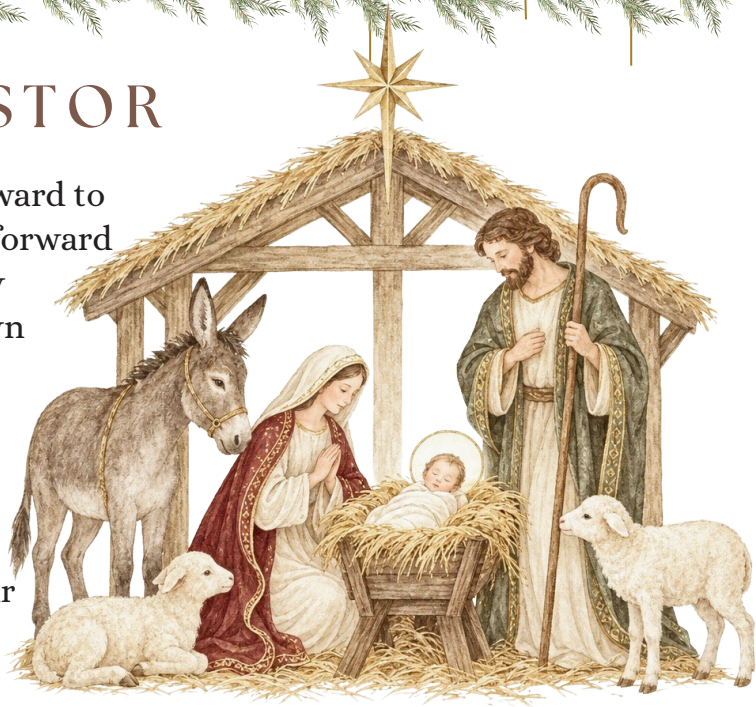
DECEMBER 2026

CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Monthly Updates from Bethany Presbyterian Church

FROM OUR SENIOR PASTOR



Advent for so many of us is a time when we look forward to peoplecoming home. Parents of kids in college look forward to kids being home after finals are completed, it may mean that kids who have left home to begin their own families will be making a stop to Grandmom and Grandpops house. Lisa and I always make our way Sandy Lake, PA where she grew up. All of us love going home. Of course this is not always a season of joy for everyone. For many this will be the first year when someone cannot make it home, or the first year there is one less place setting. Yet, we have hope in this season as we anticipate the coming of the Christ Child. All of this hope exists because God chooses not to stay home. God makes his way into a far and strange country.

Advent does not ask us to preform cheer; it announces that God came to a strange and distant land. God does not expect us to make everything perfect for Christmas, try as might. God comes perfectly into and imperfect world. That is cause enough and more for celebration. And celebrate we will this month. Anticipation of the coming of Jesus will be experienced thought the pages in this month's newsletter. In here you will see pictures from Friendsgiving. You will also see information about this year's Canata which will be held on December 13 th . BYG has a Christmas Progressive dinner coming up, the Deacons are hosting their annual Southwood Boys Home Christmas party and so much more.

These are all great things to invite family and friends to as well, especially the Cantata on December 13th. December is a great time to grow in fellowship and faith. With so much excitement in the air we know the ministry and mission of Bethany Church which God has gifted us with is surely something others would love to be a part of. We look forward to being with you all in the coming days.

In Christ,
Pastor Brian



FROM OUR ASSOCIATE PASTOR

In the basement of our house is an entertainment area, and hanging on the walls are movie posters of films that have intrigued or influenced me in some way. Hanging in the center, above my couch, is a poster of It's a Wonderful Life (which has its 80th anniversary this year!). I watch this every year during the Christmas season and it is one of my all time favorite films.

The story follows George Bailey, a young man with plenty of ambition who seems to find his plans for a grand future stifled time and time again. He dreams of getting out of Bedford Falls, seeing the world, and becoming an architect. As the story unfolds, George continually puts his own wishes aside for the sake of others. Each time, he convinces himself that it will only be for a little while. Eventually, he'll get his opportunity to leave and pursue the life he has always imagined. But that opportunity never seems to come. One thing leads to another, and the life George has planned for himself continues to be put on hold. In one of the movie's defining moments, his uncle accidentally misplaces money that was supposed to be deposited at the bank. George realizes the consequences could be devastating for him and the old Building & Loan. Seemingly penniless and feeling that he has nowhere left to turn, he reaches a point of complete despair. An angel named Clarence steps in to save him, but not before showing George what life would have been like if he had never existed.

Through the rest of the story, we begin to see just how much George has impacted the lives of those around him. The things he had often viewed as sacrifices and missed opportunities had become some of the most meaningful parts of his life. By the end, George comes to realize that he is, in fact, the richest man in town. The dreams of seeing the world and building skyscrapers a hundred stories high never materialized the way he had once dreamed of, but his newfound wealth came from the relationships and community that surrounded him.

Waiting is a difficult thing to do and we don't always wait patiently. We can become so focused on what we are waiting for that we lose sight of what is happening around us. We wonder when things will finally fall into place or when a difficult season will end. George Bailey knows something about that kind of waiting. For much of his life, he is waiting for the opportunity to become the person he has always imagined himself to be. It takes an extraordinary set of circumstances for him to see that his life has been meaningful all along.

Psalm 130 says I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning. As we enter the season of Advent, we are reminded that waiting is also an important part of our life of faith. Advent is, at its heart, a season of waiting. It invites us to step into the story of God's people who waited generations for the promised Messiah. They lived in a world that was far from what God had promised, longing for deliverance and peace. They did not yet know how or when God would fulfill those promises, but they continued to hope.

Grace & Peace
-Pastor Justin



MUSIC NOTES FROM NADINA

I've always loved Advent, and that stems back to early childhood practices that helped us draw closer to God. Advent calendars, Advent wreath/candles, traditions of visiting nativities, caroling, helping mom make special cookies that we weren't allowed to eat for days (another symbol of WAITING?!), grab bag preparations- and all of this anticipation and waiting....always culminated with brilliant and amazing Christmas itself! Huge celebrations at church- whether family style services with pageants, Midnight Mass with my great Uncle singing solos...huge celebrations at home, with caroling at the piano, food a plenty, (ALL THOSE COOKIES)....I have rich memories of December that shaped my faith life! It's no surprise that as a Music Minister, this is also my favorite season liturgically. It's this preparation, the planning something special, the anticipation of the gifts we have to share, the themes of each Advent candle that help us center on what we are waiting for! Peace, Hope, Joy, Love- Hallelujah, Our Savior is Born!

We have so many special music offerings to share in worship this month! Music in worship is a way that I draw closer to God and I pray that you each get to experience a closeness to God through our expressions, as well. The staff handbells helped us to "Ring" in the Advent seasons on the 1st Sunday of Advent, already passed now... and look at the incredible ways we can draw closer to God in worship this month!



December 3rd

Caroling with Bloom at the Bethany Nativity Creche Light Up! 6:30 pm

December 13th

Cantata Sunday 10:45 am with special guest musicians in the choir and our ensembles, and please enjoy the Men's Advent Breakfast!!



December 17th

Bloom at the Gazebo- Caroling in the Streets! 6:30 pm

December 24th

Special music from our youth at the Family Service 5 pm;
and Staff Handbells and Bethany Choir at our Candlelight Service at 7 pm

We are SO blessed at Bethany with the gifts we share together in fellowship, in worship, and in our relationship with the baby Jesus, our King in the manger, that we each celebrate in all of these special ways this season! Happy Advent and a Blessed and Merry Christmas to you all!

YOUTH MINISTRY UPDATES FROM ABBIE

There is something special about December in youth ministry. Between the laughter, friendships, traditions, and excitement of the Christmas season, it is a wonderful reminder of how blessed we are to have a community where our students can grow in faith and grow together.

We have a fun month ahead! On **December 6th,** we'll gather for our **December Group Night**, enjoying an evening of fellowship, fun, and time spent growing together in God's Word.



December 11th–13th, we'll head to Laurelville Mud Weekend! We are so excited for this weekend and all the memories that will come with it. These retreats are about so much more than the activities. They're about friendships, stepping outside our comfort zones, sharing experiences, and creating the kind of memories our students will carry with them long after the weekend is over.

We'll wrap up our December activities on **December 20th with our Progressive Dinner!** We'll visit several homes, share some delicious food, enjoy one another's company, and celebrate the Christmas season together. It's a sweet opportunity to slow down, enjoy the people around us, and make a few more memories before Christmas arrives.



As we celebrate Advent, I hope our students are reminded that the greatest gift of this season isn't something wrapped beneath a tree, but the gift of Jesus. My prayer is that our youth continue to discover what it means to know Him, follow Him, and share His love with the people around them.

I am so thankful for each student who walks through our doors, every family who supports what we do, and every volunteer and church member who invests in the lives of our young people. Youth ministry is about more than Sunday nights and special events. It's about building relationships, growing in faith, and reminding our students that they have a place where they are loved, welcomed, and belong.

Upcoming Events

**All events subject to change. Please look on the Bethany website (www.bethanypresby.org/events) for the most up to date calendar of events.*

UPCOMING CHURCH LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

No Teams Meetings unless scheduled by Team Chairs
There is a joint Session and Deacon meeting on Tuesday December 1st



THROUGHOUT ADVENT

Throughout Advent, we will have readings at each service that will teach us more about Advent and to help us lean into this season of waiting! You will also find various advent devotionals in the Welcome Center! Check out the numerous options for everyone in the family.



BLOOM LIGHT UP NIGHT - THURSDAY DECEMBER 3RD

Join us in the Welcome Center for Hot Chocolate and Cookies! Dress Warmly as we will be heading outside to sing Christmas Carols and light the Nativity Scene for all to see!

SECRET SISTERS REVEAL LUNCHEON - DECEMBER 6TH

The 2026 Secret Sisters will be having their Reveal Luncheon on Sunday December 6th at 12:00pm in Fellowship Hall. If you have any questions, please contact Pat Mishizen at 412-417-3541 or Judy Davidson at 412-343-7530.



CANTATA SUNDAY AND ADVENT BREAKFAST - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13TH

Join us Sunday December 13th for two beloved annual traditions at Bethany. The full Cantata will be during the 10:45amservice, the 8:15 service will only have some portions of the Cantata music. After each of the services, head down to the Great Room to enjoy the Advent Breakfast hosted by the Men's Ministries!

DOOR DECORATING CONTEST

The staff & volunteers at Bethany have been working hard and planning their doors for a great competition! We need YOU to vote! Starting Sunday December 6th, please follow the directional signs to check out all of the decorated doors and vote for your favorite!



December Birthdays

Joyce Bartolomeo
Douglas Bovard
Tera Brickner
Lauren Butt
Lori Calgaro
Louella Campbell
Kristen Carlberg
Donna Carman
Gary Casciola
Lynne Cawley
Ronin Colvin
Carol Cowser
Sheri Darpino
Charles Edwards
Mason Gastgeb
Beckie Harbison
Karen Harkins
Cindy Kain
Nikolas Krieg
Elizabeth Lacher
Karen Lucas
Naudia Lutz
John McCans
Bonnie Miller
James Myers
Thomas Nass
Karalee Nelson
Tyler Nicholson
Halie Pattison
Kelli Pattison
Pamela Petrow
Barbara Rahr
Maggie Regan
Kris Sabin
Dawn Salerno
Karl Salvini
Bridget Schneider
Rakesh Sepuri
Landon Smith
Meagan Smith
Rick Smith
Chris Snatchko
Elinor Stout
Abby Sysak
Michael Talerico
Krista Trimmer
Devin Underwood
Nolan Veneski
Michael Vennum
Kelly Wilhelm
Thomas Willhite

2026 CONTRIBUTIONS

As the end of the year approaches, please keep in mind that all contributions for 2026 must be received by the church no later than December 31, 2026. IRS general rules state that a check placed in the church offering plate in January 2027 cannot be recorded as a 2026 contribution, even if the check has been dated 2026. The only exception to this rule would be for contributions that are mailed and postmarked in 2026. These contributions would be deductible in 2026 even though the contributions were not received until 2027.



CONDOLENCES

The Sympathy of the congregation is extended to Maxine Berton and Joy and Al Heaps and their families on the passing of Marlene Haley, their beloved sister and sister-in-law, and to Ralph, Mark, James and Scott Haley and their families on the passing of their beloved mother who entered the Church Triumphant on October 27, 2026.



December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	Nov 30	1 **10:00 AM** Choir Practice **6:30 PM** Coed Volleyball **7:00 PM** ALANON	2 **9:30 AM** Preschool **10:00 AM** Fellowship of Prayer **11:30 AM** Wednesday Knitters **6:30 PM** Troop 2 Scouts	3 **9:00 AM** Quilters **12:00 PM** Rotary **6:30 PM** BLOOM LIGHT UP NIGHT **6:30 PM** Bloom **7:00 PM** Dartball	4 **9:30 AM** Preschool **12:00 PM** Lunch Bunch	5
6 2nd Sunday in Advent COMMUNION **8:15 AM** Worship : Traditional Worship Service **9:30 AM** Sunday School **10:45 AM** Worship **12:00 PM** Foodbank Kids Christmas Party	7 **9:30 AM** Preschool **4:30 PM** Body Carpenter Workout **6:00 PM** Youth Basketball Practice **6:30 PM** Mens Huddle Group	8 **10:00 AM** Choir Practice **6:00 PM** Al-Anon Dinner **6:30 PM** Coed Volleyball **6:45 PM** Session Team Meetings	9 **9:30 AM** Preschool **11:30 AM** Wednesday Knitters **6:30 PM** Troop 2 Scouts **7:00 PM** Choir practice	10 **9:00 AM** Quilters **9:00 AM** MOMco. AM **12:00 PM** Rotary **7:00 PM** Dartball **7:00 PM** MOMco Evening **7:30 PM** AA	11 **9:30 AM** Preschool **12:00 PM** Lunch Bunch **(4:30 PM)** BYG Laurelville Mud Weekend - December 11th-	12 **9:00 AM** SUPPLEMENTAL DIAPER BANK **9:30 AM** Cantata Rehearsal **12:00 PM** Southwood Boys Party
13 **(4:30 PM)** BYG Laurelville Mud Weekend - December 11th-13th 3rd Sunday in Advent **8:15 AM** Worship **10:45 AM Cantata** **9:00 AM** Advent Breakfast **9:30 AM** Sunday School	14 **9:30 AM** Preschool **4:30 PM** Body Carpenter Workout **6:30 PM** Mens Huddle Group	15 **10:00 AM** Choir Practice **6:30 PM** Coed Volleyball **7:00 PM** ALANON **7:00 PM** Deacons Meeting	16 **9:30 AM** Preschool **11:30 AM** Wednesday Knitters **6:00 PM** Choir Christmas Party **6:30 PM** Troop 2 Scouts	17 **9:00 AM** Quilters **12:00 PM** Golden Oldies Luncheon **6:30 PM** Bloom **7:00 PM** Dartball **7:30 PM** AA	18 **10:00 AM** Preschool Christmas Party	19 **7:30 AM** FOOD BANK
20 4th Sunday in Advent **8:15 AM** Worship : Traditional Worship Service **9:30 AM** Sunday School **10:45 AM** Worship **12:00 PM** Intercessory Prayer	21 **4:30 PM** Body Carpenter Workout **6:00 PM** Youth Basketball Practice **6:30 PM** Mens Huddle Group	22 **10:00 AM** Choir Practice **6:30 PM** Coed Volleyball **7:00 PM** Session Meeting **7:00 PM** ALANON	23 **11:30 AM** Wednesday Knitters **6:30 PM** Troop 2 Scouts **6:30 PM** Women's Volleyball **7:00 PM** Choir practice	24 CHRISTMAS EVE **5:00 PM** Family Service **7:00 PM** Candlelight Service	25 CHRISTMAS DAY Church Office Closed	26
27 **10:00 AM** Worship	28 **4:30 PM** Body Carpenter Workout **6:00 PM** Youth Basketball Practice **6:30 PM** Mens Huddle Group	29 **10:00 AM** Choir Practice **6:30 PM** Coed Volleyball **7:00 PM** ALANON	30 **9:30 AM** Staff Hand Bell Choir **11:30 AM** Wednesday Knitters **6:30 PM** Troop 2 Scouts	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE **9:00 AM** Quilters **12:00 PM** Rotary	Jan 1	2



WWW.BETHANYPRESBY.ORG

December 20
8:15AM | 10:45AM

January 3
ONE SERVICE AT 10:00AM

December 13
FULL CANTATA AT 10:45AM

December 27
ONE SERVICE AT 10:00AM

December 13
ADVENT BREAKFAST

December 24
5:00PM | 7:00PM

First Sunday of Advent is November 29th

Christmas at Bethany

loving with the heart of Jesus

BETHANY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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