

December, 2022



Bethesda Banner

As the Christmas season is upon us, I imagine that you have begun to fall into the loving embrace of Christmas traditions.

Decorations are up (or going up). Lights, trees, garland, nativity sets, and jolly-old-Saint Nick, they are likely scattered around your house and the mood is becoming festive again. Red, green, white, gold, the colors of Christmas are everywhere!

Last night before Jennifer arrived home from work, I sat in our living room and enjoyed the view of our decorations and the warmth they encouraged to seep from my heart. I listened to some Christmas classics as I waited for Jennifer, and it felt good.

Christmas music plays an important role in my holiday celebration. Some of my earliest Christmas memories are of visiting my grandparent's house in the Cleveland suburb of Middleburg Heights. Grandpa sitting in his brown chair with the family dog, Teddy, between his feet. Grandma in the kitchen baking and singing carols to no one in particular. Later in the evening grandma would take us to the piano and my sister and she would play hymns together and she would again sing.

We would listen to records in the den of Christmas classics from Bing Crosby and Perry Como over dinner, and we would enjoy cookies for dessert. Sometimes Santa would stop by and some years he was too busy for a personal appearance. But it didn't matter, I felt joy and the season was so special to me.

The Christmas season can be very special, but that choice is ours—it's yours.

This has been a difficult year for us at Bethesda. We have suffered a lot already. But in our suffering, I wonder if you will allow the joy of Christmas to press past the grief you feel and the franticness that you confront each day? I wonder if when you are given the choice, will you choose to fall back onto memories and practices of Christmas that brought you joy? Or are you just too busy for them?

Last night I could have been too busy to sit in the living room, in front of the Christmas tree, and listen to Christmas music. In Advent there is always something else that I need to attend to.

But by sitting there. By choosing to 'be still' and resist the temptation to be overly busy, space can be created to dwell with God intimately and deeply. We can create space for the Christmas joy to push past all the 'other stuff' and we sit with God. . . and we enjoy the company.

Again, though that choice is yours. . . I wonder what choice you might make?

Blessings
Rev. Derek



*This is a publication of
the people of
Bethesda Presbyterian Church*

Helping our neighbors:

Food Pantry - a basket is available weekly in the vestibule for donations to the Food Pantry. There is also be a basket in the Fellowship Hall.

Plentiful Harvest Kitchen 2022: We will serve on Sunday, December 11 from 2:00 until 6:00 pm. You can come help cook at 2:00, come at 4:00 to serve and clean up or come for the whole time. Please let Steve or Sarah Childers know if you can help.

Missions, Outreach, and Service Report—November, 2022

Presbyterian Women's Circles:

Card Ministry

Memorial Gift to Thornwell in Memory of Nancy Moore Smith

Memorial Gift to Thornwell in Memory of Gail Jones

Evening Circle: Memorial Gift to Shriners' Children's Hospital in Memory of Nancy Moore Smith

Donations to:

Thornwell

Presbyterian Communities of South Carolina

Tito Palacios and La Mission in Guatemala

The Matias Family in Brazil

Tender Hearts (Special Thanksgiving Offering at Community Thanksgiving Service)

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Four Baby Blankets Presented

Three Lap Afghans/Prayer Shawls Presented

Online Ministry

Worship Services

Pastor's Bible Study

Sounds of Grace

Community Thanksgiving Service

Hosted Community Thanksgiving Service and Reception Following the Service

Ministry of Care and Support

Provided Meals for Members

Provided Transportation and Support for Members with Medical Needs

Served Refreshments for Receptions following Two Funerals: Nancy Moore Smith and Gail Jones

Christian Education Ministry

Children Created Thanksgiving Cards During Children's Church/Cards Mailed to Several Members

Food Items Collected for Food Pantry and Blessing Box

Benevolence Fund

Scouting Ministry

Child Development Center

Thank you!

Dear friends,

Words can't express how much your thoughts, love, visits and prayers meant to me while I was sick. Thanks also for the meals you brought to us. Thanks to the prayer shawl ladies for the beautiful lap afghan you gave me. I pray that God continues to bless Bethesda with wonderful people like you.

With love,
Esther Bailey

Thank you for the wonderful response from all who attended and helped in any way with Bethesda's hosting of the Community Service on November 22.T. The Thanksgiving service was meaningful and the food and fellowship were outstanding.

Blessing to all from the Worship Committee

Upcoming Dates

Worship Committee will meet at 4:00 pm Sunday, December 4 at Dorothy Williamson's Home.

Bible Study will meet at 4:30 pm on Thursday.

Evening Circle will meet at 10:00 am on Saturday, December 10 at Trudy Amick's Home.

The PW Gathering has been rescheduled for January 21st, 2023.

My dearest Bethesda family,

Many thanks for all your prayers, thoughts and other acts of love and kindness during this difficult time. It's so wonderful to belong to the family of God at Bethesda.

With much love,
Irvin Jones



Orders for Christmas poinsettias will be taken through Sunday December 4.

The cost is \$12.00 each. Poinsettias may be done in memory or in honor of someone. A sign-up sheet will be available in the narthex each Sunday or you may call the church office Monday through Friday 9 – 1 pm. Checks should be made out to Bethesda Presbyterian Church with "Poinsettias" in the comment line .



Join us for Christmas Caroling on December 18. We'll meet in the Fellowship Hall at 4:00 pm and then go out to spread Christmas joy. After caroling, we'll meet back at the Fellowship Hall for hot chocolate and cookies.

2 EAGLE SCOUT RANKS EARNED IN NOVEMBER



On November 2, Scouts Logan Baker and Denny Davis completed their Eagle Scout Board of Review. Congratulations to these two scouts for their dedication and commitment. Both Scouts began as Cub Scouts in our church's scouting program and with the guidance of parents and leaders have achieved scouting highest rank.

Logan led an Eagle Scout project of clearing back four feet of brush and trees from the south cemetery wall at Bethesda. Denny led the project of building and installing the "Blessing Box" for Bethesda. This project has already received a lot of attention and use. Thanks to both scouts for their efforts to give back to the community.

Logan and Denny make the fourth Eagle Scout award to be earned through Troop 161 in 2022 and the 46th and 47th Eagle Scout in the troop's history. An Eagle Scout presentation ceremony is being planned for all 2022 Eagle Scouts on Scout Sunday in February of 2023.

December Verse to Remember

"For to us a child is born, and to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders, and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9: 6.

Christmas Joy Gift Offering



The Perfect Gift

When Jesus was born among us, he came as a helpless baby destined to bring joy, peace, and salvation to his people. This child, God's Word made flesh -fully human and fully God – became one of us. One with us. One among us. In all of our vulnerabilities, struggles and triumphs, Jesus became one of us – leading us, knowing us, connecting us to himself and to each other, and offering us his gift of eternal life.

Bethesda's Christmas Joy Gift Offering

Through our contribution with the Christmas Joy Gift Offering, we reflect God's perfect gift to us, with our generous support of church leaders among us – past, present, and future – who have pointed us to God.

How will is our gift used?

50% of our gifts to the Christmas Joy make it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian -related schools and colleges equipping them to lead communities for faithful living.

50% of our gifts provide assistance for current and retired church workers and their families with critical needs.

We honor and celebrate leaders like retired pastors, church workers and their families who have faithfully guided and led us but who now find themselves in critical financial need. We honor and celebrate emerging leaders like students in schools in colleges equipping them with leadership skills as they pursue their education and prepare to bring their gifts in service to the world God loves so much.

Bethesda will collect the Joy Gift Offering on Sunday December 18th.

Our [Christmas](#) Worship Service will be on [December 18](#) at 11:00 a.m. The Adult Choir, Hand Chimes and the Sounds of Grace as well as some instrumentalists will be participating in this service. The worship service will center on "The Gift of Heaven". I hope you will be able to join us for this special service.

My sister-in-law, Dorothy Hazard, writes poetry and wrote the following poem for Bethesda using our theme. LaRayne

GOD'S GIFT

by Dorothy DeWitt Hazard
2022.08.08

We give [Christmas](#) gifts to show others our love;
God's perfect gifts reveal His love from above.
Imagine a room with LOVE written over the door;
And filling the room a gift that covers the floor!

Curious you go inside, just to take a tiny peek;
What you find shocks you so, you cannot speak!
For written big and bold on the label is your name;
"This is from God!" you're finally able exclaim!

***Will you accept God's gift with a grateful heart
Or will you reject Him and forever be apart?***

Excitedly, nervously you begin to unwrap,
Taking off the paper and opening each flap.
Inside another box but written on every side
Are the names of Jesus. Will you look inside?

So you open the box covered in Jesus' name
And a multitude of gifts, no two the same!
Receiving Jesus' gifts you'll always be blessed;
For in His strong Name, you'll find perfect rest.

***Will you accept God's gift with a grateful heart
Or will you reject Him and forever be apart?***

You reach inside the box to pull out a gift
And though it is huge, it is light to lift.
It offers you forgiveness for all your sin;
Jesus carried the weight so you would win!

God the Father through Jesus His Son
Is telling you the war for freedom is won.
He knows who you are and who you will be
"The victory is yours, My child, if you'll focus on Me."

***Will you accept God's gift with a grateful heart
Or will you reject Him and forever be apart?***

Now you notice a package almost out of sight;
This packaging doesn't seem quite as bright.
Hesitantly you open it even though it looks plain
And are shocked to find that inside is pain!

This can't be right, you say, "No way this is for me!"
But trust all the Father gifts are given lovingly,
For He wants to show you He is all you need
For you to love Him in thought, word and deed.

***Will you accept God's gift with a grateful heart
Or will you reject Him and forever be apart?***

Yet another bright gift catches your eye;
You find inside gifts that seem to multiply,
Gifts of grace that can only come from above;
Gifts of God's promises born from the depths of His love.

While over gifts of mercy and faith you are fawning, you
notice the gift of peace and the gift of belonging. Are
you starting to understand that God's paternity means
He is choosing you now and for all eternity?

***Will you accept God's gift with a grateful heart
Or will you reject Him and forever be apart?***

You've been given so much and yet still there is more,
for His loves isn't spent, He has much more to pour! Like
the boxes before, there are smaller gifts inside, all la-
beled "Your choice, it is for you to decide."

God the Father through Jesus His only Son
Has given you the gift of choosing His will be done.
You can choose to seek Him and His ways pursue,
To receive His patience and devotion towards you.

***Will you accept God's gift with a grateful heart
Or will you reject Him and forever be apart?***

You've opened the gifts the Father chose for you;
The choice is now yours; decide what you'll do.
He has shown you His faithfulness, inviting you to come;
He's give abundant life if to His will you'll succumb.

What happens next if you choose to accept His gifts?
He doesn't promise an easy life, but one that is rich!
You might be wondering what you can give Him in re-
turn;
All He asks is you share His gifts so others might learn!

***Will you accept God's gift with a grateful heart
Or will you reject Him and forever be apart?***



November Birthdays



1	Derek Marotta, Lewis Smith
5	Suzanne Griffin, Will Johnston
7	Jame Anthony, Jr.
8	Ernice Bookout
9	Jerry Dickson, Robert Walker
16	Micah Blue
18	Martina Russell
21	Ginger Dewey
27	Eddie Smith
28	Robert Fulmer
29	Carson Smith
31	Liz Blackwell, Kim Johnson

November Attendance

	<u>Morning Worship</u>	<u>Sunday School</u>
- In-person		
11/6/22	48	25
11/13/22	48	16
11/20/22	57	24
11/22/22 Community	101	
11/27/22	47	25

Remember in Prayer

At Bethesda

Cindy Thrift - liver transplant
Esther Bailey
Nell Glover
Margaret Moore
Nettie R. Daves
Bobby Moore
Irvin Jones
Jonathan Lauckner
Gene Cornwell
Doris Jonas - eyes
Ricky & Debbie Simpson & Family
Frank Allen
Anita Ferguson Buffolino
Bill Dover
Ruth Rawdon
Eddie Allan Smith (back)
Stacy Meeks (CDC)

Deaths

Gail Jones, 11-3-22 .
Gene Bass, 11-3-22
Barbara Good, 11-24-22

At Bethesda Child Development Center

Cynthia Jackson, Dawn Westmoreland, Gracie Arnold,
Esther Bailey, Jamie Baker, Algeria Ervin,
Catherine Goodband, Stacy Meek, Janice Meeks,
Tracy Eddinger, Elizabeth Martin, Kennedy Brown,
Aliah Hagy, Zoe Dasota.

Global Mission Partners

Matias Family and
Tito Palacios (La Mision)

In the Community and Beyond

Noah Smith Sr.
Debbie Crosby
Ron Saboley
Rachel Ann Taylor (Pat's granddaughter) leukemia
Michael Thrower (Donna's nephew)
Barbara Good (Debbie Darby's mother) cancer
Willie Wilson (Bert's brother)
Ronnie (cancer) Adam's store manager
Rimica Brown (former CDC employee) cancer
Kenny Good (Debbie Darby's brother)
Ed & Sara Jennings (Donna's uncle & aunt)
Brittany Teter (Linda's granddaughter) pregnancy complications
Evelyn Williams (Donna's cousin)
Peggy Wells (Sarah's aunt, leukemia)
Memory Jordan (Ralph & Becky's friend) lung cancer
Shelly Palmer (Leslie's cousin) covid complications
Willie Wilson (Bert's brother)
Johnny Rockholt (Faye's son)
Cherish Clark Walker (Krystal's friend) cancer
Dale Wray & mother, Peggy (Krystal's friend)
Rick Stallard (Josh's father)
Heath, cancer (3 yr. old friend of Tara Rogers)
Larry Rockholt (Carolyn's son)
Dorothy Hazard (LaRayne's sister-in-law)
Hildegard and Jim Bell's granddaughter, lupus
Edna Rhinehart (Carolyn Rockholt's sister)
Vivian Fulmer (Bobby's mother)

In the Military:

Chase Davis, Zoe Davis, Morgan Drayton,
Sully Foy, Nicholas McAteer,
Alyarda Thompson, Michael Wilkerson

Bethesda Presbyterian Church

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Our Pastor:

Rev. Derek Marotta

Our Elders:

Alberta Anthony

Ernice Bookout

Mark Boyd

Sarah Childers

Jimmy Darby

Cheryl Forlines

Susan Hibbard

Irvin Jones

Linda Messer

Todd Russell

Johnny Walker

Dorothy Williamson

*"Glory to God in the
highest, and on earth
peace among those with
whom He is pleased."*

Luke 2: 14

Our Mission

We celebrate the sharing of the Good News of Jesus Christ who is the head of the Church. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, we are God's servants dedicated to the nurturing of all people in faith, service and fellowship; providing service to those in need; comforting the bereaved; ministering to the sick; offering solace to the troubled; and always seeking the lost.

We invite all believers in the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to share the communion loaf and cup of communion as symbols of our unity and service to the Risen Lord.



Established 1760

Bethesda Presbyterian Church Staff:

Pastor - Derek Marotta

Secretary/Bookkeeper - Pat Jones

Director of Music Ministry - LaRayne Hall

Sexton - Donna Hagler