



The Echo

September 2024

A publication of Bethany United Methodist Church, Weyers Cave, VA

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If you would like ... and currently don't receive the church newsletter and other important updates by email, please send your email address to Cindy Kite at office.bethany@gmail.com.



*We invite you to join us
for our*

70TH YEAR HOMECOMING SERVICE

AT BETHANY UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH

Sunday, September 8, 2024

*9:30 am
with lunch to follow*



From the Pastor's Desk . . .

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Have I ever told you all how grateful I am to be your pastor? Well, if you haven't heard me say it recently, now you have. This summer has been jam-packed with meetings, celebrations, and lots of preparing for a BUSY fall. But amid the busy-ness; I was grateful to get away as I got to hit the reset button and recharge my own batteries during vacation time. Not every church is always so open to their pastors, taking time to be renewed and refueled, so I am appreciative that here at Bethany, that is encouraged and received well.

As we gear up for our 70th Anniversary celebration, I know my two short years of being the pastor here are just a speck on the grand timeline of Bethany. But I have encountered so many special moments in this short time span. I would like to share just a few of them as we all reflect on each of our special moments throughout the history of this beloved church community. From being able to preside over the Lord's table monthly and bending down on my knee to offer the bread to our kiddos to watching people say yes to following Jesus at their baptism, these moments bring me so much joy. In the moments of hard times and final goodbyes, being invited into those spaces to grieve, comfort, and be present is a gift that I will never take for granted. The smiles of our

Honduran brothers and sisters when they schooled me in fútbol and taught me how to paint nails...priceless. From spending time at Valley Pike listening to your stories and life experiences; to catching up in the Narthex after Sunday morning worship, it truly is the people that make Bethany UMC so special. God is truly doing something beautiful here; and I am grateful to be able to witness just a taste of it.

So, continue to be people who strive to be Christ's hands, feet, and voice. Continue to listen to the cries of our neighbors and the shouts of joy from our children. Continue to find ministry opportunities that fit your gifts and talents and serve fearlessly for the Kingdom of God. For as Mark 10:45 tells us, *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Blaine



Attention Young Adults

The Young Adults will be gathering at Staunton Lanes on Friday September 13th at 8pm for an evening of bowling and fellowship. If you are ages 18-30ish and looking for something to do, come on out and let's have some fun.

The church will be covering the fee for your shoes and lane rental.



Missions Update

by Lori Mooney

Can you believe it is September? We are going on ¾ of the year being gone. How has this happened? Is time speeding up?

Thank you to those who went out to eat on the fundraising nights to support the Honduras mission trip that Blaine and Gary will be attending here in a couple weeks with Friends of Barnabas. Or thank you for making direct donations to support them. We appreciate all the help. They will be doing a final count here soon to see how much we are from reaching our goal. There might be one more final push to ask for donations, so if you haven't already donated, please feel free to put an extra donation in the offering plate and be sure to mark it for Honduras mission trip. Thanks!!

Harrisonburg Social Services had asked our church for new or slightly

used games or toys to help stock their office. If you all are cleaning out and want to donate some toys or games that are not in bad condition, please drop them off at the church and we can get them routed their way.

Things soon to come include buying gifts for Apple Tree project with Kingsway Outreach, Truck or Treat at the Community Center, Blood Drive, Ringing the Bell for the Salvation Army and taking up cold weather donations for them, too, and who knows what else might be up our sleeves that we come across and feel the need to help with. Keep your eyes peeled to see these announcements and help as you can.

Mission spotlight of the month: RISE of Harrisonburg.

RISE is a community rooted in God's risk-taking love, life-changing grace, passionate outreach and open-armed acceptance. We welcome people



from all walks of life and all walks of faith to join us our journey. Everyone is welcome at RISE. We seek to be a place free of judgment and full of love. If you would like to support RISE, please earmark your check for an extra donation.

If you know of someone who needs help, please let us know.

Lori Mooney, co-chair, 540-820-7394, Brownsugarcookie@yahoo.com

Sarah Simmons, co-chair, 540-292-0956, sarahsimmons4@aol.com

Young at Hearts

will meet for their monthly luncheon on Tuesday, Sept. 3 at 12 noon. Join us at Hometown Grill in Staunton for some good food, fun and some of the best fellowship around. All folks, 55 or older, but still "young at heart" are invited to join us! If you haven't ever attended a get-together with us, give it a try. You'll be glad you did. And it's the perfect opportunity to get some fellowship time with your church family! Please contact Leslie Wagoner at 540-470-8603 or lmwagon@gmail.com.



Caring Cards

invites you to join them on Tuesday, Sept. 10 at 10 am to write cards and notes of encouragement to our members who might need a little encouragement, are sick, or deserve a thank you, etc. As we write, we have a good time fellowshiping together. Please join us! Questions? Contact Lori Mooney or Becky McCarty.



Coffee with the Pastor

Join Pastor Blaine for coffee, or whatever, on Thursday, Sept. 12 from 9:30 am - 12 pm at Valley Pike's Rumor Mill. It will be a fun time to just relax and talk with Pastor Blaine and other folks. And you know

Pastor Blaine will want to talk college football!!



Worship Meeting

There will be a Worship Meeting on Monday, Sept. 16 at 6 pm. Please let Jackie Dunsmore know if you are unable to attend.

Donuts & Devotions

Attention all men! You are invited to join us for Donuts & Devotions on Saturday, Sept. 21 at 8 am. There will be coffee drinking. Donut eating. Fellowshiping. Devotion sharing. And fun conversation. There's no commitment. Come when you can.



Virginia Annual Conference 2024

by Rosemary Wagoner

I was inspired this year at the Virginia Annual Conference and have been praying about how to communicate this to you. I will be glad to talk to anyone who wants to hear more about how I was moved by the speakers at Annual Conference.

The night before the call to order there was a Juneteenth Celebration. This was a great experience that I hope we can have again. It was wonderful to hear some personal experiences and share what our African American brothers and sisters have had to endure over the years. Rev. Ellis Crum says that Juneteenth is a Celebration of Freedom and the “Now What?” God is doing something new. We need to be open to where he leads us.

Every Annual Conference session is opened by the oldest and youngest members offering prayer and singing “And Yet We Are Alive” a hymn written by Charles Wesley.

The theme this year was “A Conference in Three Movements”. This year was an overview with the next three years concentrating on each of the movements. The movements driven by the Holy Spirit are; “Theological”, “Historical”, and “Missional”.

An uplifting part of Annual Conference was the preaching and teaching. The preachers this year were Rev. Dr. Michael Beck, Rev. Dr. Rodrigo Cruz, and Rev. Woo Kang. Each of these speakers spoke in depth about the number of people in our circles who don’t know the Lord, and therefore what our role is in sharing the wondrous love of God. Michael Beck shared the results from the Pew Research and the American Church Research Project that showed

that only 20% of people attend church regularly; while another 20% of people don’t attend regularly, but will say they do. An additional 20% of people say they would attend if a friend asked them and 40% of people have no interest in attending church. All of the speakers spoke about people who have been harmed by the church. Church harm is real. Real life accounts were given of church folks who were lied to, not cared for, and at times were pushed out because of their beliefs or lived experiences.

The best way to respond to church harm, in the eyes of the speakers, was to really channel this new movement when church folks are taking church to those outside of their walls. These are called Fresh Expressions. A great example of a Fresh Expression that I liked was about a member of one of the churches who started holding fellowship time at his home dog park. Another one that amazed me was when Michael Beck talked about holding worship in a Tattoo Parlor. Martha Stokes, the Conference Lay Leader, spoke about the role of Laity in helping bring people to Christ. She also emphasized reaching out of the church confines.

All of these examples prodded me to pray about how Bethany could take the church to those who don’t know God or who have been wounded by a church. I challenge all members of Bethany to be thinking and praying for ways we can “take church” to our neighbors. By doing this, we can show God’s love and kindness to all those who may not expect it. This is another reason why we are pushing the Bethany Bridge Builders, as this would be the goal.

The Bishop talked about the things we have in common and how we need to concentrate on those things. We all love the Lord and are called to share his love with those around us.

Of course we had to have some business to discuss. Here are some of the key items.

- The Report from the Just Compensation Task Force formed a study of Clergy Compensation. The Task Force asked to continue working on this and a motion was made to look into providing Health Care Coverage for part-time appointees.
- The Conference Budget over the past several years, has been working to reduce apportionments. Apportionments are what each church is asked to contribute to help support the work of the VAUMC. If we add part-time pastors and extension ministers this will impact the Apportionments. I feel it is worth it to take care of our Pastors.
- The Site Selection Committee recommended having the 2026 and 2027 Annual Conference at the Atlantic Union Bank Center, the new arena at JMU. The motion passed, so both of those annual conferences will be held in our backyard. I hope people at Bethany will volunteer to help with the session and attend some of the Worship experiences.

The Annual Conference ended with the Retirement and Ordination services. Blaine and Ashley took their next step in becoming Provisional Elders. Congratulations to Blaine and Ashley.



My Time at Bethany by Tom Lee

Greetings to the Bethany UMC family,

It is truly a joy to write to you as you anticipate the upcoming celebration of your 70TH Anniversary. Sincere thanks to Pastor Blaine for extending the invitation.

I had the honor of serving as pastor of Bethany from July 1984 through July 1988. Upon arrival I was fresh out of seminary. Having previously served as a student pastor; Bethany was my first full time appointment. I have often reflected on how enriching those brief four years were for me. The experience was invaluable in preparing for subsequent years of ministry.

I remember Bethany as being inspiringly welcoming, encouraging, and intentional about being faithful. For starters, no one entered the doors for Sunday morning worship without a warm greeting from Bev Roller. Bev was quite the quintessential evangelist. With notepad in hand, he welcomed every visitor, recorded name and address and notes about the conversation. Soon afterward and for weeks he checked in with a call or visit to extend appreciation for their interest in attending. Bev's genuine love for the Lord and people were contagious, and without a doubt, to his credit were responsible for the congregation's growth for decades. I learned much more about ministry from observing and consulting with him than I did in my studies at Duke Divinity School. Honestly, it should not surprise anyone if Bev has taken St. Peter's place at heaven's gate!

The genuine friendliness of the congregation was exceptional. Back in the mid-1980s a regular visit from the pastor was both welcomed and expected, even if unannounced. The friendships gained by listening to stories, sharing in lighthearted conversations and tears of sorrow during those visits helped connect me to wonderfully real people and earn their trust. There were times when I was the one ministered to. Among the invaluable lessons I received: Not to take myself too seriously, keep the sermons short, and how to stay out of trouble. The coffee was always best just up the road from the parsonage at Pat Lynns' home. So were the many hours of wise counsel at Pat and Eddie's table!

Adequate space was a real concern in the eighties. One of the Sunday School classes was meeting in the closet of the old fellowship hall, attendance at worship and social events



was nearing capacity. Around the fall of 1985 it was clear to the leadership that a building project for expansion was crucial to assure Bethany had space to grow. Once sparked, that dream quickly blossomed, and within two years the facility was doubled in size. I remember well the congregations'

enthusiasm to take on such a bold project and how people gladly sacrificed to see it accomplished. Those were exciting and awe-inspiring times. God was truly smiling on Bethany Church!

Truth is, God has always smiled upon you. What a rich heritage! 173 years ago, a faithful few birthed Bethany's mother church on Necked Creek. 103 years later in April of 1954 their descendants gathered as the cornerstone was laid for the building on the hill where you now worship. As I scan the leadership roster, nearing your 70th anniversary, it is clear that some of the descendants from Naked Creek Church, and some of the fine people who were serving during my tenure are still carrying the torch along with those who have joined since. Your faithfulness endures and each of you is deserving of commendation. You deserve to be commended also for the broad scope of opportunities you currently provide to connect with one another, to grow in discipleship, and to reach out to people in need within your community. I pray you will remain steadfast in continuing to be a vital church in our broken world and in extending God's grace to all within your reach.

Finally, I retired in July 2021 and now reside with my wife Pattie and mother-in-law, Patsy Joyner who is receiving hospice care. Pattie and I are blessed with seven grandchildren, whose company we enjoy immensely. Unfortunately, we are unable to participate in the September 8 celebration due to a schedule conflict. We will certainly be with you in spirit and hope to visit soon.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Tom

70th Anniversary Homecoming



We are celebrating our 70th anniversary on Sunday, Sept. 8 with a special worship service with special music, guests, and other surprises. Rev. Dr. Victor Gomez, our District Superintendent, will be delivering the message that morning. As we are expecting a packed house, please make sure to welcome our visitors and make sure they have a seat in the sanctuary!

A special luncheon will follow the worship service. Chicken and BBQ, prepared by the Michael family, will be provided. We need other food items such as mac & cheeses, green beans, etc. Please check out the sign up sheet at the Welcome Center to see what we are still in need of and sign up to bring something. We want to make sure we have

enough food for our Bethany families and our guests. I know, as always, folks are slow to sign up, but always come through! While signing up for food, take a look to see where you can help with the preparation for this special day!



Attention anyone who has participated in a Bethany choir, a cantata, or special music of any kind at anytime in the past! For our 70th anniversary worship service, we would like to have all the folks who have been part of our music here at Bethany sing a well-known hymn, "How Great is Thy Faithfulness" at the end of the service. Questions? Please contact Jackie Dunsmore.

Last minute invitations can still be mailed out if you have someone you would like to have invited. Please give the names and addresses to Cindy Kite so she can get an invitation in the mail. If you see the announcement on Facebook, please share it on your Facebook page!

Treasurer's Report by Cindy Kite

September already?! Where did August go?! Where did the summer go? Move over green leaves and warm temperatures for leaves of red, yellow, orange and brown and sweaters and sweatshirts. Brisk mornings and best of all, college football!!

Bethany had many events and fellowships this summer. Our kick-off to summer fellowship and picnic, our youth summer mission trip, annual conference, and a women's Bible study. We honored Louise Jennings and Kingsway Ministries. We had a river baptism, our annual ice cream social, promotion Sunday and welcomed new members into our church family. And started preparations for our 70th Anniversary Homecoming! Not to mention the many meetings, Young at Hearts luncheons, Caring Cards, Donuts & Devotions and Pastor Blaine's coffee hours. When many churches slow down, Bethany just keeps moving along and even moves a little quicker than in the spring.

None of this would have been possible if it weren't for our faithful church family! Your attendance, your willingness to take on coordinating and planning events, your willingness to participate in these events and your faithful giving to support these events and the many other ministries we have here at Bethany. During the summer, most church's finances plummet. This summer, we continued to give even though attendance was certainly down most Sundays. At the end of May we were behind our budget by 15.1%. Today we are only 10% behind our budget! That's awesome! However, we would really like to make up that 10% as we move into the fall. If you've missed giving a couple of Sundays this summer, I encourage you to try to make those up. I challenge you to make up that 10% by the end of October! God has a plan for Bethany. We can keep moving towards that plan with your help!

August 21 - Week 33		
Budget	226,345.00	
Where We Should Be		142,847.43
Where We Are		<u>128,496.13</u>
Deficit of		14,351.30
Net Percentage		-10%

We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.

(Winston S. Churchill)

One Call Now ... our new automated call system

We are implementing a new automated call system here at Bethany to keep the Bethany family more connected. Pastor Blaine will use this phone line to ask for immediate prayer requests, share important announcements, and any other thing Bethany related.

What we need from you is to give us what phone line you would like this automated call to go to. Sign up on the sheet at the Welcome Center or email Cindy at office.bethany@gmail.com and give your name, email address (if you have one) and the ONE phone number you'd like to use for your household. If you have questions, please contact Cindy or Pastor Blaine. **IF YOU DON'T SIGN UP AT THE WELCOME CENTER OR CONTACT THE OFFICE. YOU WILL NOT BE INCLUDED ON THE AUTOMATED CALL LIST.**

New or Used Toys

The Mission Team is collecting new or gently used games, toys, or activities. These will go to Child Protective Services in the Harrisonburg/Rockingham waiting areas. There will be a basket in the foyer for your donations. Thank you in advance for helping with this project.



Please be in prayer for ...

Members:

Laura Lucas, Tom & Jan Gorden,
Don & Hazel Truslow

Extended Members:

Jon Roller - son of Randy & Annie Roller, nephew of Julie Ritchie, Susie - food pantry neighbor, Layla - niece of Charlotte Saufley, friend of Amy Michael, Krista - friend of Lorna Frizzelle, colleague of Rosemary Wagoner, Carl - brother of Gary Ruleman



September

- 3 Lori Mooney
- 4 Audrey Bradshaw
- 6 Happy (Laiken) Huffer
- 8 Randy Kite
- 9 Autumn Johnson
- 11 Mary Beth Schwab
- 12 Bridgett Crawford
- 15 Grant Simmons
- 18 Hattie Castle
- 20 Sandra Elkins
- 22 Ben Michael
- 24 Elva Shifflett
- 27 Weezer Crawford

October

- 1 Carolyn Roller
Tara Stroop
- 2 Wayne Frizzelle
- 3 Linda Byers
- 5 Josh Unger
- 6 Mary Beth Hill
- 10 Emma Riddle
- 16 Maecy Anne Frizzelle
- 21 Barbara Somers
Wyatt Dunsmore
- 22 Jan Fulton
- 23 Tom Ott
Tobias Casey
- 25 Joe Morris

- 29 Lois Huffer
Amy Michael
- 31 Leslie Wagoner



September 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 LABOR DAY Office Closed	3 12 pm - Young at Hearts Luncheon at Hometown Grill in Staunton	4	5 <i>Grateful Thankful Blessed</i>	6	7
8 70TH ANNIVERSARY HOMECOMING SERVICE & LUNCHEON	9 national GRANDPARENTS DAY	10 10 am - Caring Cards	11	12 9:30 am - 12 pm Coffee with the Pastor at Valley Pike 	13 8 pm - Young Adult Bowling at Staunton Lanes 	14
15	16 6 pm - Worship Meeting	17	18 happy national cheeseburger day!	19	20 October Newsletter Articles Due	21 8 am Pastor Blaine & Gary Lucas leave for Honduras
22 <i>happy fall y'all!</i>	23	24	25 	26	27	28 Pastor Blaine & Gary Lucas return from Honduras
29 	30	<i>be thankful</i>				

Cindy on Vacation



Bethany United Methodist Church

3700 Lee Highway
Weyers Cave, VA 24486

www.mybethanyumc.org



70TH ANNIVERSARY

HOMECOMING

Sunday, Sept. 8

The Echo

"The Echo"

A Publication of Bethany United Methodist Church
3700 Lee Highway, Weyers Cave, VA 24486

(540) 234-8880

www.mybethanyumc.org

Blaine Oliver-Thomas, Pastor

(850) 508-7245

blaineoliver-thomas@vaumc.org

Dale Roller, Praise Band Leader

Bridgett Crawford, Youth Leader

Cindy Kite, Secretary/Treasurer

Danny Perry, Sexton

Oct. Newsletter Deadline: Sept. 20, 2024

Please submit articles to Cindy Kite at
office.bethany@gmail.com

Webmaster: bethanyumc.website@gmail.com



connect. grow. serve.

At Bethany we ...

Connect with God in community

Grow in our likeness to Jesus Christ

Serve our neighbors