challenges, food, hot chocolate, and ugly Christmas sweaters. We will eventually move to the Manse to close out the night. We hope to see you all there, and bring a friend!



EPiC Retreat

The next EPiC youth retreat is January 26-28, 2024. The Presbytery of the Alleghenies is hosting this EPiC Youth Retreat at Camp Ligonier Conference Center in Ligonier, PA (which is actually where a popular late minister named R.C. Sproul started a ministry called “Ligonier Ministries”). Eric and Haley both know this area well since it is right by Jennerstown, PA, where they met. The theme for this year’s retreat is TRANSFORM, and our very own presbytery’s Rob Sparr from Graystone EPC in Indiana, PA will be our speaker.

The cost for each student will be \$50; however, if you would like to attend and cannot cover the cost, please reach out to Eric or Haley as we do not want anyone who wants to go to the retreat and experience God’s grace not be able to due to financial reasons. The cost covers 3 meals on Saturday, breakfast on Sunday, 2 nights lodging, and all program costs. See Eric or Haley to reserve your spot by Wednesday, December 27, 2023. We are really excited about this weekend and we hope to see you there!



TRANSFORM
2024





What I Have Learned Through a Devastating Time

by Beverly Crawford, Bethany's Administrative Assistant

December is a very hard month for me. As some of you may know, my only son Ryan passed away at the age of 44 on December 26, 2020. He lived in Texas, and we didn't know he was so seriously ill. I talked to him every day. He didn't want to worry me. Toward the end, he was saying a few things that made me concerned. However, he assured me that it was nothing and that if he felt worse, he would get help. He lived alone.

We talked twice on Christmas Day. On the morning of the 26th, we texted. He said he was going to go to Urgent Care. He promised. So, I called in an hour...two hours...all afternoon. I then called the police to go check on him. They would not go in his house. I said, "I know he is in there." They wouldn't go in until the morning of the 27th. I received a call - while driving- telling me my son was deceased. I wailed alone in my car. We later learned it was liver failure.

That call changed my life forever. I can't even describe my feelings. So painful. I questioned God. Why? I dedicated my son back to You to keep and watch over. I prayed for him every single day. Didn't You hear me? Why?

Why? Was I not good enough? Do You not love me God? I trusted You!

It took me awhile, but with lots of prayer, searching the Scriptures, conversations with God and great talks with strong Christian people, I came to an understanding...

I understand that I am not in charge. His ways are higher than my ways. He knows the future. He called my son Home. It was his time. We all have a time. He knows our time before we even begin our life. Nothing I could have done would have changed what happened.

I have peace now. I know I will be with my son again. He loved Jesus as his Savior. He loved and studied the Bible. He even told me a week before his death "to live is Christ and to die is gain." This brings me much comfort.

I learned... Joy and Sorrow can coexist.

So, what is the most important message to pass on from all of this? It is to make sure your children and grandchildren accept Jesus as their Savior now! We are not guaranteed another hour or another day. My hope is in the Lord. Ryan is in Heaven, and I'm sure he's making Jesus laugh. What a great kid he is! I talk to Jesus everyday and ask Him to tell Ryan I said hi and that I love him. I will meet Jesus and Ryan in the Rapture. See you soon. I love you. Please, make sure your family will be with you in Heaven, too. Love you all.





The Christmas Story


M	T	B	M	A	N	G	E	R	O	S	T	A	R
Y	J	S	H	E	E	P	J	O	S	E	P	H	C
R	P	E	A	C	E	D	O	N	K	E	Y	N	A
R	M	J	I	N	C	E	N	S	E	V	V	S	M
H	A	M	C	M	B	H	N	V	J	O	H	H	E
O	R	N	C	A	E	O	G	Y	A	F	G	E	L
Y	Y	F	G	G	T	L	O	E	N	T	I	P	L
E	C	E	B	I	H	Y	L	M	I	D	F	H	W
A	A	N	G	E	L	S	D	M	M	V	T	E	I
S	U	A	B	M	E	P	P	A	A	J	S	R	S
T	M	X	R	T	H	I	M	N	L	E	V	D	E
G	B	A	B	Y	E	R	J	U	S	S	N	S	M
F	G	R	F	D	M	I	T	E	V	U	P	K	E
S	A	V	I	O	R	T	J	L	S	S	B	E	N

ANGEL
ANIMALS
BABY
BETHLEHEM
CAMEL
DONKEY
EAST
EMMANUEL

GIFTS
GOLD
HOLY SPIRIT
INCENSE
JESUS
JOSEPH
MAGI
MANGER

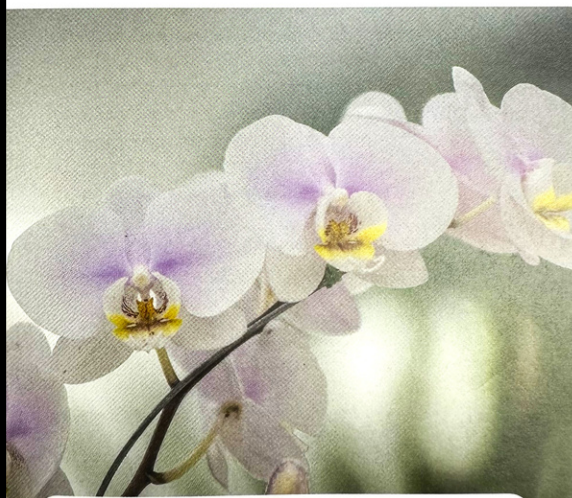
MARY
MYRRH
PEACE
SAVIOR
SHEEP
SHEPHERDS
STAR
WISE MEN

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Our Daily Bread

DECEMBER | JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2023-2024



Why do you worry about clothes?...Not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of [the flowers of the field].

MATTHEW 6:28-29

The December-February “Our Daily Bread” is now available in the church office or in the Welcome Center.

Financial Report Through October

Income \$372,539
 Expenses \$364,341
 Difference \$ 8,197



CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations on the birth of Betsy Rust's granddaughter Katherine Sarwaa Appau. Sarwaa means “Noble One” in Ghana. Welcome!



Is there a hidden meaning behind the "12 Days of Christmas" song?

There's a theory floating around claiming that during a time when Christians were punished for worshipping openly, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" song was used to secretly pass on the ideology of Christianity. Per this theory, each gift on the list symbolizes a different aspect of the Christian faith:

The Partridge in the Pear Tree is Jesus Christ.

The 2 Turtle Doves are The Old and New Testaments.

The 3 French hens are Faith, Hope and Charity, the theological virtues.

The 4 Calling Birds are the four gospels and/or the four evangelists.

The 5 Golden Rings are the first five books of the Old Testament.

The 6 Geese A-laying are the six days of creation.

The 7 Swans A-swimming are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven sacraments.

The 8 Maids A-milking are the eight beatitudes.

The 9 Ladies Dancing are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The 10 Lords A-leaping are the ten commandments.

The 11 Pipers Piping are the eleven faithful apostles.

The 12 Drummers Drumming are the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle's Creed.




A decorative border of holly leaves and red berries frames the page. A red ribbon with a bow is centered at the top and bottom.

25 Random Acts of Christmas Kindness

1. **TAPE CHANGE TO A VENDING MACHINE FOR A STRANGER TO FIND.**
2. **HAND OUT A COMPLIMENT CARD.**
3. **DONATE FOOD TO A FOOD PANTRY.**
4. **MAKE A THANK YOU CARD FOR YOUR MAIL CARRIER.**
5. **CANDY CANE BOMB A PARKING LOT.**
6. **TAKE SUPPLIES TO AN ANIMAL SHELTER.**
7. **PUT CHANGE IN THE SALVATION ARMY BUCKET.**
8. **SEND A HUG IN THE MAIL.**
9. **PICK UP LITER.**
10. **LEAVE A POPCORN SURPRISE AT A NURSING HOME.**
11. **WRITE A "SMILE IT FORWARD" NOTE FOR A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER.**
12. **DONATE TOYS TO A CHARITY.**
13. **PAY FOR A STRANGER'S COFFEE.**
14. **MAKE A GIFT FOR A TEACHER.**
15. **DO YARD WORK FOR A NEIGHBOR.**
16. **LET SOMEONE GO AHEAD OF YOU IN LINE.**
17. **FEED THE BIRDS WITH A CANDY CANE BIRD FOOD ORNAMENT.**
18. **MAKE A SWEET TREAT FOR YOUR MAILMAN.**
19. **DO A CHORE FOR SOMEONE.**
20. **SMILE AT EVERYONE YOU SEE.**
21. **PASS OUT STICKERS TO KIDS WAITING N LINE.**
22. **MAKE A CARD FOR A NEIGHBOR.**
23. **THANK YOUR SANITATION WORKER WITH A YARD SIGN.**
24. **CALL CHURCH MEMBERS TO CHECK ON THEM AND SAY HI.**
25. **SING CHRISTMAS CAROLS FOR YOUR NEIGHBORS.**

DECEMBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3 9:45 A.M. Sunday School 10:30 A.M. Worship 11:45 A.M. Deacons' Mtg.	4 6:00 P.M. Cub Scouts 6:30 P.M. Christian Ed	5 6:30 P.M. Missions 6:30 P.M. Safety Team 7:00 P.M. Property Mtg.	6 8:00 A.M. Bethany Quilters 4:00 P.M. Girl Scouts 6:00 P.M. Worship Band 6:30 P.M. Outreach	7 7:30 A.M. Men's Breakfast 9:00 A.M. Prayer	1	2
10 9:15 A.M. Sunday School 10:30 A.M. Worship	11 6:00 P.M. Cub Scouts 6:30 P.M. Personnel	12 7:00 P.M. Worship	13 8:00 A.M. Bethany Quilters 4:30 P.M. Girl Scouts 6:00 P.M. Worship Band 6:30 P.M. Military Prayer	14 9:00 A.M. Prayer 6:30 P.M. Garden Club	8	9
17 9:15 A.M. Sunday School 10:30 A.M. Worship 2 P.M. "Night in Bethlehem" 5 P.M. "Night in Bethlehem"	18 12:00 P.M. My Ladies and Friends 6:00 P.M. Cub Scouts 7:00 P.M. Finance	19 6:30 P.M. Cub Committee	20 8:00 A.M. Bethany Quilters 4:00 P.M. Girl Scouts 6:00 P.M. Worship Band	21 9:00 A.M. Prayer 7:00 P.M. Session	15	16 9:00 A.M. Set - Up for Night in Bethlehem
24 9:15 A.M. Sunday School 10:30 A.M. Worship 6:00 P.M. Christmas Eve Service	25 Christmas  (office closed)	26 (office closed)	27 8:00 A.M. Bethany Quilters 6:00 P.M. Worship Band	28 9:00 A.M. Prayer	22	23 6:30 P.M. Youth Christmas Party
31 9:15 A.M. Sunday School 10:30 A.M. Worship					29	30

Bethany Presbyterian Church

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Regular Office Hours

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Ed Lindey, Valerian Moeller, Earl Runcan,
Bruce Wamboldt

Deacons:

Madalin Huff, Tami Iman, Doug Lindey,
Lynda McQuown, Ed Pears, Betsy Rust,
Rita Thompson, Kim Watson, Linda
Wishart

Bethany Staff

Pastor

Pastor Robert White

Financial Secretary

Kim Watson

Director of Student Ministries

Eric Budnovitch

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Beverly Gallagher

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Pr. Bill Woodman

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Pianist

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