

March 2026



# Bethesda Banner

As I have stated over the last couple of weeks, Lent is the season of the church where we reflect. It is the time in the Church's calendar where we create deliberate space to think about the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. As we think about Jesus' sacrifice, we hope that our reflections in Lent will be carried on past this season and change our lives. In this way, the season of Lent can last longer than we realize.

## Bethesda Presbyterian Church

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

Sunday School 9:45 am

Worship 11 am

Visit

[www.bethesdapres.org](http://www.bethesdapres.org)  
for updates.



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

Lent is primarily about the sharing of the stories of our combined Christian and Hebrew heritage. In Lent, we read of Abraham and of the Exodus. In this season, we hear about the Law of Moses and the anointing of David. The prophet's invite us to gaze into the Valley of Dry Bones and wonder, "can these bones live?"

We conclude Lent by reading of Jesus' entrance into the Holy City for the final time of His earthly life as palms are waved and we joyfully sing, *All Glory, Laud, and Honor*.

But the stories that we share of Jesus' life, His ministry, and His suffering must continue into the life of this church together. You and I need to share our story as a church right alongside of the story of Jesus. Often.

As such, the story of Bethesda needs you!

For, as Robert McKee says, "*Story is about originality, not duplication.*" We do not seek to share the same story necessarily. We seek to share our individual stories that God blessed you with. Each of you who read these words bring a special, unique, discoverable gift that explains, expands, and brings color to, the work and the ministry of Bethesda.

Your story is not simply about the words that you choose to say to each other or to members of the community whom you encounter each day. Your story is more than just a practice of evangelism. No, your story is shared in how you practice and display **presence** when you are with each other both at this church when we are together and especially when we are apart Being the Church.

Sure, words often help with any story, but words are not required when the Spirit of the Lord steps in. Each of you have a gift that is given by God. And so, I encourage you to pray about your story and your involvement in the story at Bethesda. For I believe in the stories that you share, and I know that God is calling you to continue sharing them in the life and work of His church.

Grace and Peace

Rev. Derek

*Helping our neighbors:*

**Plentiful Harvest Kitchen** - Bethesda served on February 8. 173 meals were given. Our next date to serve is 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.

**Catawba Area Agency Food Pantry Dates (tentative)**

3/13/2026 Mt. Olive AME Zion Church, 527 S. Dave Lyle Blvd., Rock Hill

3/27/2026 Pilgrims Inn, 236 West Main St., Rock Hill

**Missions, Outreach, and Service Report—February 2026**

**Presbyterian Women's Circle:**

Card Ministry

**Donations to:**

Thornwell

Presbyterian Communities of South Carolina

Tito Palacios and La Mission in Guatemala

The Matias Family

**Prayer Shawl Ministry**

*One Prayer Shawls/Lap Afghan Presented*

*One Baby Blanket Presented*

**Online Ministry**

Worship Services

Sounds of Grace

**Ministry of Care and Support**

Provided Transportation to Medical Appointments for Community Member

**Community Support/Outreach**

*Plentiful Harvest Kitchen*—Prepared and Served 173 Meals at Plentiful Harvest Kitchen at Covenant Presbyterian Church

*School Lunch Program*—In partnership with Mt. Zion Baptist Church, prepared and distributed 667 bag lunches to area children during York and Rock Hill Schools Break, including York Housing Authority and Motel residents in York as well as neighborhood children. Also Distributed 48 Food Lion Cares Boxes to some of the families.

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

**Child Development Center**

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

Coming up.....

March 2: Chime Practice at 6:30 in the Music Room

March 3: CDC Committee at 5:45 in the Session Room

March 4: Choir Practice at 5:30 in the Choir Room

Congregational Life Committee at 5:30 in the Fellowship Hall

Wednesday night dinner at 6:30 in the Fellowship Hall

March 5: The Morning Circle at 10:00 am in the Sunday School Building.

March 14: Church Work Day, 8 am until 12 pm

April 18: Spring Gathering of Providence Presbyterian Women

Oakland Avenue Presbyterian Church

Breakfast at 8:30 am

Program at 9:15 am

There will be a memorial service for ladies who passed away in 2025.

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](mailto:bethesda@comporium.net)

2026 Shepherd fold lists are available on the front pew of the church. Please take one and check to make sure your contact information is correct. If your contact information is not correct, please contact the church office (803-328-1360) or email [bethesda@comporium.net](mailto:bethesda@comporium.net). If you would like to have one electronically, please contact the church office and one will be provided. Your Elder should be contacting you in the next few weeks to ensure you know who to contact should you need church information or pastoral care concerns.

We are purchasing a stand-alone columbarium for our historic Bethesda cemetery as another option for cremation remains. In this permanent ground memorial, the cremation urns will be held in individual compartments called niches. The niches can hold up to 2 urns and will be the same cost as a single cemetery plot, which depends on one's status. Currently our member cost is \$600.00 (\$900.00 for non-members if related to a member and \$1,200.00 for nonmembers as stated in the cemetery policy). If anyone has an interest, please let our cemetery representative, Bobby Walker, or our church secretary know asap. You can help offset the cost for this columbarium by advanced payment for your niche. Also, this allows for free engraving on your niche if it's done with the initial purchase of the columbarium, which will save you some money down the road.

## Thank you!

To my Dearest and Loved Church Family,

My gratitude of much thankfulness to you all for your concerns and prayers for my recovery.

I do pray for others who are going through rough situations because I am not the only one. There ARE others out there who need our thoughts of them through prayers and /of love!

My worst day could possibly be their best day!

Thank you again and bless ALL OF YOU!...MORE!

My genuine thanks,  
Eddie Allan Smith

Dear Bethesda Presbyterian Church Prayer Shawl Ministry,

Thank you so much for the beautiful shawl. I already have it packed in my chemo bag ready to take with me to my next treatment. I truly appreciate the love, prayers, and support. I'm grateful the Lord has given me the opportunity to see how kind, caring and selfless people are. It has been such a blessing. Thank you again!

Love,  
Katie Blanton

Dear Safe Passage Supporter,

On behalf of Safe Passage, I am writing to express our gratitude and appreciation for your 2025 donation. The 2025 Annual Impact sheet provides an update on the services, challenges and achievements of the year. All of our services are provided free of charge, without regard to income, age, sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, English proficiency and ability.

There is no way to fully express our appreciation for your support. We are continually inspired by the generosity of donors like you, who answer the call to help survivors within our communities. Your continued financial support will ensure that we continue to provide trauma informed, client-centered services to Individuals experiencing domestic violence, sexual violence, and child abuse/neglect.

If you have any questions or want to know how you can make a bigger impact in 2026, please contact me. Thank you for supporting survivors of abuse and Safe Passage!

Sincerely,  
Adrienne Woods, ESQ.  
Executive Director  
Safe Passage, Inc.

### Ministry Support Online



**Contributions may be made from the QR code.**

Spring is upon us which means we have SO much to look forward to! We have two very important dates coming up!

1. Easter Egg Hunt: This will take place on Saturday April 4th at 10:00 am. We will need all volunteers at the church by 9:15. The youth will help to hide the eggs like they always do before doing their own Youth Scavenger Egg Hunt.

-We are in need of pre-filled eggs in order to make this event happen! If you are able to donate, please drop them off in the church office.

2. VBS: This year we are doing the Snowball Mountain Challenge! Our focus will be on Philippians 4:13! Please mark your calendars as the dates of VBS are June 22nd-25th! We are in need of volunteers so please let me know where you would like to volunteer! Below is who we have so far and how many more are needed as well.

### VBS Volunteer List

-Setup Crew- We will need ALL hands-on deck on June 21st at 6:00.

-Kitchen/Dinner/Cleanup- David Chambers will lead the VBS Food Committee! The VBS Food Committee will be in charge of coming up with the menu, shopping for the food and preparing the food. Volunteers so far to help David are Debbie Fulmer and Jesse Merritt (Wednesday night only). We need at least 3 more volunteers!

-3's & 4's Class Leaders- Need 3 volunteers

-Kinder & 1st Grade Leaders- Beth Smith, Sue Burns and Jen Marotta

-2nd & 3rd Grade Leaders- Need 3 volunteers

-4th & 5th Grade Leaders- Need 3 volunteers

-Arts & Crafts- Esther Bailey, Ernice Bookout and Debbie Darby

-Music- Need 2 volunteers

-Storytelling- James Platt and Leslie Platt but still need 3-4 more volunteers.

-Recreation- Susan Hibbard but we need 2- 3 more volunteers.

-Photographer and Decorations- Derek Marotta

-Floaters- Debbie Fulmer and Jesse Merritt (on Wednesday only)

Please reach out to me on which group you would like to volunteer with while there are still many options available! ☺

I hope you all are just as excited about these upcoming events as I am!!

Thanks for always being such an AMAZING church body!

Laura Merritt

## Announcement to Congregation

### Requesting Suggestions for Potential Elders

The Congregational Nominating Committee (CNC) is currently seeking church members to be active Elders, serving as members of the Session for a 3-year term, others to fill any vacancy left by a former elder's unexpired term. We are seeking persons

- \* Whose personal lives reflect a commitment to the universal love of Christ, with dedication to live love's ethic best as they are able
  - \* Who are committed to the mission and ministry of Bethesda Presbyterian Church
  - \* Who have been active members of Bethesda for at least one year
  - \* Who are willing and able to give a considerable amount of time and energy to our church every month, attend Session meetings and committee meetings, and work between meetings to implement and complete projects
  - \* Who are willing and able to provide effective leadership for any committee they may serve as chairperson, and for the congregation as a whole
- Whose style of ministry is not that of "lone ranger," but rather a commitment to the sharing of teamwork

The position of elder is a ministry of *Discernment and Governance*. Elders partner with the minister in leading and guiding the spiritual faith and pastoral care of the congregation.

Elders are ordained and are described in the Book of Order as "persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they "lord it over" the congregation (Matt 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life". Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel, both within the church and in the world."

Ruling Elders are decision makers of the Church ("the Board of Directors"). They constitute the voting body of the church, decide policy, control finances, oversee the use of the building and interact with Presbytery and outside groups.

Please send or give your suggestions to a member of the Congregational Nominating Committee (CNC). Every name submitted will be carefully considered, choosing among them a slate of nominees to be elected by the congregation.

2026 Congregational Nominating Committee

Laura Merritt

Steve Childers

Esther Bailey

Susan Hibbard

Johnny Walker

Debbie Fulmer

# Providence Presbytery Leaderfest Seminar

## March 28, 2026

Unity Presbyterian Church / 303 Tom Hall St / Fort Mill, SC 29715

**Presented by Stephen Ministries, St. Louis, featuring Joel Bretscher**

The mental health crisis has been a growing challenge in society for decades, with numerous proposed solutions that have fallen short of resolving the problem. Building on more than two years of research, Stephen Ministries St. Louis has developed a bold new approach for the church to make a far-reaching difference in this area. Come and hear about this unexpected, powerful way for you, your small group, and all of our congregations to help solve the mental health crisis.

### Schedule

8:30–9:00 a.m. **Check-In and Continental Breakfast**

9:00 a.m.–Noon **Presentations**

- How Your Congregation Can Help Combat the Health Crisis: A New, Expanded Approach
- What Jesus Teaches Us about Empathy

Noon–12:45 p.m. **Lunch (included with registration)**

- Optional Presentation on Getting a Church Involved with Stephen Ministry

12:45–3:00 p.m. **Presentations**

- Unexpected Ways to Care
- What We've Learned about Grief and Relating to Those Who Are Grieving



**Scan the QR code on the Left to Register**

\$20 registration fee

Space is limited. Pre-Registration by March 21 is requested.



**Joel Bretscher** has been a member of the staff at Stephen Ministries in St. Louis since 1995. As Program Director, Joel leads the writing and editing team in the development of books, videos, training materials, courses, and other resources.

He is the lead author of *The Gift of Empathy* and coauthor of *Caring Assertiveness*, both award-winning books.



## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

<b>3</b>	<b>Alan Smith, Jr., Lisa Percival</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Edie Nettles</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Lane Russell, Jennifer Marotta</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Joni Walker</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Mills Sharpe</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Charles Williamson, IV</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>Conor Goodband, Anne Caueny</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Irvin Jones</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Katie Burns, Ainsley Darby, III</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>Dorothy Williamson</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>Steven Dickson, Jr.</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>Chad Russell</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>Karen Boyd, Easton Pennington</b>

### Attendance for February

	<u>Morning Worship</u>	<u>Sunday School</u>	<u>Online Worship</u>
	In-person		Views
2/01/26	Snow - no church		30
2/08/26	43	26	31
2/15/26	36	23	13
2/18/26 Ash Wednesday	37		6
2/22/26	50	30	16

## REMEMBER IN PRAYER

### AT BETHESDA

Ruth Rawdon  
Anita Ferguson Buffolino  
Frank Allen  
Jonathan Lauckner  
Margaret Moore  
Eddie Smith  
Benny Coxton  
Bill Dover  
Eddie Allan Smith - hospital with respiratory issues  
Ricky & Debbie Simpson and family  
Gene Cornwell (Mac)  
Hildegard Bell  
Steve Dickson, Jr.

### DEATHS

Mary Jack (Jackie) Johnson Saboley 2/21/26 -  
Graveside service 2:00 pm on Church 2/28/26  
Bethesda Presbyterian

### 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 COUMMNITY 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  
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  
Charlie Ruffalo (Substation II owner) cancer

# Bethesda Presbyterian Church

4858 McConnells Highway York, SC 29745

Phone: (803)328-1360

Email: [bethesda@comporium.net](mailto:bethesda@comporium.net)

Website: [www.bethesdapres.org](http://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*

*Directory of Music Ministry - LaRayne Hall*

*Sexton - Donna Hagler*