

January 2025



Bethesda Banner

As we begin 2025, I want to share with you the words of author Lisa A. Smith as she thought about Isaiah 60:1-6. She wrote:

"It's winter in Alaska, where I live, and right now it feels like darkness covers the earth. We'll have less than 5 hours of daylight on the Feast of Epiphany, the celebration of light. The light in Alaska this time of year is dull and wan as the sun traces a shallow arc across the sky. The nights are long, and the temperatures stay far below freezing. [So] what does it mean to hear a prophecy about light when you live in deep darkness?"

The struggle to find and embrace the light in the new year is not just something that Alaskans deal with, but we hear in the church also can find a resonance in this idea and question. The new year brings the Epiphany of the Lord and the celebration of light and life coming back into the church. But for many we are still dealing with the struggles of 'thick darkness' that Isaiah spoke about.

Like the Israelites who heard Isaiah's words in chapter 60, we might have no memory of what the old life, a life filled with joy, celebration, and homecoming looks like. But as the Christmas miracle reminded us, we do have the potential of hope. We do have Jesus to fall back upon and the union of Emmanuel to trust in.

For when hope is dim, it can be hard to see the light of Christ and feel the presence of God after Christmas and the candles are extinguished and put away. We, too, in our places of despair, need the assurance that God is with us, and that God will provide, even if it's not in the way that we expect or were taught to look for by treasured voices.

We are not trusting that God will send literal gold or camels as we read about in verse 6, but we do trust that God sends other people into our lives and that many of them are bearers of light that we need the most. When we have been in a place of shadows, other people have shown us the light of Christ.

In the New Year that has come, can we be a church that helps others find that space and place of light in their own places and in their own moments? For if we have gone through those places we can know for certain that others are going through them right along with us as well.

Blessings,
Rev. Derek

Lisa A. Smith. *The Christian Century*. Email version. Accessed on December 29, 2024.

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*

Helping our neighbors:

Plentiful Harvest Kitchen: Bethesda will serve dinner at Covenant Presbytery in Rock Hill on January 19, 2025 from 2-6 pm. You can come and help for a couple of hours or stay the whole time. Start the new year out by serving our neighbors in need!

Please help replenish our "Blessing Box" and Food Pantry. Suggested items are non-perishable food items, inexpensive can openers, and small hygiene items. (powdered milk, evaporated milk, saltine crackers, coffee, sugar, canned fruit, peanut butter, jelly, canned meat or pasta items, spaghetti sauce, pasta, small cereal boxes, etc). A basket is available weekly in the vestibule for donations. There is also a basket in the Fellowship Hall for those who wish to make contributions at the Wednesday Night Dinners. These items are used to fill the "Blessing Box", distributed to people who request help through the Bethesda Benevolence Fund, and delivered regularly to local food distribution organizations. Thank you for your contributions to this ministry.

Plastic Recycling- We will continue to collect soft plastics for our fourth bench.

Missions, Outreach, and Service Report— December, 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

Christmas Joy Offering

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Two Prayer Shawls/Lap Afghans Presented

Online Ministry

Worship Services

Sounds of Grace

Pastor's Bible Study

Ministry of Care and Support

Grief Share/Weekly Meetings

Provided Transportation for Church Member and Community Member to Appointments

Community Support/Outreach

Blessing Box--Maintained the Blessing Box by Keeping It Fully Stocked

Angel Tree—Gifts for Local Family

Toy Drive—In a joint project with the Bethesda Child Development Center, toys were collected for 106 children at Black Mountain Presbyterian Church; There was such an abundance of gifts and love that 34 extra boxes of toys were given to a local elementary school to help those children.

Christmas Dinner Giveaway—Distributed 108 bags of groceries to 77 households, serving 227 people, including 82 children

Operation Christmas Child Packing Party—Packed 60 Gift Boxes for Operation Christmas Child

Christmas Caroling to Homes of Church Members and Community Members.-

Child Development Center

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

Fundraiser: Barbecue and Hot Dog Plates, Silent Auction, Bake Sale

Christmas Program

Prepared 82 Gift Bags for Children of Families receiving food through the Christmas Food Distribution

Upcoming in January:

Choir will meet at 5:30 on Wednesdays.

Wednesday Night Dinner will resume this Wednesday, January 5, at 6:30 pm.

Morning Circle will meet on Thursday, January 9, at 10:00 am in the Sunday School building.

The Church Secretary will be out of the office from Monday, January 13 – Friday, January 17. If you have any information for Sunday's bulletin 1/19/25, please send in by 9:00 am on Thursday, 1/9/24. Church Office 803-328-1360 or email bethesda@comporium.net

Plentiful Harvest Kitchen at Covenant Presbyterian, January 19, 2:00—4:00.

NEW 2025 FLOWER CHART is in the Narthex- sign up to place flowers in 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 by the previous Tuesday. There will be a plate upfront for people to donate for the Flower Fund

Offering Envelopes for 2025 are available. They have been placed in the mailboxes in the Church Office and on the front pew. If you no longer need envelopes, maybe you are using ACH., QR code, etc, please let us know. Questions, contact the Church office, 803-328-1360 or email bethesda@comporium.net

Ministry Support Online!



Contributions may be made from the QR code.

Thank you:

I want to thank all of you who blessed me with cards and gifts this holiday season. Also, our music ministry. Thank you for being willing to share your time and talent to make our Christmas Worship Service a blessing for everyone.

Hope you all have a blessed 2025.

LaRayne

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning...in him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:1-5)





January Birthdays



1	<i>Ricky Simpson, JoEllen Smith</i>
2	<i>Stacey Coleman</i>
4	<i>George Freeman, Jr.</i>
9	<i>David Johnson</i>
13	<i>Claire Williamson</i>
16	<i>Adam Cole</i>
17	<i>Steve Childers, Linda Messer, Leslie Platt, Janie Stallard</i>
18	<i>Debbie Fulmer</i>
19	<i>Zach Costner</i>
21	<i>Cathy Goodband</i>
25	<i>Austin Johnson</i>
26	<i>Alan Smith, Jr.</i>
27	<i>Jim Bookout</i>
28	<i>Jesse Merritt</i>
29	<i>JonMark Marotta, Kelsey Privette, Kelly Williamson</i>
31	<i>Johnny Walker</i>

Attendance for December

	<u>Morning Worship</u>	<u>Sunday School</u>
	In-person	
12/1/24	55	28
12/8/24	47	12
12/15/24	67	22
12/22/24	89	20
12/24/24 Christmas Eve 6 pm	101	
12/24/24 Christmas Eve 11 pm	15	
12/28/24	34	14

Remember in Prayer

At Bethesda

Jennifer Marotta
Margaret Moore
Jonathan Lauckner
Gene Cornwell
Ricky & Debbie Simpson & Family
Frank Allen
Anita Ferguson Buffolino
Bill Dover
Ruth Rawdon
Eddie Allan Smith
Stacy Meek (CDC)
Janice Meeks (CDC)
Hildegard Bell
Eddie Smith
Luke Johnson
Bobby Fulmer (back surgery)
Steve Dickson, Jr.
Benny Coxton

Deaths

Family & Friends of Norm Hibbard, 12/1/24 (Wes' dad)
Family & Friends of Jane Putnam, 12/16/24
Family & Friends of Bobbie Kay Hagler, 12/27/24
Family & Friends of Joy Nettles, 12/30/24 (John's step-mother)

At Bethesda Child Development Center

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

Global Mission Partners

Matias Family and
Tito Palacios (La Mision)

In the Community and Beyond

Cheryl Hughes
Johnny Rockholt (Faye's son)
Rick Stallard (Josh's father)
Penelope Lowder (Rocky's niece) surgery
Dennis Duncan (Debbie Fulmer's dad) his memory
Hildegard and Jim Bell's granddaughter, lupus
Brittany, Wes & Whitley Teter (Linda's granddaughter)
Dolores Lynn (Tara's aunt in Iowa) heart problem
Dwight Little (cirrhosis of liver & stroke) Leslie Henson's co-worker)
Tommy & Nell Harper (Sarah's parents)
James David (David Chamber's grandson)
Jackie Saboley
Peggy Neal (JoEllen's mom) disease narrowing blockages
Christina Dixon (Shannon's friend) breast cancer
Janet Osborne (breast cancer)
Debi Dubard - treatment for cancer
Karyson Cook
Jeff Thompson
Becky Shillington (Jim & Ernice's daughter) surgery
Belinda Chambers - wrist surgery
Rev Jerry Devinney (Lakewood Baptist Church pastor)
Terry Brown (Darlene Dunlap's cousin)
Kathy Miller (Todd Hagler's mother)
Barry Zachary (friend of Walkers) lung cancer
Amy Quilty (Tim & Sue's daughter) wrist surgery

In the Military:

Chase Davis, Zoe De Anda,
Pierce Dewey, Sully Foy,
Nicolas McAteer, Gage Orr,
Michael Wilkerson, Sabrina Dollar

Bethesda Presbyterian Church

4858 McConnells Highway

York, SC 29745

Phone: (803)328-1360

Email: bethesda@comporium.net

Website: www.bethesdapres.org

Our Pastor:

Rev. Derek Marotta

Our Elders:

Steve Childers

Debbie Fulmer

JonMark Marotta

Jesse Merritt

Laura Merritt

Linda Messer

Jim Percival

Lisa Percival

Stacy Russell

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

Director of Christian Education - Laura Merritt

Secretary/Bookkeeper - Pat Jones

Director of Music Ministry - LaRayne Hall

Sexton - Donna Hagler