

Bethany United Methodist Church
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The Rev. Stephen E. Young, Pastor

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THE BETHANY BANNER

December, 2007

Holiday Calendar Schedule



Saturday, December 1 – 6:00 p.m. Chrismon Tree Decorating Party.

We invite preschool children through young adults to join us in the sanctuary to enjoy a time of fellowship as we decorate the Chrismon Tree.

Monday, December 3 – 1:30 p.m. Gift-Wrapping Party

The United Methodist Women will hold their annual gift-wrapping party for the residents of Walter Reed Convalescent Center

Saturday, December 15 – 5:30 p.m. Christmas Caroling

Join us as we go to sing Christmas carols to our shut-ins. Refreshments will follow in the WBFH, sponsored by Family Ministries.



Sunday, December 16 – 4:00 p.m. Choir Christmas Cantata

The Chancel Choir will perform the Cantata "A 1940's Christmas Homecoming" A repeat performance will be offered on **Monday, Dec. 17 at 7 p.m.**

Wednesday, December 19 – 11:30 a.m. XYZ Christmas Luncheon

Bethany XYZ Club will have their Christmas luncheon and program. The Honorable Harvey Morgan is scheduled to speak.

Friday, December 21 – 7:00-10:00 MYF Christmas Party

Join your friends for a night of fun, food, and fellowship. Bring a dish to share.

Sunday, December 23 – 9:00 a.m. Church-wide Breakfast

Bethany United Methodist Men will sponsor a church-wide breakfast



Sunday, December 23 – 10:00 a.m. Children's Christmas Program

Our children, under the direction of Musical Director Sandy Fox, will present the children's musical "Meet Me at the Manger" in the church sanctuary. There will be only one service this day. A "Happy Birthday, Jesus" party will follow in the WBFH.

December 24 – 7:30 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Service

We will sing familiar Christmas carols, read the Christmas story, have special music, a message by the Pastor, and the lighting of the congregation's candles during this informal service.



December 24 – 11:00 p.m. Lessons, Carols, and Communion

Appropriate Scriptures will be read, interspersed with the singing of Christmas carols, in the dimmed sanctuary. This formal service will conclude with the celebration of Holy Communion and the peal of our carillon.



December 31 – 11:30 p.m. Watch Night service

Marsha Miller will lead us in a brief service as we end the year of 2007 and begin 2008 at the altar of our Lord.



Congratulations to...

Susan and Keith Ward on the birth of a daughter, Ella Bayleigh, born on Nov. 11, 2007. She weighed 7lb and was 19 3/4 Inches long. Grandparents are Nancy and Tom Smith and Gloria Ward and Richard Ward.

Jim and Shannon Minor on the birth of a son, Justus James, born on November 14, 2007. He weighed 7lb 12 oz and was 20" long.

Photographs Still Needed

Collection of photographs of Bethany's deceased members will be an ongoing project. We are starting a second round of collections and will be contacting persons who might be able to help us acquire more photos. We have placed in three-ring binders by the bulletin board display and in the church office a list of those members for whom we need photographs. Please take some time browsing through the list to see if you can help us with acquisitions or identify others who might be of help to our project. Many thanks for your efforts. Rey and Patsy Morales (642-4112).

Financial update

Required budget amount through October 28:

\$274,164

Amount received through October 28:

\$263,237

Photo Albums

Several months ago photo books were loaned out in an effort to identify some of the persons in the pictures contained in the books. The books missing are #1 & #4. If you borrowed them and just forget to return them, would you please get in touch with the office or bring them in. Thanks for your help.

Notes of Appreciation

We wish to thank their Bethany friends and family for the many lovely cards, notes and prayers during our recent health concerns and surgery. It meant so much to both of us.

-Jerry and Deannie McKendree

Thanks to my Bethany family for the phone calls, cards and prayers during my recent surgery and recovery. It was such a comfort knowing that others were thinking about me and praying for me during that difficult time.

-Linda Ambrose

Thanks so much for the calls, cards, food, prayers, and visits that I received during my recovery from surgery. You made me feel very special. I am blessed to belong to such a caring and thoughtful church family.

-Donna Andersen

This thank you is so overdue for all the prayers and many, many acts of kindness shown to us since the onset of Archie's health problems in February. No words can ever express how much you have meant to us. You are the best Church family anyone could ever have. God bless each and every one of you.

-Archie and Loretta Leigh

A special thanks to all the wonderful parents for preparing food for the Teen Thanksgiving Feast! Everything was absolutely delicious! A very special thanks to Lisa Hasty for not only organizing the dinner, but also giving up her entire Sunday to cook for Bethany's youth! I am truly blessed with the youth and their parents at Bethany! Thank you all for such a wonderful year. -Sondra Colbert

UMW Thank Offering

United Methodist Women's Thank Offering is now due. If you have not turned your offering in at your circle meeting you may give to Jean Heywood. If you have already done so, thank you for supporting this program.



The Family Life Committee

in conjunction with the

Youth and Children's Ministry

ask for your warm spirit, happy smile

and energetic voices to be a part of

Bethany's Annual Christmas Carole

Saturday, December 15th at 5:30 pm

for children and adults of all ages!

After we spread Christmas cheer at the homes of many church members,

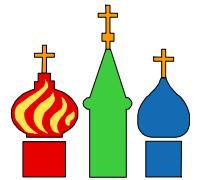
we will come back to the church for fellowship, hot cocoa and dessert!

We hope your family can attend!!

~Kathleen Greene, Bain Schultz, Kris Kent and Sondra Colbert~

Russian Youth Initiative

The Mission Committee has once again agreed to host Youths from Russia. The Russian Youths (6) and Interpreter (1) will be here in the late June/early July 2008 time period.



This program provides BUMC to have a direct mission involvement with children from Russia. 98% of all Russian children are at a health risk due to the environment in Russia. Most of these children come from urban areas where there is extremely heavy industrial pollution of the water, ground, and air. Some of the children come from areas which also have extreme nuclear pollution as well. The children do not look sick, although many do experience respiratory problems and other health problems. It is the long-term effects of this pollution which we are trying to help. Medical studies have shown that the three weeks visit to our area has a significant beneficial effect on the lives of these children. There are also cultural and political benefits which come from the sharing of ideas and time.

The children's stay is highlighted by a variety of activities. These activities will include mission work, cultural, educational, and fun activities. Activities include visits to Virginia Beach, Busch Gardens, Water Country USA, VIMS, Jefferson Lab, Virginia Air and Space Museum, Bowling, Movies, a tour of Gloucester High School, Boys and Girls Club, Beavercreek Park, shopping, making their own pizza at Pizza Hut, and fishing on the York River, etc.

BUMC host families will be needed to lodge and get the youth to BUMC for their various activities. The host families will need to provide the youth with his/her own bed. It is fine for the youth to share a bedroom. If you are interested in being a host family, or have any questions, please contact Mike Andersen: H: 642-2582; C: 815-5367. We look forward to sharing God's love with these children.

Mike Andersen, Missions Chair

Mississippi Mission Team Report



The BUMC Mission Team was blessed to represent the Bethany United Methodist Church Family in Gulfport Mississippi November 5-9, 2007. The team was motivated to serve God with enthusiasm, compassion, motivation, and love.

The Mission Team Members were: Mike Andersen, Connie Reinke, Patrick Kiley, Kevin Kiley, Joni Diamond-Silvers, Sherry Hodges and Blair Hodges. The trip to Gulfport, MS served as an opportunity for the team to bond. By the time we arrived in Gulfport, you could see that the team chemistry and enthusiasm to serve the Lord was first and foremost on their minds.

On day 2 of our trip to Gulfport, we were quickly and humbly reminded of the catastrophic event of Hurricane Katrina. We stopped for lunch 20 miles from Gulfport. We were dressed in our Mission team T-Shirts. We were approached by numerous victims of the disaster. The testimonials can be summarized as *“we would not be where we are today, without volunteers”*. A vivid comment was: *“I have a “bow in a wall” where volunteers put up sheetrock and painted. Even today, I admire that wall as a testament of the love and willingness for volunteers to serve the Lord and wanting to see us back in our homes.* We knew now that we were privileged to serve, knowing that whatever good we did, we were answering our own personal reason for wanting to help others.

Upon arriving at the Trinity United Methodist Church in Gulfport, MS, we were met by Courtney Allen, our gracious host. Our assignment was to continue the recovery effort on a trailer owned by Marisa Massey; 15714 Brodnax Road, Ocean Springs, MS 39565. This property was severely damaged by both floodwater and wind damage. It is in the final stages of repair and the goal is for Ms. Massey to move into the trailer by the end of November. Our workday began with breakfast. There were other groups from Georgia and Michigan. The food was provided by the church. Meals would be cooked and served by signup. We prepared an evening and morning meal. We took lunch to the site. It was 27 miles from the church. Each lunch culminated with a devotional and prayer. Joni Diamond-Silvers was our spiritual leader.

What we did:

Rear Deck/Water Heater Closet:

- Installed balusters
- Installed steps
- Installed roofing material and flashing
- Installed insulation
- Installed water heater
- Installed door, trim, door knob
- Installed electrical circuit for water heater

Built Front Porch:

- Installed steps
- Installed railing
- Installed balusters

Internal Carpentry:

- Installed and trimmed out doors
- Installed trim on baseboards, windows, and ceilings
- Painted trim work
- Caulked/Puttied as necessary
- Installed carpet tacks

The Mission Team would like to express their “heartfelt thanks” to the BUMC family for their prayers, spirit, donations and phone calls as we rendered our service to the Lord.

The conclusion to this BUMC mission Trip can be summarized by what we saw on a marquee: **HURRICANE KATRINA WAS BIG, GOD IS BIGGER”** -God Bless Each Of You

BUMC Mission Team Nicknames:

- Mike Andersen/”Main Man”
- Kevin Kiley/ “Mr. Perfect”
- Patrick Kiley/”Supreme Carpenter”
- Sherri Hodges/”Quality Control”
- Connie Reinke/”Chop Saw Connie”
- Joni Diamond-Silvers/”Social Sweetie”
- Blair Hodges/”Mr. Awesome & First in Line (FIL)

Sermon Topics for December

Dec. 2 “Wake Up Call” based on Romans 13:11-14

Dec. 9 “The Pointer” based on John 1:19-36

Dec. 16 “Something Worth Singing About”
based on Luke 1:39-56

Dec. 23 Children’s Musical:
“Meet Me at the Manger” (10:00 a.m.)

Dec. 24 “If Animals Could Talk” based on Luke 2:1-19

Dec. 30 Rev. Bob Justis preaching

Dec. 31 (11:30 p.m.) Marsha Miller leading

Clara Biswas Recovers from Broken Ankle

Our missionary to Cambodia, Clara Biswas, had a safe trip in the United States as she visited with her supporting churches throughout Virginia without incident. Back in Cambodia, however, Clara suffered an accident. She fell down the stairs at the Methodist Building in Phnom Penh and broke her ankle. To receive better medical care she was sent to Singapore, where she received surgery on her ankle. Below is her e-mail to us:

Dear Rev. Steve Young,

Thank you so much for your e-mail. Last night [Nov. 18] I came back from Singapore after my medical treatment, and everything went very well. The hospital took very good care. I have a new cast, am still using crutches, and I am doing very well. After 6 weeks I have to go back to Singapore again.

Now we are so busy preparing for Christmas, with children preparing songs, drama, dance, etc. They are very excited and look forward to the Christmas celebration.

Thank you so much for your prayer and support. These funds [special offering taken at Bethany] will be used for our Christmas program as well as for others....Please say “hello” to Susan and the congregation. God bless you all. You are in my prayers.

*Regards,
Clara*

You may send your own “get well” wishes to Clara at clarabiswas@hotmail.com

Dec. 9th Is "Bring a Friend" Sunday



All Bethany members are challenged to invite an unchurched friend to attend the worship service with them on Sunday, December 9--which we are designating as "Bring a Friend to Church" Sunday. Almost everyone

knows someone who is not currently attending a church but who might be open to "making a visit" to church one Sunday. We are asking you who that person might be in your circle of friends, family, and acquaintances. Whom do you know who might benefit most from a visit to Bethany? Would you be willing to pray for that person and then invite him or her during the first week in December? The Advent season of the year is a lovely time for a person to visit our church sanctuary!

Adults Take "AIM" Once Again

The AIM Sunday School class has been reorganized and revitalized, under the leadership of Kris Kent. The AIM class offers an alternative Sunday School experience to the traditional lessons taught with prepared quarterlies and prescribed Scripture texts. The curriculum for the AIM class is entitled "Faithlinks" and is received from Cokesbury by a direct e-mail subscription each week. Topics are relevant to today and are often current event-related, e.g. Veterans Day, the drought, an attitude of gratitude, celebrities and faith, etc. Topics are studied from a Christian faith perspective, with adequate attention given to the teaching of Scripture. The class is relaxed and informal and allows ample time for class discussion. Young or old, married or single, are invited to visit this class, which meets in the middle partitioned classroom in the Warren Belvin Fellowship Hall.

JOB a Hit with Men

As many as eight men are meeting each Monday night to study the Book of Job in an informal Bible study setting. Facilitated by David Chapin, the study uses a 12-week study guide entitled: *Job—Wrestling with God*. Representative passages from Job are read each week, and study guide questions focus on biblical content, contemporary interpretation, and practical application to the life of 21st century disciples. There is always room around the table for additional men to join the fellowship. Why not drop by one Monday evening at 7:00 p.m. to see what the study is like? The class meets in the Journey Classroom (front of the WBFH) from 7 until 8:30 p.m.

Taking Communion to Our Shut-ins



An important part of our outreach to shut-ins is offering to bring them the Sacrament on Communion Sundays. In addition to Pastor Steve's ministry in this area, we now have four additional

trained persons to take the consecrated elements out to shut-ins on Communion Sunday afternoons. They are Marsha Miller, Loreen Paiva, Tina Loase, and Jonathan Loase. If you are unable to attend church and would like to be included on the list of those receiving communion, please contact our church office.

Holy Communion Offered Twice a Month at Bethany

In addition to our regular first-Sunday-of-the-month offerings of Holy Communion during morning worship, Bethany also offers Holy Communion on the third Thursday evening of each month at 7:30 p.m. (on Christmas Eve in December). You are invited to join us whenever you choose.

New Members to Be Received

New members will be received into the Bethany Church family on Sunday, December 9. Anyone who would like to join on that Sunday and who has not yet spoken to the pastor, please contact him as soon as possible (832-0979).

Rev. Bob Justis to Preach

Rev. Bob Justis, one of our retired pastors at Bethany, will bring the message at both services on Sunday, Dec. 30, while Pastor Steve is visiting with family in New Jersey. Prior to his retirement, Bob served 23 years as a pastor in the Virginia Conference.

Confirmation Class to Begin in January

Pastor Steve will lead a Confirmation Class for young people to prepare them to profess their faith in the Lord and to become members of the church. The ten-session class will be taught on Sunday afternoons from 12:45 until 1:45 p.m., beginning on January 13. A light lunch will be provided for young people who participate. Please direct your questions to Pastor Steve (832-0979).

Good-bye to the Pruitts

Bill and Diane Pruitt, faithful servants of God at Bethany for many years, have moved to their dream home in the northern end of York County (Lightfoot exit off 64). Their new address is 102 Marina Point, Williamsburg (23188) in the Skimino Farms subdivision. We wish them Godspeed and much happiness!

A Labor of Love



The present strength of Bethany UMC has been built upon the love, sweat, and tears of hundreds of faithful servants of the Lord at Bethany in years past, many of whom are now deceased. To honor their special contributions to the church

Reinaldo and Patsy Morales have prepared a comprehensive photo display at Bethany. The board currently includes 86 photos of our deceased members, the date when they joined Bethany Church, the date of their death, and the names of their children. This project has taken dozens of hours of time so far and is still not complete. Additional photographs are still being solicited for some of our deceased. Please let Rey know if you can provide a missing photo, and be sure to give him and Patsy a big "thank you" for their wonderful labor of love.

Advent Devotionals Available

Many Christians have discovered the joy of undertaking a special spiritual discipline during the Advent season of the year. For this reason Bethany is again making available devotional booklets for the congregation to use each day during Advent, beginning on Sunday, Dec. 2, and ending on Christmas Day. For each day there is a Scripture passage, a devotional thought written by a different pastor or layperson, and a brief prayer. This year the devotional booklet, *God's Abundant Blessings*, is provided by the Society of St. Andrew and is part of that organization's efforts to raise money for food ministries to the poor of our land. The devotional booklets will be available at both entrances to the sanctuary. Along with the booklet, please take a coin box and place a coin in the box each day during Advent. We will receive the coin boxes on the two Sundays following Christmas.



Pastor's Column: "Managing Christmas"

He entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made (Luke 10:38-40).

One of the challenges of the Advent and Christmas season is to manage the accompanying stresses and strains in such a way that we can still experience the joy and peace of Christmas. Unless a person is extremely organized, it is difficult, if not impossible, to do it all—the decorating, the baking, the Christmas cards, the shopping, the gift-wrapping, the service projects, the social dinners, and the family expectations-- and still retain the nobler sentiments of the season. Some of us experience Christmas as a long series of expectations and obligations. We need to realize that when Jesus comes to call at our house, it's okay to say "no" to some things so that we can say "yes" to some others. I believe that some of us would be most helped to analyze ahead of time our Christmas habits and see if there are any areas which we can downsize and simplify, so that what is left we can experience with joyful abandon.

Whatever we might decide to leave off in our preparation for Advent and Christmas, there are two very special things that we should make every effort to include. The first is to engage in some activities that lift our souls up to God. What is it that draws you to God? Is it hearing a choir sing familiar Christmas songs? Is it seeing the Christmas story enacted before your eyes in word and action? Is it singing Christmas carols? Is it reveling in the simple joy that children experience at this time of year? Is it listening to Christmas bells or to an organ concert? Is it sitting in awed meditation in a candlelit sanctuary? What lifts your soul up to God at Christmas? And when you identify what works for you, be sure to include in your Advent and Christmas schedule one or more of those settings where God can work his magic in your heart. Be a Mary and sit at our Lord's feet.

Second, engage in some activity that involves giving love to others. Do it not because you have to, but because you want to. Do it because you want to share the love God gave us at Christmas with others. If preparing a meal for others gives you great joy, then by all means do it. If taking the time to make homemade gifts for others gives you great joy, please do it. If giving a monetary gift to a cause that is dear to your heart gives you deep satisfaction, please do it. If doing a tangible act of kindness for the needy at Christmas brings you great joy, please find some opportunity to do it. Let God's Christmas love to you flow from you to others! Be a Martha with the right attitude!

I believe that if we downsize our preparations just a bit, and if we intentionally seek the opportunity for heavenly inspiration and for earthly ministration the end result will not be "managing Christmas," but setting it free from dead obligations, so that Christmas joy and peace can live in our hearts and shine in our lives.

A servant of Christ,
Pastor Steve

Bible Buddies is open to all third, fourth and fifth graders!!

Enjoy team sports, cool discussion topics, music, Christian fellowship and fun!

Come to Bethany UMC at 6:00 p.m. for a light dinner then stay until 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 2nd and 16th.

Miss Kris and Miss Jane hope to see you then!
Kris Kent 642-6438/kentcrew@cox.net

Take an Angel for Christmas

Once again Bethany will have an Angel Tree in the narthex the first and second Sundays of Advent. On the tree a number of "angels" will be attached: notes about a boy or girl from a disadvantaged family whom the Salvation Army has identified to receive special love this Christmas. Suggestions may be provided for a special Christmas gift(s). If you take an "angel" from the tree, please purchase your gift and place it unwrapped under the tree not later than Dec. 10. If you have questions, please call Doris Luther (642-6053).



Poinsettias are available to order and place in the sanctuary for Christmas services. The cost is \$12.00 for each six-inch plant. This is a fundraiser for the MYF. Order deadline is December 13, 2007.

NAME _____

Phone No. _____

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

Amount attached \$ _____

Payment **MUST** accompany order. Make checks payable to Bethany UMC with notation for poinsettias.

Our Mission

To know the love of God personally through Jesus Christ,
To share the love of God through fellowship as a congregation,
To spread the love of God throughout our community and the world.

