

December 2025



Bethesda Banner

Are you done being Thankful? It is traditional in November to spend our time thinking and remembering to give God thanks for all He has done for us over the past year. But often that practice stops as Advent begins... strange, isn't it?

Bethesda Presbyterian Church

4858 McConnells Hwy.
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At the most important time of the year as we celebrate Christ's birth, many of us do not make the space and time to give God thanks for how he has blessed and cared for us. But maybe we should... maybe we could.

As Anne Lamott wrote: *"We and life are spectacularly flawed and complex. Often we do not get out of our own way. . . Sometimes circumstances conspire to remind us or even let us glimpse how thin the membrane is between here and there, between birth and the grave, between the human and the divine. In wonder at the occasional direct experience of this, we say, Thank you."*

With the coming of Advent, and all of the expectations of this season as they press down upon us in an unbearable way, and as the temptation grows moment by moment to forget any sense of Thanksgiving, I encourage you to pause. I encourage you to seek the place of gratitude—right now.

Even if the very first breath of your day brings with it the expectations of full schedules, of doctor's appointments, stress at work, and the aches and pains of healing, perhaps there is a place where you can say to God 'thank you'—not any of the suffering that you went to bed with.

But perhaps you can find the space, even for just the briefest of moments as the day begins, to give thanks to God for how the Lord of Heaven and Earth has watched you sleep and how God helped you to open your eyes. And even if that first step and stretch is painful and, like me, you groan and crack and wobble as you first walk, God is there to hold you by the hand. He is there to take you by the hand if things don't move as smoothly as you would like.

And so again, perhaps the first prayer of each day this month can mirror the prayers of last month: Thank You.

Grace and Peace

Derek

Anne Lamott, *Help, Wow, Thanks: Three Essential Prayers* (Riverhead Books, New York, 2012), 46.

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 - A team from Bethesda served 201 dinners on November 30.

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.

Missions, Outreach, and Service Report— November, 2025

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
Offering from Community Thanksgiving Service Donated to Safe Passage and Pilgrim's Inn

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Four Blankets/Lap Afghans Presented

Online Ministry

Worship Services
Sounds of Grace

Ministry of Care and Support

Provided Transportation to Medical Appointments for Community Member
Funeral Receptions: Prepared and Served Refreshments for 3 Funeral Visitations

Community Support/Outreach

Thanksgiving Turkey/Food Distribution: Distributed 79 Bags of Groceries with Thanksgiving Turkeys to Community Members, Serving 225 People in 70 households
Food Items: Collected Food Items for the Blessing Box and Food Pantry/Maintained the Blessing Box, Keeping it Stocked Stocked with Food
Plentiful Harvest Kitchen: Prepared and Served 201 Dinners at Plentiful Harvest Kitchen
Food Share: Distributed 7 Boxes of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
Operation Christmas Child: Packed and Delivered 124 Gift Boxes for Operation Christmas Child
Thanksgiving Service: Hosted the Community Thanksgiving Service and Reception for Adnah United Methodist Church, Service for Antioch United Methodist Church and Bethesda

Child Development Center

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

Coming up...

Hand Chimes will meet on Mondays at 6:30 in the Choir Room.

Adult Christmas Choir Practice is on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm in the Choir Room.

Wednesday Dinner is at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. We will not have dinner on December 17, 24 and 31.

CDC Chapel will meet on Thursday at 4:00 pm.

The Morning Circle will meet on Thursday, December 4, at 10:00 am in the Sunday School Building.

New Elder Installation will be on Sunday, December 7 during the Worship service.

On **Sunday, December 21, 2025**, the Session has called a **Congregational Meeting** immediately following worship for the purpose of approving the annual terms of call for the Pastor.



Christmas at Bethesda



Live Nativity - Thursday, December 18 - 6:00 pm until 7:30 pm (there will also be a free food distribution)

Celebrate the Child Christmas Worship - Sunday, December 21 at 11:00 am

Christmas Eve Services - 6:00 pm and 11:00 pm



This past Sunday 124 boxes were packed for Operation Christmas Child. These boxes will bless children around the world!

Ministry Support Online!



Contributions may be made from the QR code.



December Birthdays



- 1 Derek Marotta; Lewis Smith, Jr.
- 4 Rocky Rhoad, Jr.
- 5 Suzanne Griffin, Will Johnston
- 7 James Anthony, Jr.
- 8 Ernice Bookout
- 9 Jerry Dickson, Robert Walker
- 14 Autumn Marotta
- 18 Martina Russell
- 21 Ginger Dewey
- 27 Eddie Smith
- 28 Bobby Fulmer
- 29 Carson Smith
- 31 Liz Blackwell, Kim Johnson

	Attendance for November		
	<u>Morning Worship</u>	<u>Sunday School</u>	<u>Online Worship</u>
-	In-person		Views
11/02/25	54	30	24
11/09/25	50	28	25
11/16/25	37	24	17
11/23/25	42	28	13
11/25/25	86	Thanksgiving service	12
11/30/25	46	27	15

Remember in Prayer

At Bethesda

Ruth Rawdon
Anita Ferguson Buffoliino
Frank Allen
Jonathan Lauckner
Margaret Moore
Eddie Smith
Benny Coxton
Edward and Dorothy Williamson
Bill Dover
Eddie Allan Smith
Ricky & Debbie Simpson and family
Gene Cornwell (Mac)
Hildegard Bell
Steve Dickson, Jr.
Debbie Darby (Knee replacement, 8/11/25)

Deaths

Michelle Melton, 10/28/25
Elizabeth Foster Caveny, 11/22/25. Burial at Bethesda Cemetery

Marriages

JonMark Marotta & Autumn Lersch 11/2/25
Kathleen Wooldridge Jagers & Kenneth Leroy Wheatley 11/5/25
Matthew McAteer & Sarah Herlan 11/8/25
Justin McAteer & Rachel Berry 11/22/25

Global Mission Partners

Matias Family and
Tito Palacios (La Mision)

At Bethesda Child Development Center

Cynthia Jackson, Dawn Westmoreland, Jamie Baker,
Catherine Goodband, Natalie Ashe, Emily Hopkins,
Shelby Ashe, Madison Hartis, Julie Cornwell.

In the Community and Beyond

Cheryl Hughes
Johnny Rockholt (Faye's son)
Hildegard and Jim Bell's granddaughter, lupus
Brittany, Wes & Whitley Teter (Linda's granddaughter)
Tommy & Nell Harper (Sarah's parents)
Janet Osborne (breast cancer)
Debi Dubard - treatment for cancer
Becky Shillington (Jim & Ernice's daughter) chemo
Kathy Miller (Todd Hagler's mother)
Barry Zachary (friend of Walkers) lung cancer
Amber Love (Alberta's friend) heart problems
David McKowen (friend of Steve Childers) cancer
Clayburn Barnett - esophageal cancer
Sheri & Sarah Kimbrel - health issues
Taylor Dover (Kelly Williamson's niece) breast cancer
Ruby Ledford (David & Esther Bailey's neighbor) eye issues
Mark Williams (Donna Hagler's brother) prostate cancer
Glenn Prange (3 yr. old - leukemia) bone marrow transplant
Bonnie Davis (Bill's mom) breast cancer surgery, 11/4/25
Donna Parrish (Jim & Lisa's friend) heart failure
Ally Percival (Karen's daughter-in-law) surgery to remove brain tumor on 1/2/26.

In the Military:

Chase Davis, Zoe De Anda, Pierce Dewey,
Gage Orr, Michael Wilkerson, Sabrina Dollar

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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