



BETHANY ROAD

DECEMBER 2025

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Church Family,

It is that time of year again when we run around buying gifts, putting up lights, and traveling all over the country. Christmas songs play in every store and mall hallway. In some ways, this Advent season brings excitement, fun, memories, and good food...the usual. For others, it brings loneliness, frustration, depression, and sorrow. Maybe you feel like it brings both at the same time. It can be confusing, and perhaps there is another way.

Advent is traditionally a time to pause and reflect on the work of Jesus, and why God became man and broke into this world. When we focus on Christ, we receive the power to weather this holiday storm, no matter what we are struggling with. I encourage you to keep your eyes on the Light of the World and let Him bring light to your Christmas season.

We have traditions in the Church that help us draw close to God during Advent: the Advent wreath lighting, decorations around the church, Christmas music, and Christmas Eve services. Everyone looks forward to the wonderful Christmas music! All of these traditions have a purpose and should help us focus on God. The Advent wreath lighting reminds us each week of different aspects of God and what Christmas means for 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. Stream your favorite Christmas hymns, carols, and songs. It is easy to get caught up in the busyness and miss Jesus, even though He is the point of all the extra things we do.

Throughout Advent we will be running a sermon series called "A Thrill of Hope: The Heart of Our Carols." We will explore the biblical roots of some of our favorite Christmas hymns as a lens to see the Christmas

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story in a new light. I hope it challenges you to think about your favorite songs and where they come from and why they became beloved in the first place. I pray that it gives you strength to resist the commercialization and frantic nature of the season, while also addressing the real pain and loneliness this time of year can bring. May the Lord, who came as a baby for you, be ever on your heart as you slow down to see Him.

I like to recommend a resource during the Christmas season to help keep our hearts and minds on Jesus. There is a devotional about Christmas hymns I have been enjoying that I would like to share with you: "Joyful Noel: Rediscovering Classic Christmas Hymns and Carols" by John Williamson. We will have three copies available in the library if you would like to borrow one, and you can always purchase a copy for yourself. This devotional is a great way to start your day this Advent season.

I want to challenge you to use this Advent season as an opportunity to be on mission. Perhaps there is someone you can bless through service. Perhaps a neighbor, friend, or co-worker you can surprise by showering love upon them. Is there someone you know who desperately needs to know Jesus? Let this Advent season be an opportunity to share your faith. Pray and look for opportunities to let this person know about the incredible Light of the World who broke into the darkness. Why not invite someone to Bethany for the Advent season? As we are on mission for God. He continues to mold and shape our hearts toward Him. May this Advent season be one of warmth, love, joy, and fruitfulness in mission through the One who gives us everything we need.

In Christ,

– Bob



A Thrill of hope
THE HEART OF OUR CAROLS

THE HAVEN

Community Food Pantry at Bethany Church

We wanted to share a little update about how God is blessing the ministry of the Haven.

Between the current economic squeeze and the ripple effects from the recent government shutdown, a lot of folks are finding it incredibly hard to stretch their budgets and cover basic needs. More and more people are reaching out to us for a helping hand, which really highlights the growing need right here in our own backyard. During the last month we have had three food distributions and have been able to feed 600 of our neighbors.

For many of our friends and families, these food distributions are so much more than just a bag of groceries. They're a beacon of hope, a bit of stability, and a chance to breathe easier knowing there will be food on the table.

And speaking of hope, we owe a massive, heartfelt THANK YOU to every single one of you who makes this possible! To our incredible team of dedicated volunteers – from tirelessly organizing everything behind the scenes to warmly greeting everyone and handing out provisions, your commitment is

just amazing. And to our generous donors, your financial contributions keep our pantry doors open and our shelves stocked with healthy, nutritious food.

Your belief in what we do is the very fuel that keeps us going. Because of you, we can make sure that children have access to good food, and parents don't have to face that impossible dilemma of choosing between paying rent or buying groceries. You help us ensure dignity and peace of mind for our neighbors during these challenging times.

We couldn't do any of this without your partnership. Thank you for standing with us, for caring so deeply, and for helping us uplift and nourish our cherished community.

We have one more distribution on Saturday, December 20- please keep praying that all will come know the true reason of Christmas, the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Warmly,
Sue



Advent Reflections

Week 1 – Hope

Advent begins with the promise that God is near and faithful. Even in seasons of waiting, His light is coming.

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.” Isaiah 9:2

Week 2 – Faith

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9

Week 3 – Joy

Joy breaks into ordinary life when Christ draws near. His joy remains even in difficult days.

“Good news of great joy.” Luke 2:10

Week 4 – Peace

Christ brings a peace deeper than circumstances. His presence quiets anxious hearts.

“My peace I give you.” John 14:27



COMING SOON



Operation Christmas Child



Thank You Bethany Church!



This year's Operation Christmas Child collection week was a great success. We had the privilege of dedicating 102 shoeboxes donated by Bethany members during the Sunday, November 23 service. Additionally, 568 shoeboxes came through the doors of Bethany Church on their way to the central drop off location in New Castle where nearly 20,000 shoeboxes were collected from churches in our local region. These shoeboxes will now move on to a national processing center before traveling to children in far off lands. Operation Christmas Child is a wonderful opportunity to share the Good News of love and saving grace of Jesus Christ through these simple shoeboxes. Since 1993, over 232 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 by donating hundreds of shoeboxes as well as donations towards The Greatest Journey – a 12-week lesson 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.

A BIG thank you goes to the many Bethany volunteers who donated their time at our drop off center. Please continue to pray for Operation Christmas Child and the children who will receive shoeboxes this year! Thanks – John Inman





THE BOX WITH THE RED RIBBON

Long ago, in a small town nestled between snowy hills, there was a little girl named Emma who loved Christmas more than any other time of year. But this Christmas was different—her father had lost his job, and her family had very little. There would be no presents under the tree, no feast on the table—just a small evergreen they had cut from the woods and decorated with popcorn strings and paper stars.

Still, Emma's mother told her, "Christmas isn't about what's under the tree, it's about what's in your heart."

On Christmas Eve, Emma found an old, empty box in the corner of the attic. She brushed off the dust, wrapped it carefully in plain brown paper, and tied it with a bright red ribbon she'd saved from last year's gifts. When her mother asked what she was doing, Emma smiled and said, "It's a special present for Jesus."

That night, after everyone had gone to bed, Emma knelt by the tree and placed the little box beneath it. "Dear Jesus," she whispered, "I don't have anything fancy to give You, but inside this box is everything I can offer—my love, my kindness, and my promise to help others, just like You do."

The next morning, her parents found the box. Inside was a small note that read:

"This box is full of love for Jesus. I'll keep filling it all year long."

Tears filled her mother's eyes. Her father smiled for the first time in months. That simple gift—a box tied with a red ribbon—became a reminder for the whole family that the greatest gifts are not bought or wrapped, but given from the heart.

Every Christmas after that, the family would place an empty box with a red ribbon under their tree—not to hold presents, but to hold their love, prayers, and acts of kindness for others.

MEN'S *breakfast*

*The men's breakfast is held
the first Thursday of the
month at 7:30 A.M. Join
the guys for a great
breakfast and a message.*



This year instead of collecting socks for Joshua's Haven, we will be collecting non-perishable food items for our food ministries. Please bring what you can to the December and January breakfasts.



NEW BOILER INSTALLED

OUT WITH THE OLD
AND IN WITH THE
NEW. BETHANY HAS
A NEW FURNANCE.



Heating System Update

If you've been in the church over the past week or so, you may have noticed that it's been a little chilly in some areas. That's because Roth Mechanical has been hard at work installing a brand-new boiler. Our old boiler was nearly 40 years old and had been giving us plenty of trouble in recent years.

Over the past couple of years, the Property Committee has carefully researched the best way to update our heating system throughout the church. Earlier this summer, we also replaced the rooftop unit that heats and cools the sanctuary, which had been old and failing as well. The good news is that the new rooftop unit is now working beautifully!

We expect the boiler installation to be completed soon—hopefully within the next week—so that we'll have full heat again before the really cold weather arrives.

You may also be wondering about the cost of these improvements. We've been preparing for these expenses for quite some time and have been setting aside funds for them. If you've noticed a negative number in the financial section of the newsletter, it's because we've been paying for the new equipment but haven't yet transferred the money from our savings. Once that transfer is made, the numbers will look much better.

ATTENTION PARENTS

~~VACATION~~

Christmas Bible School

December 13th 9am-noon

Music • Stories • Crafts • Snacks • Adventure!

Who: Preschool (potty trained) – 5th Grade



Register now: bethany-presbyterian.org/events



Bethany Financial Statement Through October 2025

Income	\$365,035
Expenses	\$459,388
Difference	\$ -94,352

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.



THE CANDLE IN THE WINDOW **A CHRISTMAS STORY OF HOPE**

It was Christmas Eve in a small mountain town blanketed with snow. The church bells had just finished ringing, and families were gathered by warm fires, singing carols and preparing for Christmas morning. But one small house on the edge of town was quiet — the home of an elderly widow named Martha.

Martha had lost her husband years before, and her children now lived far away. Still, she faithfully attended church and often reminded others that “Christmas is not about what we receive, but about the Light that came into the world.”

That evening, as she sat alone, she placed a single candle in her front window — a tradition she kept every year. “This light,” she whispered, “is to remind me that Christ is always near — and to guide anyone who needs hope.”

As the night grew colder, a young man named Daniel trudged through the snow. His car had broken down miles back, and he had lost his way in the dark. The wind howled, and despair began to creep in — until he saw a faint, flickering glow in the distance. A candle in a window.

Following the light, he made his way to Martha’s home. When she opened the door and saw his frostbitten face, she quickly ushered him in, wrapping him in a blanket and setting a bowl of hot soup before him. They talked by the fire for hours — about life, about faith, about how sometimes God leads us to where we least expect to find warmth and kindness.

As dawn broke, Daniel said softly, “Ma’am, I thought I was lost. But now I know — God used your candle to lead me home.”

That Christmas morning, Martha looked out her window as the first rays of sunlight glistened on the snow. Her heart was full. The single candle had done its work — not just lighting a window, but lighting a life.

Just as Martha’s candle shone in the darkness, our faith and kindness can guide others to the hope found in Jesus Christ. This Christmas, may our hearts be like that widow — open, glowing, and ready to welcome others to the light of His love.



Holiday Food Drive

Nov 3-Dec 15

Partner with The Haven of Mercer to bless those facing food insecurity in our community

Drop off

Abound Health:
Mon-Sat 9-3

Common Grounds:
Mon, Wed-Sat, 8-8

Bethany Church:
Mon-Fri, 8-Noon



Every prayer and donation makes a difference—thank you so much!

Suggested Donations

Canned vegetables & fruit
Boxed stuffing or mashed potatoes
Canned soup or chili
Peanut butter & jelly
Pasta & sauce
Canned meats (tuna, chicken, etc.)
Rice & beans
Baking mixes (muffins, cake, etc.)
Holiday treats or cookies

If you would like to make a financial donation: Checks, made out to "The Haven of Mercer" can be dropped off or mailed to Bethany Church.

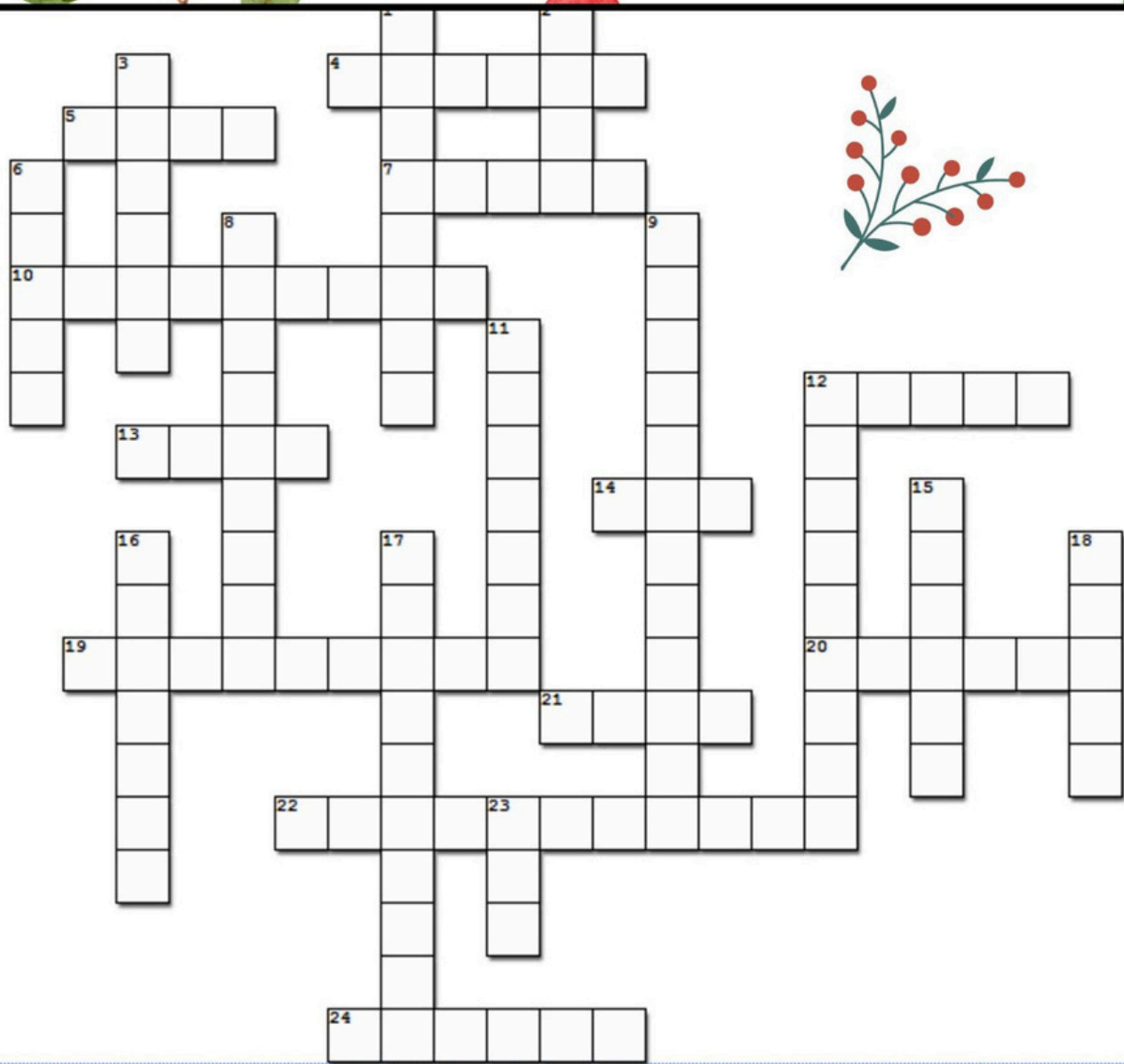


THE HAVEN
Food Pantry at Bethany

IN COLLABORATION WITH
MERCER COUNTY FOOD BANK

All donations help individuals of all ages facing food insecurity in Mercer County.

Christmas and Bethany



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.

Across

4. CHRISTMAS SONGS
5. NUMBER OF CHILDREN THE PASTOR AND BECKY HAVE
7. OUR FOOD BANK
10. JESUS'S PROFESSION
12. CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR
13. WHAT WE JUST HAD FIXED THAT RINGS
14. FINANCIAL SECRETARY
19. BETHANY _____ CENTER
20. DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES
21. PIANIST
22. WHAT RINGS ON SANTA'S REINDEER
24. WHERE JESUS WAS LAID

Down

1. TREASURER
2. MAIN COLOR FOR CHURCH MATERIALS
3. PASTOR
6. DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES
8. WHERE JESUS WAS BORN
9. GOLD, MYRRH, AND _____
11. ASSISTANT OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR
12. WHO WERE TOLD ABOUT THE BIRTH OF JESUS FIRST
15. MARY'S HUSBAND
16. OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD ITEM
17. RED CHRISTMAS FLOWER
18. ORGANIST
23. JESUS'S FATHER

DECEMBER 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 6:30 PM Romans Home Study	2 6:30 PM Missions Comm. 6:30 PM Outreach Comm. 6:30 PM Safety Team 7:00 PM Property Comm.	3 4:30 PM Cub & Girl Scouts 6:00 PM Worship Band	4 7:30 AM Men's Breakfast 9:00 AM Prayer 6:30 PM Garden Club	5	6
7 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 10:30 AM Children's Church 11:45 AM Deacons' Meeting 6:00 PM Sun. Night Gathering 6:00 PM Youth Group	8 6:30 PM Personnel Committee	9	10 6:00 PM Worship Band 6:30 PM Military Prayer 7:00 PM Worship and Memorial Committee	11 9:00 AM Prayer 6:00 PM Mom's Group	12 8:00 AM Christmas Program Set Up	13 9:00 AM Christmas VBS Program
14 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 10:30 AM Children's Church 6:00 PM Sun. Night Gathering 6:00 PM Youth Group	15 11:00 AM Christmas Luncheon	16 6:00 PM Cub Committee 7:00 PM Book Club	17 4:30 PM Cub and Girl Scouts Christmas Party 6:00 PM Worship Band	18 9:00 AM Prayer 7:00 P.M. Session	19	20 10:00 AM The Haven
21 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 10:30 AM Children's Church 6:00 PM Youth Group	22	23	24 6:00 PM Christmas Eve Service	25 CHRISTMAS DAY (office closed)	26 CHRISTMAS (office closed)	27
28 9:15 AM Sunday Brunch 10:30 AM Worship Service 10:30 AM Children's Church 6:00 PM Youth Group	29	30	31 6:00 PM Worship Band NEW YEAR'S EVE			

Bethany Presbyterian Church

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A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

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

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Music Director

Andrew Kraus

Pianist

Jane Deitrick

Organist

Denny Horkey