

February, 2024



Bethesda Banner

Bethesda Presbyterian Church

4858 McConnells Hwy.
York, SC 29745
(803)328-1360

Sunday School 9:45 am

Worship 11 am

Visit

www.bethesdapres.org
for updates.



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

As the Church we are about to enter the season of Lent. On Valentine's Day, we will begin our journey towards the cross of Jesus. We will begin with communion on Transfiguration Sunday (2/11). Ashes will be administered in the worship space on Wednesday evening to mark the start of the season.

Overall, plans are being formed for a meaningful Lenten season for each of us with devotionals and special offerings. The choral anthems will reflect the seasonal change as the words take on a stronger message. We will partake of the Seder meal in the fellowship hall and participate Tenebrae in worship.

Using language from this past weekend, we are familiar with this season, and its story, ad nauseum. We know every step and moment of the story of Jesus' suffering. It can be repeated passage by passage.

But let us resist the temptation to trivialize or downplay the significance of the passion of Jesus. This season can transform us if we give it the space and the time necessary. The choice is ours.

I read the story of a local church that struggled with this idea. They were so excited about Easter that they ran right past the cross of Jesus and began passing out chocolate crosses on Palm Sunday. A member of the local community stopped one of the members and asked why were they doing this? Did they not know that Jesus still had to die on Maundy Thursday?

Confused about the death of Jesus, and where this question was coming from, the church-member responded, 'it's really not a big deal. He is risen. The death-stuff is not that important anyway.' And then they gave the person a cross and a big hug.

While I do agree that Jesus gains the final victory over death. We must not rush too quickly past the suffering of what Jesus does on the cross for us. Our sin. His death. His willingness to die for us cannot be neglected; it must not be neglected. Even if we have heard it before, and even if we have read the story countless times, we must read it again. Think on it again. Notice it again.

For in the retelling of the story we find the power and transformation living. So, I invite you this Lenten season, to spend time with this familiar account. Let it change you. Give it room in your heart. You might be surprised how God speaks to you!

Blessings,

Rev. Derek

Helping our neighbors:

Please help replenish our "Blessing Box" and Food Pantry.

Plentiful Harvest Kitchen: Our next two dates to serve are March 10 and May 26.

Plastic Recycling- We have collected enough plastics for our third bench! We will continue to collect plastics for our fourth bench.



A Blood Drive will be held on February 13 in the Fellowship Hall in honor of Rachel Ann Taylor (Pat Jones' granddaughter). For every pint of blood given money will be donated toward Rachel Ann's medical bills. Click on the link to sign up to give blood:

https://donate.thebloodconnection.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/229367

Missions, Outreach, and Service Report— January, 2024

Presbyterian Women's Circle:

Card Ministry

Donations to:

Thornwell

Presbyterian Communities of South Carolina

Tito Palacios and La Mission in Guatemala

The Matias Family in Brazil

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Three Prayer Shawls/Lap Afghans Presented

One Baby Blanket Presented:

Online Ministry

Worship Services

Pastor's Bible Study

Sounds of Grace

Ministry of Care and Support

Provided Transportation to Medical Appointments and Other Support for Church Members and Community Member

Community Support/Outreach

Food Items

Collected Food

Items for Food Pantry and Blessing Box /Maintained the Blessing Box by Keeping it Fully Stocked

Food Distribution—Distributed 49 Bags of Grocery Items, Serving 22 Families with at Total of 79 Household Members

Plentiful Harvest Kitchen—Prepared and Served 138 meals

Benevolence Fund

Provided Assistance to Two Families

Child Development Center

Pastor Conducted Two Weekly Chapel Services for the Three Year Olds through Pre-K Children and for the After School Children

2023 Year end Contribution Statements have been mailed or placed in the mailboxes in the Church Office. If you have any questions, please call 803-328-1360 or email bethesda@comporium.net

New Offering Envelopes for 2024 are available. They have been placed in the mailboxes in the Church office and on the front pew in the Sanctuary. If you do not receive some and would like envelopes, please contact the church office at (803)328-1360 or email bethesda@comporium.net

2024 Flower Chart is in the Narthex - sign up to place flowers in the Sanctuary for Sunday morning worship and, if you wish, info in the bulletin on that Sunday, notify Pat at (803)328-1360 or email bethesda@comporium.net

A Simple Bible Study

If you just cannot find the time to attend one of the Bible studies a Bethesda, might I suggest a simple Bible study.

Read the Lectionary Scriptures for each week several times during the week (*see below*) Identify thoughts, words or phrases that catch your attention in each scripture. Write them down.

Consider how all the weekly scriptures are connected. Is there an overarching theme? Ask yourself what do I hear? What do I see? How might these be connected to my life?

These simple steps will prepare you to hear the Word of God during Sunday worship and feed your heart throughout the week.

Lectionary Scriptures for February 2024

February 4- Mark 1:29-39; Isaiah 40:21-31

February 11—Mark 9:2-9; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

February 18—1 Peter 3:18-22; Genesis 9:8-17

February 25— Mark 8:31-38; Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

John Nettles

Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song

1. Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey;
I'll tell ev'rybody about you wherever I go:
you alone are our life and our peace and our love.
Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey.
2. Lord Jesus, I'll praise you as long as I journey.
May all of my joy be a faithful reflection of you.
May the earth and the sea and the sky join my song.
Lord Jesus, I'll praise you as long as I journey.
3. As long as I live, Jesus, make me your servant.
To carry your cross and to share all your burdens
and tears.
For you saved me by giving your body and blood.
As long as I live, Jesus, make me your servant.
4. I fear the dark and the doubt of my journey;
but courage will come with the sound of your steps
by my side.
And with all of the family you saved by your love,
we'll sing to your dawn at the end of our journey.



February Birthday



5	Debbie Simpson, Lisa Teska
7	Sarah Childers, Deloras Melton
10	LaRayne Hall
13	Bill Dover, Danny Drayton
14	Leslie Henson
16	Mary Joe Gardner, Sarah Russell
23	Valerie Bull
28	Cohen Hudson

	Attendance			
	<u>Morning Worship</u> In-person	<u>Sunday School</u>	<u>Online Worship</u> Views	<u>Bible Study*</u>
1/7/24	50	26	26	9
1/14/24	48	19	30	18
1/21/24	34	13	41	19
1/28/24	43	26	26	

*Bible Study includes in person and on-line participation

Thank You

Hi Ladies,

Trudy came by and gave me the beautiful afghan your shawl ministry crocheted for me. The colors are gorgeous and I can feel all the time, prayers and love to all who made this special gift!

Thanks again for such a thoughtful gift and I appreciate all your love and prayers!

Patti Simril

Remember in Prayer

At Bethesda

Dorothy Williamson
Liz Blackwell, 1/3/24
Peggy Adkins
Cecilia Alexander
Margaret Moore
Jonathan Lauckner
Gene Cornwell
Ricky & Debbie Simpson & Family
Frank Allen
Anita Ferguson Buffolino
Bill Dover
Ruth Rawdon
Eddie Allan Smith (back)
Stacy Meek (CDC)
Janice Meeks (CDC)
Hildegard Bell
Eddie Smith

At Bethesda Child Development Center

Cynthia Jackson, Dawn Westmoreland, Esther Bailey,
Jamie Baker, Catherine Goodband, Janice Meeks,
Elizabeth Martin, Natalie Ashe, Emily Hopkins, Shelby
Ashe, Madison Hartis.

Global Mission Partners

Matias Family and
Tito Palacios (La Mision)

In the Military:

Chase Davis, Zoe De Anda,
Pierce Dewey, Sully Foy,
Nicholas McAteer, Gage Orr,
Michael Wilkerson

In the Community and Beyond

Eva DuPree
David (Bobby Fulmer's friend)
Jackie Johnson Saboley (hip surgery)
Trey Privette (Walker family) glioblastoma
Sue Hopkins
Griffin (Marotta's nephew Axton's 11 year old friend)
Cheryl Hughes
Dorothy Hazard (LaRayne's sister-in-law)
Larry Rockholt (Carolyn's son)
Johnny Rockholt (Faye's son)
Rick Stallard (Josh's father)
Noah Smith, Sr. (Pacia's dad)
Penelope Lowder (Rocky's niece) surgery
Dennis Duncan (Debbie Fulmer's dad) his memory
Hildegard and Jim Bell's granddaughter, lupus
Cherish Clark Walker (Krystal's friend) cancer
Dale Wray & mother, Peggy (Krystal's friend
Rachel Ann Taylor (Pat's granddaughter) leukemia
Brittany, Wes & Whitley Teter (Linda's granddaughter)
Dolores Lynn (Tara's aunt in Iowa) heart problem
Joanne Cox (Debbie Fulmer's aunt) cancer
Dwight Little (cirrhosis of liver & stroke) Leslie Henson's co-
worker)
Tommy Harper (Sarah's dad)
James David (David Chamber's grandson)
Ron Saboley (Jackie's husband) unable to have surgery
Peggy Neal (JoEllen's mom) disease narrowing blockages
Rose Locklair (Peggy, Faye, Ruth & Mack's sister) hospice
Nikki Thompson (Alberta's daughter) colon cancer

Join Us for Ash Wednesday Service February 14



Ash Wednesday is the first day of the 40 days of **Lent**, a six-week period (not including Sundays) dedicated to reflection, repentance, prayer, fasting, and spiritual discipline. It is observed in preparation for Easter and ends on Holy Thursday before Easter Sunday. Holy Thursday marks the Last Supper. The Lenten season was established in the 4th century. It is observed by Catholics and several Protestant denominations.

Ash Wednesday emphasizes two themes: our sinfulness before God and our human mortality. The service focuses on both themes, helping us to realize that both have been triumphed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The ashes, applied in the shape of a cross on the forehead during an Ash Wednesday service, are a symbol of penance, mourning and mortality. Centuries ago, participants used to sprinkle themselves with ashes and repent much more publicly, but the practice fell away sometime between the 8th-10th centuries before evolving into what it is today. (www.umc.org)

***Create in me a
clean heart, oh
God, and
renew a steady
spirit within
me.***

Psalm 51:10

The Session requests that worshipers refrain from bringing beverages into the sanctuary. Bottled water and cough drops are available in the narthex for an emergent need.

The Session considers the consumption of beverages during worship not in keeping with the sanctity of worship. As a practical matter the increased consumption of beverages during worship has resulted in an increase in the number of incidents of spilled beverages. The sanctuary floor is designed to slope downward towards the pulpit, thereby increasing the chance of an accident. Clean-up efforts during the service are a distraction to other worshipers and may require extra work for the sexton.

Session Highlights – January 2024

During the January Session meeting elders reflected on the blessings and spiritual growth of the fellowship at Bethesda in 2023. Time was spent in prayer, focusing on a forward outlook to where God is calling us in 2024. It was realized that we have an ability to upscale our impact on the community by continuing to step out in faith to the Lord's calling.

The Session approved 11 communion dates for 2024. This represents an increase in the desire to be more unified in our communion with Christ throughout the year. During the Lenten season, the church will again observe Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday, which will include a Sedar meal. On Resurrection Sunday new members will be joining the Bethesda fellowship.

[On February 18th we will hold our annual congregational meeting immediately following the worship service. At that time the 2023 Annual Congregational Report will be presented. In addition, the congregation will elect four members from the congregation to serve on the Elder Nominating Committee. This committee, with prayer and discernment, will seek to find three faithful individuals who are called by God to serve on the Session as the class of 2027. A brief meeting of the Corporation will also be held immediately after the congregational meeting. The President of the Corporation for Bethesda will present the Annual Corporation Report.](#)

The Session approved six special offerings to be collected this year, They are One Great Hour of of Sharing, Pentecost, Dimes for Hunger, Joy Gift and Christmas Eve offering. The special offering to support the Benevolence Fund is collected on the fifth Sundays that occur during the calendar year. The Administrative Committee has developed opportunities for making digital contributions. In 2024 members will be able to contribute to their annual pledge, special offerings, and specific ministries using a digital link. Information on how to access this option will be forthcoming shortly.

The Session joyfully accepted a recommendation from the Christian Education Committee to offer Laura Merritt the position of part-time Director of Christian Education. Laura will be responsible for designing and implementing a program of Christian Education for all ages. This will include developing opportunities for Bible study, fellowship, recreation, outreach, and retreats for all ages. Many of such opportunities are already in place and ongoing. Join us in supporting Laura in her new calling. Members desiring to provide financial support to the Christian Education and Youth ministries may do so with a dedicated contribution to this growing ministry.

Bethesda's support of local and foreign mission projects will be upscaled in 2024. New opportunities for missions will be visioned and staffed with committed project leaders. Mission project leaders will be responsible for developing and implementing specific mission opportunities. We began 2024 by building on our monthly food distribution in January, led by Karen Percival. We also will be planning the next community lunch distribution when schools are out of session in February.

Elder Shepherds will be supporting our church families in the coming year. Updated church directories and shepherd fold lists will be released in the next few weeks. The Session is excited about the opportunities to which God will call us in the next year. We invite you to draw closer to God as we worship and glorify him through our worship, Bible study, prayer and service in the kingdom of God.

John Nettles

Bethesda Presbyterian Church

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York, SC 29745

Phone: (803)328-1360

Email: bethesda@comporium.net

Website: www.bethesdapres.org

Our Pastor:

Rev. Derek Marotta

Our Elders:

Alberta Anthony

Mark Boyd

Steve Childers

Cheryl Forlines

Debbie Fulmer

Laura Merritt

Linda Messer

Jim Percival

Stacy Russell

Johnny Walker

*"For God so loved the world,
He gave his only son.
That, whoever, believes in him
shall not perish but have
everlasting life."*

John 3:16

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