



BETHANY ROAD

JANUARY 2026

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Bethany Family,

January has arrived, and with it comes the familiar conversations: dieting, change, goal-setting, and looking ahead to what a new year might bring. Some of us are energized by those plans, and others of us are already tired of the entire discussion.

This year, I'd like to invite us to walk a different road together. Recently, my family visited the Ligo Farm. We watched the cows, young and old, simply being cows. It was bitterly cold, and Christmas was fast approaching. Toward the end of our visit, Amy reminded me of something deeply important... the discipline of celebration. Taking time to celebrate what is good and beautiful in our lives, how God has blessed us and cared for us, and why this life matters. Celebration orients our hearts toward God and cultivates gratitude (1 Thessalonians 5:18; Psalm 100:4-5). God is tirelessly at work for our good (Romans 8:28), and He promises to continue caring for us and providing for our needs (Matthew 6:34).

We can celebrate both individually and as a community of believers. It's this shared celebration that I especially want to draw your attention to. Bethany has much to celebrate from 2025. Each of us likely has a favorite memory or two... perhaps a personal moment, a meaningful connection, a time when the Holy Spirit opened your eyes, or a moment when you felt carried through a difficult season.

As I remember this year, here are some moments I want to celebrate: Easter was a significant celebration and a turning point for our church. We embraced revival and witnessed God moving among us in fresh ways. We sensed clearly that God was doing a "new thing" in our midst.

Just a few months later, during VBS, we quite literally felt the building shake as the sanctuary filled with children worshipping the Lord with joy and delight. What a gift it was to serve and love in the name of Jesus!

In 2025, we also witnessed lives changed by the work of the Holy Spirit, hearts transformed through conversations, difficult moments, the West Virginia mission trip, and especially through baptism. We celebrated new life in Christ and people publicly committing themselves to Him. I will never forget the joy of baptizing so many people in the pouring rain. It was a unique and memorable moment that reminded me of God's faithfulness, both in our lives and in our ministry together.

We also made many new friends this year. Through the faithful ministry of The Haven food pantry, Big Summer Playdates, and our large Block Party, God continued to bring people into our community. We were also blessed to welcome new members through classes in both the Spring and the Fall. God is moving, can you see it? Can you feel it? Perhaps there is
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another moment from this year that stands out to you. I want to encourage you to take time to pause and reflect on how God has blessed you in 2025. Do this as an individual, as a family, and as a church family. What can you celebrate? Maybe it's connected to the many blessings we've experienced together as a congregation. Maybe it's deeply personal. Perhaps it's both. Regardless, cultivating a heart of gratitude is vital.

There is so much good ahead of us as God's people because God is faithful to His promises. He promises to care for us, to provide for us, and to remain in a relationship with us. We are His people. He is our God, a God of love, who truly cares and desires to know His creation. What a blessing we have in Jesus.

With gratitude,
Pastor Bob



A SNIPPET OF BETHANY CHURCH 2025



Renewed in Christ

FOR A NEW YEAR

January naturally invites us to think about fresh starts. The calendar turns, the decorations come down, and life settles back into its familiar rhythms. Yet, for the people of God, the new year is more than a change of dates. It is an opportunity to remember that renewal is at the very heart of the Christian life.

Scripture reminds us that, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). This promise does not arrive once a year. It is the daily work of the Holy Spirit in us. As we step into 2025, we do so not by our own strength, but by the mercy of God who continually shapes us, teaches us, and draws us closer to Himself.

January offers us a moment to pause and consider where God is inviting us to grow.

Perhaps He is calling us into deeper prayer. Perhaps He is nudging us toward reconciliation or forgiveness. Perhaps He is prompting us to serve in new ways within the church or community. Whatever He places on our hearts, we trust that His plans are good and His grace is sufficient.

Let this new year be marked less by resolutions to improve ourselves and more by a renewed commitment to follow Christ wholeheartedly. May we be a congregation that listens for His voice, loves one another well, and lives as a light in a world that still needs the hope of the Gospel.

As we begin 2026 together, let us pray for God's direction and rely on His faithfulness. The year ahead is unknown to us, but it is already held securely in His hands.

Men's Breakfast

Thursday, January 8 at 7:30 A.M.



Because of your generosity, this year has been full of moments where young people were seen, known, and loved:

- 89 kids experienced Young Life Summer Camp—where many students heard the gospel for the first time!
- 67 volunteer leaders were trained and equipped to walk with teens through life's highs and lows.
- We welcomed Jocelyn Roth to our staff team, expanding our outreach at Slippery Rock University.
- Through many countless conversations, car rides, and shared laughter, kids heard the good news: they are deeply loved by Jesus!

This true story of two 7th grade girls in our community shows this so well. Sarah and Maria showed up at their first WyldLife Club, with no desire to hear about Jesus. (not their real names) Not only were they not interested, they made fun of the idea of church and Jesus the whole time. Disinterested and bored, they told their leader they didn't want to come to Club again.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit and the account of Jesus going after the lost sheep...

their leader showed up at the middle school that week with the goal of finding Sarah and Maria. After finding them and talking a little about life, she convinced them to give WyldLife Club one more shot.

That night, they showed up! But once again started to joke about the idea of Jesus. Jessie asked if they understood the seriousness of what they were joking about, and began to tell them about who Jesus actually was, and the girls started to lean in. Jessie asked if they knew what the gospel was and they looked at her confused, so she got to share the gospel with them. After sharing, Maria burst into tears and said, **"No one has ever talked to me about God like that before!"**

Just minutes after this conversation, Jessie got up in front of the whole room of middle school students and shared about what it was like to commit to a relationship with Jesus. After the talk Jessie found Maria and Sarah and they both burst into tears, opening up about their struggle with depression and self harm.

Jessie was able to listen to them and share God's love with them,

and they were both eager to accept Jesus into their life! They did so and immediately felt lighter and visibly brighter!

When Sarah got home she texted Jessie that she threw away all the harmful substances she had, and she asked if she could share about her story at Club the next week. Here is an excerpt of what Sarah said:

"I prayed a prayer that changed my life and gave my life to Jesus all because of my leader, Jessie.

I will never forget how she made me feel seen, loved, and cared about. At first, it felt weird because I never thought anyone saw me how she did; she showed me that I'm important and not only important, that I mattered."

This is why our team continues to go: that more and more kids would know the hope and value that is found in Jesus alone.

We are so thankful for your generous support!

Alex Eckard, Jocelyn Roth, Madeline Jew, Annalese, Wolf and Jen Wamboldt.

Penn West Young Life Staff



The Blessings of God

On behalf of The Haven of Mercer, we want to extend our deepest and most heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support and generosity. We are continually inspired by the remarkable compassion shown by the Bethany Church family, dedicated community members, and invaluable partners such as the Mercer County Food Bank. We truly believe we have witnessed the extraordinary impact of God through all of this.

Your contributions, whether through donated food items or vital monetary gifts during our recent drive, have made an immediate and profound difference. During a particularly challenging period marked by the government shutdown, your swift response enabled us to implement an emergency food distribution. Thanks to this incredible outpouring of support, we were able to provide crucial food to approximately 600 individuals within a four-week timeframe, ensuring that our most vulnerable neighbors did not go hungry.

We are also able to maintain the needed food supply for the growing number of students using the Mercer High School Food Pantry. Back packs were filled full of food for students to take home over holiday break.

This collective effort was amplified by the community at large, with numerous local businesses and groups organizing food drives and making significant financial contributions. We are grateful to The Buhl Foundation and the Mercer County Food Bank, both of whom provided critical emergency grant funding that allowed us to quickly acquire the additional food supplies needed during that urgent period.

Looking ahead, we are delighted to share that with the recent passage of state and national budgets. We have now received the much-anticipated grant money designated for food purchases for the upcoming fiscal year. This essential funding, alongside the ongoing financial donations from generous individuals and businesses, forms the cornerstone of our ability to continue the vital mission of God to provide consistent and nutritious meals to our neighbors facing food insecurity.

Your partnership is indispensable as we strive to build a more secure and compassionate outreach to our community. Thank you once again for being such an integral part of The Haven of Mercer's outreach.

Thanking God with you, The Haven Team



Food Distribution Dates:

January	February	March
S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

April	May	June
S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

100 West Venango Street, Mercer, PA 16137

**4th Saturday of each month
10:00am-11:30am**

IN COLLABORATION WITH
 **MERCER COUNTY
FOOD BANK**



BETHANY

YOUTH



Hello Bethany Church Family,

We are ending our 2025 with one of the more busy, crazy, and fun times of the year!

To start off the month, we went on our weekend retreat to Seneca Hills with 6 teens, where we dove deep into our faiths in a series called "Can I Ask That?" where the teens were presented with popular questions revolving around the faith such as "Is it okay to doubt," or "How can I follow a God who allows Christians to do bad things?" The teens were engaged and opened themselves up bravely and vulnerably about things they have struggled with in their own lives! God was definitely moving throughout this weekend!

We had our Christmas party/lock-in with the teens right before Christmas! Here we finished our series "Plugged In" studying the book of Colossians! We had some fun games and competitions, such as a gingerbread house building contest, a gift unwrapping race (with oven mitts on), and more!

To round out the month and year, we held a "Coffee and Canvas" outreach event at Common Grounds to allow the teens to invite some of their friends to a calm evening of painting and fellowship!

I just personally want to thank you all for the prayers and support you have given this ministry throughout the year! I have no doubt that 2026 will be even better than 2025! See you all next year!

Micah Wojnowski



FINDING GOD'S WARMTH IN THE WINTER SEASON



WINTER HAS A WAY OF SLOWING LIFE DOWN. THE DAYS ARE SHORTER, THE NIGHTS ARE LONGER, AND THE COLD CAN MAKE EVERYTHING FEEL A BIT HEAVIER. MANY PEOPLE FIND THIS TIME OF YEAR CHALLENGING—WHETHER BECAUSE OF THE QUIET AFTER THE HOLIDAYS, THE RHYTHM OF DARKER DAYS, OR SIMPLY THE STILLNESS THAT WINTER BRINGS. YET SCRIPTURE REMINDS US THAT NO SEASON IS EMPTY OF GOD'S PRESENCE. EVEN WINTER CARRIES ITS OWN KIND OF GRACE.

THE PSALMIST DECLARES, "HE GIVES SNOW LIKE WOOL; HE SCATTERS FROST LIKE ASHES" (PSALM 147:16). THESE WORDS REMIND US THAT GOD IS NOT ABSENT IN THE COLD. HE IS THE LORD OF EVERY SEASON. WHAT MAY FEEL BARREN TO US IS STILL UNDER HIS CARE, STILL MOVING TOWARD THE PROMISE OF SPRING.

WINTER GIVES US A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO REST, REFLECT, AND DRAW CLOSE TO CHRIST. IN THE SLOWER PACE, WE FIND ROOM TO LISTEN FOR GOD'S VOICE. THE QUIETER MOMENTS CAN BECOME INVITATIONS TO PRAY, TO READ HIS WORD, OR TO SIMPLY SIT IN HIS PRESENCE. JUST AS THE EARTH RESTS IN PREPARATION FOR NEW GROWTH, GOD MAY BE PREPARING FRESH STRENGTH, DEEPER FAITH, OR RENEWED HOPE WITHIN US.

FOR THOSE WHO FIND WINTER EMOTIONALLY HEAVY, TAKE HEART: GOD SEES YOU. HIS COMFORT IS NEAR, AND HIS LIGHT SHINES EVEN IN THE DIMMEST DAYS. REACH OUT TO ONE ANOTHER, OFFER ENCOURAGEMENT, SHARE A WARM MEAL, OR MAKE A SIMPLE PHONE CALL. SOMETIMES THE SMALLEST GESTURES CARRY THE GREATEST WARMTH.

AS WE JOURNEY THROUGH THESE WINTER MONTHS, LET US REMEMBER THAT THE COLD DOES NOT DIMINISH GOD'S LOVE OR HIS WORK IN OUR LIVES. BENEATH THE SURFACE, HE IS CULTIVATING WHAT WILL BLOOM IN ITS APPOINTED TIME. MAY WE WALK THROUGH THIS SEASON WITH HOPE, KNOWING THAT THE GOD WHO GUIDES US IN SUMMER AND FALL IS THE SAME GOD WHO SUSTAINS US IN WINTER.



Women's
GARDEN CLUB



#1 There is no Garden Club meeting in January. We take off several months due to weather uncertainty.

#2 My Ladies and Friends postponed Christmas Party is rescheduled for Monday, January 26 (this is the regular meeting day) at noon in the Social Hall and Kitchen.

NINE WAYS THAT GOD COMMUNICATES WITH US

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. Prayer: Psalm 86:7 | 6. People: Acts 2:42-43 |
| 2. Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 | 7. Talents and Gifts: |
| 3. Holy Spirit: Luke 24:45 | 8. Worship: Peter 3:15 |
| 4. Jesus: Matthew 28:20 | 9. Social Media |
| 5. Church: Hebrews 10:25, 1 Cor. 12:27 | |



As we approach the end of 2025, our hearts are full. This year has carried moments of deep joy as well as seasons of sorrow—victories that made us celebrate, and challenges that drew us closer to God and one another. Through it all, one truth has remained unshaken: God has been faithful.



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

January 25, 2026

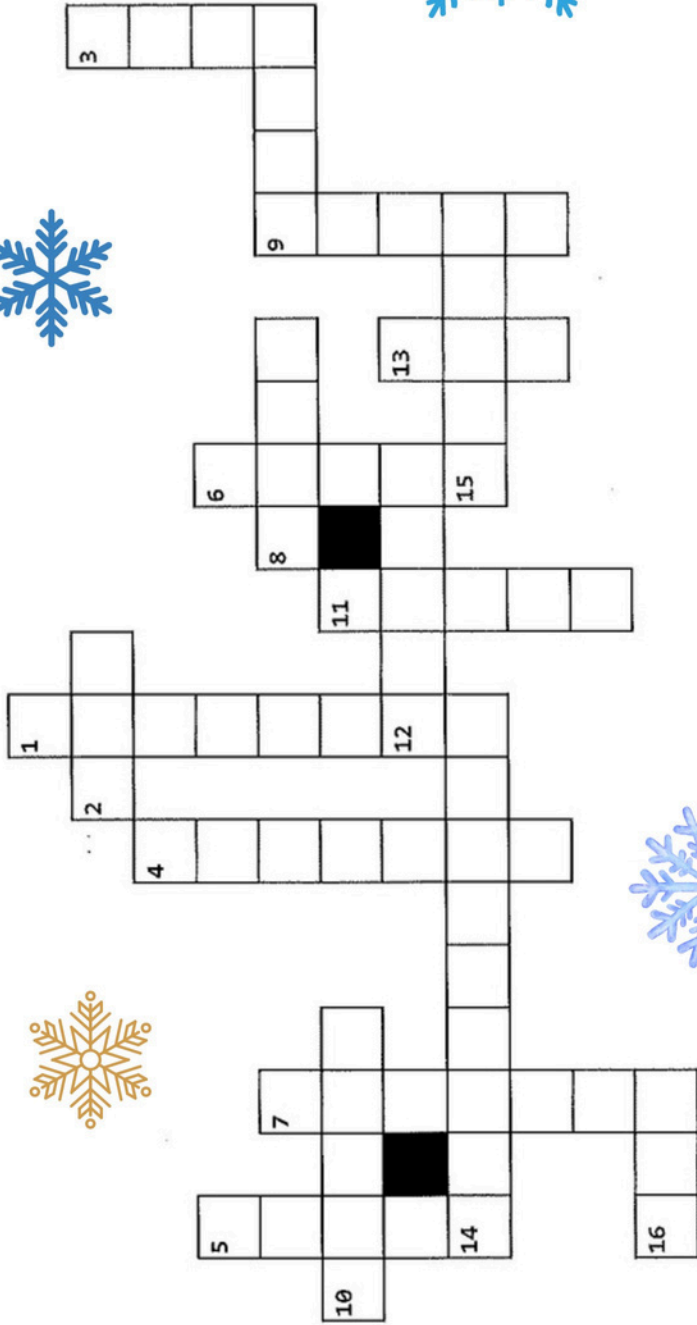
Bethany Financial Statement

Through November 2025

Income	\$420,209
Expenses	\$502,668
Difference	\$-82,459

Although our financial statement appears to show that we are running a deficit, in reality the amount that we are in the negative was spent on the bell and heating system repairs that were planned from the beginning of the year. The money for those repairs is in our savings account and will be transferred at the end of the year. Our finances are in good order.

HAPPY NEW YEAR



Across

2. FIRST MONTH'S ABBREVIATION
8. OPPOSITE OF WARM
9. WINTER PRECIPITATION
10. FROZEN RAIN
12. WHAT JANUARY WEATHER OFTEN DOES TO WINDOWS
14. PEOPLE WHO MOVE SOUTH FOR THE WINTER
15. POPULAR WINTER ACTIVITY
16. OFTEN FROZEN ON PONDS

Down

1. SOME WEAR THESE ON THEIR EARS (TWO WORDS)
3. SOFT WINTER SHINE, OFTEN FROM CANDLES
4. FIRST MONTH OF THE YEAR
5. WHAT NEEDS PAID AFTER HOLIDAY SHOPPING
6. MIGHT BE NEEDED FOR YOUR FEET IN THE SNOW
7. DECIDE FIRMLY TO DO SOMETHING IN THE NEW YEAR
9. SLIPPERY WINTER HAZARD
11. REGION OPPOSITE SOUTH
13. WINTER HEADWEAR

2026 January

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
4 10:30 A.M. CHILDREN'S CHURCH 10:30 A.M. WORSHIP 11:45 A.M. DEACONS' MEETING 6:00 P.M. YOUTH GROUP	5	6 5:00 P.M. CHRISTIAN ED. MTG. 6:30 P.M. MISSIONS COMM. 6:30 P.M. OUTREACH COMM. 6:30 P.M. SAFETY TEAM MTG. 7:00 P.M. PROPERTY TEAM MTG.	7 4:30 P.M. CUB SCOUT AND GIRL SCOUTS 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP BAND	8 7:30 A.M. MEN'S BREAKFAST 9:00 P.M. MORNING PRAYER 12:00 P.M. ROOTED	9	10
11 10:30 A.M. CHILDREN'S CHURCH 10:30 A.M. WORSHIP 11:45 A.M. DEACONS' MEETING 6:00 P.M. YOUTH GROUP	12 6:30 P.M. PERSONNEL	13	14 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP BAND 6:30 P.M. MILITARY PRAYER 7:00 P.M. WORSHIP & MEMORIAL	15 9:00 A.M. MORNING PRAYER 12:00 P.M. ROOTED 7:00 P.M. FINANCE COMM.	16	17
18 10:30 A.M. CHILDREN'S CHURCH 10:30 A.M. WORSHIP 11:45 A.M. DEACONS' MEETING 6:00 P.M. YOUTH GROUP	19	20 6:00 P.M. CUB COMMITTEE 7:00 P.M. BOOK CLUB	21 4:30 P.M. CUB SCOUT AND GIRL SCOUTS 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP BAND	22 9:00 A.M. MORNING PRAYER 12:00 P.M. ROOTED 7:00 P.M. SESSION	23	24 10:00 A.M. THE HAVEN
25 10:30 A.M. CHILDREN'S CHURCH 10:30 A.M. WORSHIP 11:45 A.M. DEACONS' MEETING 6:00 P.M. YOUTH GROUP	26	27	28 4:30 P.M. PACK NIGHT 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP BAND	29 9:00 A.M. MORNING PRAYER 12:00 P.M. ROOTED	30	31

Bethany Presbyterian Church

100 W. Venango Street

Mercer, PA 16137



Non-Profit Organization

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Mercer, PA 16137

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Prayer Chain: bethanyprays@yahoo.com

Web: www.bethany-presbyterian.org



TO: or current resident

Elders and Deacons



Elders:

Dave Allen, Steve Amsler, John Inman, Gary McElfresh, Earl Runcan, Valerian Moeller, Bruce Wamboldt, Bob White, Bill Woodman

Deacons:

Samantha Faloney, Amy Hayes, Liz Hodgkinson, Sandra Hostetler, Madalin Huff, Tami Iman, Alex Lindey, Lynda McQuown, Betsy Rust, Rita Thompson, Kim Watson, Linda Wishart

Bethany Staff



Pastor

Dr. Bob White

Visitation Pastor

Pastor Bill Woodman

Church Administrator

Steve Amsler

Administrative Assistant

Beverly Crawford

Director of Student

Ministries

Micah Wojnowski

Director of Children's

Ministries

Evelyn Dickinson

Treasurer

Kathleen Daley

Financial Secretary

Kim Watson

Music Director

Pianist

Jane Deitrick

Organist

Denny Horkey