

Welcome Packet Summary for New Members

Welcome to Bethany United Methodist Church!

We are thrilled to have you join our church family. This packet is designed to help you connect with Bethany UMC, explore opportunities to grow in faith, and find ways to serve in our community.

Our Mission and Vision

- **Mission:** *Love God. Love Others. Serve the World.*
- **Vision:** *Christ in Life, Life in Christ.*



What to Expect at Bethany

1. **Worship Services:**
 - Sundays at 9 am in the Sanctuary and online.
 - Special seasonal services (Advent, Lent, etc.).
 2. **Opportunities for Growth:**
 - Bible studies and small groups for learning, serving & sharing life together
 - Sunday School for children and youth & Youth fellowship.
 3. **Opportunities to Serve:**
 - Outreach programs such as the New Community Shelter & Mission projects
 - Ministries within the church, like worship teams, hospitality, teaching, & youth mentoring.
 4. **Church Events:**
 - Fellowship activities like coffee hour, potlucks, and mission projects.
 - Seasonal events like Trunk or Treat and the Easter Egg Hunt.
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Next Steps for New Members

1. **Complete Your Membership Form:**
 - Fill out the New Member Form and submit it to the church office or Pastor Robb.
 - Set a date for your membership reception during a worship service.
 2. **Get Involved:**
 - Explore opportunities to join small groups, volunteer, or participate in church events.
 - Use the included Spiritual Gifts Inventory to discover how God has equipped you to serve.
 3. **Stay Connected:**
 - Check the weekly church bulletin and website for updates on events and ministries.
 - Follow Bethany UMC on social media for news and inspiration.
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Important Contacts

- **Church Office:** office@bethanygreenbay.org | (920) 217-9241
 - **Pastor Robb McClintock:** pastor@bethanygreenbay.org
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HAND OUT #1

Who We Are – United Methodist Church Basics

Bethany United Methodist Church

A Brief History of the United Methodist Church

- **1703:** John Wesley, founder of Methodism, is born in Epworth, England.
 - **1738:** Wesley experiences his *Aldersgate Experience*, where his heart is “strangely warmed,” marking a turning point in his faith journey.
 - **1744:** The first Methodist Conference is held, solidifying the movement’s mission to renew faith and practice acts of mercy.
 - **1784:** The Methodist Episcopal Church is officially established in the United States, extending the movement globally.
 - **1968:** The United Methodist Church is formed through a merger of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church, creating one of the largest Protestant denominations in the world.
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Core Beliefs

The Three Graces:

1. **Prevenient Grace:** God’s presence in our lives before we recognize it. This grace draws us toward a relationship with God.
 2. **Justifying Grace:** God’s forgiveness and acceptance when we confess and turn to Him in faith. This is often described as being made right with God.
 3. **Sanctifying Grace:** God’s ongoing work in us to make us holy, helping us grow in love, service, and spiritual maturity.
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The Wesleyan Quadrilateral

United Methodists use four sources to guide faith and practice:

1. **Scripture** – The primary authority for faith and life.
 2. **Tradition** – The wisdom and practices of the Christian community throughout history.
 3. **Reason** – Using intellect and critical thinking to interpret Scripture and apply faith in the modern world.
 4. **Experience** – Personal and communal encounters with God’s grace, helping shape our understanding of faith.
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Saved by Faith, Active in Works

- We are saved by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This salvation leads us to respond by loving and serving others through acts of mercy, charity, and justice.
 - As John Wesley taught, “*There is no holiness but social holiness,*” meaning our faith must be lived out in community and service.
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Key Teachings of John Wesley

- *"In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."*
 - *"Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion?"*
- Sermon 39: *Catholic Spirit* (1750)
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The United Methodist Church Structure

Connectional System:

The United Methodist Church is a "connectional" church, meaning all local churches are interconnected and work together as one body to fulfill the mission of the church.

1. **Local Church:** The heart of ministry, where discipleship and community impact occur.
2. **District:** A regional grouping of churches providing support and resources.
3. **Annual Conference:** A gathering of churches within a geographic area to make decisions and share in ministry.
4. **General Conference:** The global decision-making body of the UMC, where representatives meet every four years to set church policy and direction.

Mission Statement:

- *"To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."*
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Reflection Question

- What resonates most with you about United Methodist beliefs and history? How do you see these values shaping your faith journey?
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Bethany United Methodist Church

Love God. Love Others. Serve the World.

HAND OUT #2

Bethany United Methodist Church Vision and Mission Handout

Bethany's Vision Statement

"Christ in Life, Life in Christ"

Our vision is to shape a community of Jesus-followers that demonstrates the presence of Jesus within us, evidenced by the way we share life together. This vision is inspired by Jesus' command in John 13:34-35: *A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*

This is our way of describing the ultimate goal of our church community when we are all living as fully-developing disciples of Jesus Christ.

Bethany's Mission Statement

"Love God. Love Others. Serve the World."

This mission is derived from Jesus' summary of God's commandments in Matthew 22:36-40:

Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?

Jesus replied: *'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'*

This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

We focus on intentionally growing people in these three areas to make our vision a reality:

1. **Love God:** Deepening our relationship with God through worship, prayer, and spiritual practices.
 2. **Love Others:** Building relationships and community through small groups, fellowship, and care ministries.
 3. **Serve the World:** Reaching out to our community and beyond through acts of compassion, justice, and mission.
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A Fully-Developing Disciple

A person who embodies the vision of "Christ in Life, Life in Christ" is someone who:

1. **Loves God:**
 - Regularly attends worship and grows through prayer, Bible study, and giving.
 2. **Loves Others:**
 - Participates in small groups, leads or mentors others, and engages in fellowship opportunities.
 3. **Serves the World:**
 - Volunteers in church ministries, supports outreach efforts, and participates in mission projects.
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The Journey of Benjamin Bethany: A Discipleship Illustration

Meet Benjamin Bethany

Benjamin Bethany is an ordinary person, just like you. At one point, he wasn't very involved in church—he only attended worship occasionally and wasn't sure where he fit in. But over time, Benjamin made small, intentional decisions that helped him grow into a fully engaged disciple of Jesus Christ.

Through his journey, we can explore how Bethany UMC's mission—*Love God, Love Others, Serve the World*—comes to life in real ways.

Benjamin's Discipleship Pathway

Step 1: Welcome and Connect

At first, Benjamin only attended worship on Christmas and Easter. One Sunday, he was greeted warmly at the door, and someone invited him to coffee hour. He learned about a New Member Orientation and decided to attend.

- Reflection Question: *What made you feel welcomed at Bethany? How can you help others feel at home here?*

Step 2: Grow in Faith

After attending the New Member Orientation, Benjamin began coming to church more regularly. He signed up for a Bible study and started learning about the Wesleyan understanding of grace. He also set aside time for daily prayer and devotional reading.

- Reflection Question: *What is one step you can take to grow in your faith—prayer, study, small groups?*

Step 3: Serve in Ministry

Benjamin started greeting people on Sunday mornings as a hospitality volunteer. Then, he heard about the church's mission partnership with the New Community Shelter and decided to help serve meals once a month. This hands-on experience deepened his understanding of what it means to serve others in Christ's name.

- Reflection Question: *How can serving others help you grow in faith? What ministry opportunities excite you?*

Step 4: Lead and Multiply

As Benjamin continued growing in faith and service, he was asked to help lead a small group for young adults. Eventually, he also became a mentor for youth in the church. He gave his testimony at a church event, inspiring others to take their own next steps in discipleship.

- Reflection Question: *Where do you see yourself leading in the future? How can you help others grow in faith?*

Your Journey: Walking in Benjamin's Footsteps

Benjamin Bethany's journey is unique, but it reflects the real possibilities for anyone who seeks to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Where do you see yourself on this pathway?

- Are you at the welcome stage, just getting to know the church?
- Are you ready to grow in faith by joining a small group or daily devotion?
- Do you feel called to serve through ministry or outreach?
- Is it time for you to lead and help others on their journey?

Next Steps:

- Identify one area where you want to grow.
 - Talk with a pastor or ministry leader about opportunities.
 - Pray for God's guidance on your discipleship journey.
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Pathway to Discipleship

How do we help people move from a first-time visitor to a fully-developing disciple of Jesus Christ?

Step 1: Welcome and Connect

- Attend worship services and meet members of the Bethany community.
- Participate in introductory events like the New Member Orientation.

Step 2: Grow in Faith

- Join a Bible study or small group.
- Develop spiritual practices like prayer and devotional reading.

Step 3: Serve in Ministry

- Get involved in church ministries like teaching, hospitality, or outreach.
- Join mission opportunities to serve the local community and beyond.

Step 4: Lead and Multiply

- Take on leadership roles within the church.
 - Mentor others in their discipleship journey.
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Reflection Questions

1. Which part of Bethany's mission speaks to you the most: Loving God, Loving Others, or Serving the World? Why?
 2. What is one step you feel called to take to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ?
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HAND OUT #3**Membership Vows at Bethany United Methodist Church**

What It Means to Be a Member

When you become a member of Bethany United Methodist Church, you make a covenant to live out your faith in community with others. Membership is not just about joining a church; it's about committing to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ and supporting the ministry of the church with your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

The Five Membership Vows**1. Prayers**

Supporting the church through prayer.

- Pray for the church's ministries, leaders, and members.
 - Develop your personal prayer life and participate in corporate prayer opportunities, like Bethany's Breakthrough Prayer: *"God of boundless possibilities, break through to us and reveal the ways You are calling us to put our faith into action, so Bethany Church will bring greater healing, hope, and renewal in our community through the love of Jesus Christ."*
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2. Presence

Supporting the church through regular attendance and involvement.

- Attend weekly worship services and special church events.
 - Participate in small groups, Bible studies, and fellowship opportunities to deepen your relationships with others in the church community.
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3. Gifts

Supporting the church through financial giving and sharing your talents.

- Give faithfully to the church's mission and ministries.
 - Share your God-given talents by volunteering in various roles, such as music, teaching, or administration.
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4. Service

Supporting the church by serving others.

- Volunteer in the church's ministries, such as Sunday School, Caring Ministries, or outreach projects.
 - Engage in local and global mission opportunities, such as serving at the New Community Shelter or participating in mission trips.
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5. Witness

Sharing your faith with others.

- Live your life as an example of Christ's love and grace.
- Invite others to church and share your faith story.
- Be an ambassador of Bethany's mission: *Love God, Love Others, Serve the World.*

Reflection Questions

1. Which of these membership vows feels most natural to you? Which one feels like an area for growth?
2. How can you begin to live out your vows of membership at Bethany UMC?

Bethany United Methodist Church

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HAND OUT #4

Pathway to Discipleship at Bethany United Methodist Church

Becoming a Fully-Developing Disciple of Jesus Christ

At Bethany United Methodist Church, we are committed to helping people grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. Our pathway to discipleship provides a clear and intentional journey for spiritual growth, moving from being a first-time visitor to a fully engaged member who lives out our mission to *Love God, Love Others, and Serve the World*.

What Does a Fully-Developing Disciple Look Like?

A disciple of Jesus Christ at Bethany UMC:

1. **Loves God** by attending worship regularly, engaging in prayer and study, and giving faithfully.
 2. **Loves Others** by building relationships, participating in small groups, and providing care and support to others.
 3. **Serves the World** by volunteering, engaging in missions, and living as a witness to God's love.
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How Can You Get Started?

1. **Explore Opportunities:** Speak with a pastor or ministry leader about ways to connect and grow. Visit Bethany's website or bulletin board for a list of upcoming events and ministries.
 2. **Complete the New Member Form:** Share your interests and areas of service so we can help you find your place in the church.
 3. **Join a Group:** Sign up for a small group, Bible study, or fellowship group that fits your interests and schedule.
 4. **Discover Your Spiritual Gifts:** Take a spiritual gifts inventory and learn how God has uniquely equipped you to serve.
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Reflection Questions

1. Where do you see yourself on the Pathway to Discipleship?
 2. What is one step you can take today to grow closer to God or become more involved in the church?
 3. How can you use your gifts to love God, love others, and serve the world?
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