

January 2026



Bethesda Banner

What an amazing season we have just completed as the church! Christmas, or Advent, is behind us. We are now in a different season, a new season, as a church, the season of Epiphany. Now that Christmas is behind us, most of us will breathe a bit easier. Perhaps we might even begin to think that the hard work is done.

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***

Grace and Peace

Rev. Derek

For this Advent season has been quite challenging on many levels here at Bethesda. It stretched us; Advent pushed us harder and further than we thought we could go at times. Everywhere we looked, we saw God's children. Yet God does not leave us; God walks beside us calling each Christian to practice their faith. But as I said, the beginning of Advent brought us struggles.

For starters, many of us were confronted with some form of suffering this year—physical, emotional, expectational, grief. It was there. The actual suffering did not matter as much as did the truth that it came to us all. It stalked us. The pain was unwanted but there was nothing we could about it except love one another and be present for each other as Christ is present with the Church.

Just as we thought we were getting out from under this smothering blanket, something new came to us: the call of ministry.

The Live Nativity and a pair of opportunities to offer food support to our community around Thanksgiving and close to Christmas, called us onward. And the Body of Christ here at Bethesda was amazing. We cared for over 200 people both times and as we cared for them, we heard them offer support to us. I have shared some of those stories with you after the work was completed.

And I will continue to do so as more stories are shared. These stories are vital because they encourage us when we struggle. They help us to find the Lord.

So now that 2026 is here, I want to encourage you again. The work of Being the Church continues. I do not know where God is going to take us. But I know for certain that God is continuing to move in this church. We are gaining a reputation as a church that cares and supports their community.

And yes, we will also be tired, we will be worn down, and we will wonder how we will care for the next person who needs. But the response comes from God before we even vocalize it. . . "Whom shall I send?" And I know for certain that Bethesda will respond, "Here we are, send us." And Jennifer and I are grateful to be part of a church that seeks to care for God's children as each of you do. So, the first word of 2026 is: Bless you in the work that God calls you to do this year.

Helping our neighbors:

Plentiful Harvest Kitchen - The first two dates for 2026 are February 8 and May 10.

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—December 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

Christmas Joy Gift Offering

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Four Prayer Shawls Distributed

Online Ministry

Worship Services

Sounds of Grace

Ministry of Care and Support

Provided Transportation to Medical Appointments for Community Member

Community Support/Outreach

Live Nativity—Over 200 Carloads of Visitors Drove Through the Live Nativity Presented by Church Members as they Shared the Good News of Jesus' Birth

Food Distribution—Distributed 96 Bags of Food with Hams to 57 families, serving 203 people

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

Food Share—Distributed Boxes of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Family Gifts—Sunday School Class and Church Members Collected and Provided Gifts for a Community Family with Three Young Children

Christmas Carolling to Homebound Church and Community Memberst

Children and Youth

Happy Birthday Jesus Party for Children, K-5

Youth Christmas Party

Child Development Center

Christmas Program and Fundraiser Dinner

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

Coming up.....

Wednesday Night Dinners will resume on January 7, 2026 at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Choir Practice will resume on Wednesday, January 7, 2026 at 5:20 pm.

The Morning Circle will meet on Thursday, January 8, 2026 at 10:00 am in the Sunday School Building.

Thank you

Thanks to all the carolers who came to Westminster Towers on Sunday, December 21. We were so glad to see you and enjoyed your singing. Thanks for coming to visit us and bless us with your music.

Kathy Jagers, resident

Thank you to everyone who gave me cards and gifts this Christmas. I am so blessed to receive such a show of love. May you all have a blessed New Year.

LaRayne

Offering envelopes for 2026 are available. They have been placed in the mailboxes in the church office and on the front pew in the sanctuary. If you are no longer using envelopes, maybe you are using the QR code, ACH, etc., please let us know. Questions, contact the church office (803)328-1360 or by email at bethesda@comporium.net

The new 2026 Flower Chart is in the narthex to sign up to place flowers in the sanctuary for Sunday morning worship. If you wish to have info in the bulletin on that Sunday, contact Pat at (803)328-1360 or by email at bethesda@comporium.net

Ministry Support Online



Contributions may be made from the QR code.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



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

Attendance for December

	<u>Morning Worship</u>	<u>Sunday School</u>	<u>Online Worship</u>
	In-person		Views
12/17/25	50	31	24
12/14/25	53	24	30
12/21/25	83	37	35
12/24/25	6 pm	88	19
	11 pm	20	
12/28/25		34	28

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

AT BETHESDA

Ruth Rawdon
Anita Ferguson Buffolino
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 surgery 8/11/25

DEATHS

Anne Bull 12/6/25
Barry Zachary 12/9/25
Joe Forlines 12/18/25
Lawonna Daves 12/27/25 (Burial on 12/30/25 Bethesda Cemetery)
Jane Carroll Johnson 12/22/25 (funeral 1/8/26 11 am, private burial Bethesda Cemetery)

Global Mission Partners

Matias Family
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 Military

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

IN THE COUMMMUNITY AND BEYOND

Hildegard and Jim Bell's granddaughter, lupus
Brittany, Wes & Whitley Teter (Linda's granddaughter)
Janet Osborne - breast cancer
Tommy & Nell Harper (Sarah's parents)
Kathy Miller (Todd Hagler's mother)
Clayburn Barnett - esophageal cancer
Sheri & Sarah Kimbrel - health issues
Glenn Prange (3 yr old - leukemia) bone marrow transplant
Ruby Ledford (David & Esther's neighbor) eye issues
Donna Parrish (Jim & Lisa's friend) heart issue
Ally Percival (Karen's daughter-in-law) surgery to remove brain tumor, 1/2/26
Johnny Rockholt (Faye's son)
Cheryl Hughes - health issues
Debi Dubard - treatment for cancer
Becky Shillington (Jim & Ernice's daughter) chemo
Amber Love (Alberta's friend) heart problems
David McKeowen (Steve Childers' friend) stage 4 cancer
Taylor Dover (Kelly Williamson's niece) breast cancer
Mark Williams (Donna Hagler's brother) prostate cancer
Bonnie Davis (Bill's mom) breast cancer
Emma Joy Dover (Sarah's 9 yr old niece) Type 1 diabetes

Trex Plastic Recycling Challenge

Our next bench has been ordered. As we work toward another bench in 2026 please keep in mind the types of plastic that can be recycled: **ALL PLASTIC SHOULD BE CLEAN AND DRY - NO FOOD RESIDUE!**

Grocery Bags - Bread Bags - Case Overwrap - Pallet Wrap and Stretch Film - Dry Cleaner Bags - Newspaper Sleeves - Ziploc and other Resealable Storage Bags - Produce Bags - Product Wrap - Retail Bags - Air Pillows - Bubble Wrap - Plastic Shipping Envelopes - Electronic Wrap - Plastic films labeled with #2 or #4 recycling symbol (polyethylene films) - Wood Pellet Bags - Salt Bags - Cereal Box Liners

Please DO NOT put the following plastics in the recycling bins:

Frozen Food Bags - Candy Bar Wrappers - Potato Chip Bags - Net or Mesh Produce Bags - Pet Food Bags - Degradable/ compostable bags or film packaging - Pre-Washed Salad Mix Bags - Hot Dog or Meat Wrap Packaging - Six Pack Rings - PPE (Gloves, Masks or Protective Wear) - Pool Covers - Lamination Film - Silage and Hay Bags - Vinyl Shower Curtains or Tablecloths - Bedding or Linen Packaging - Shiny, Crinkly Films like Floral Wrap

Don't see your item on this list? Try these tests to see if your plastic is acceptable or not.

See if the package will stretch when you pull it. If yes, it can be included. If it tears like paper, then please don't put in the bin.

Is the package shiny or does it make a crinkly/crunchy sound in your hand? If yes, do NOT recycle in the NexTrex® bin.

Debbie Darby, Ernice Bookout and Sarah Childers pick up the recycling from the church, weigh it and take it to the correct recycle points. Lately, we have had to go through the bags and pull out dirty items and items that cannot be recycled. Please follow the above lists and it will save them a lot of time! Thank you!

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:

Trudy Amick

Sue Burns

David Chambers

Steve Childers

JonMark Marotta

Jesse Merritt

Laura Merritt

Jim Percival

Lisa Percival

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 - Rev. Derek Marotta

Director of Christian Education - Laura Merritt

Secretary/Bookkeeper - Pat Jones

Director of Music Ministry - LaRayne Hall

Sexton - Donna Hagler