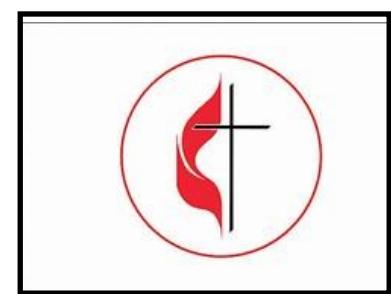


# JANUARY 2026 THE SPIRIT OF BETHEL



## Bethel United Methodist Church

6th      Glory Group at noon  
       Bethel UM Men 6:00PM fellowship hall

7th      Wednesday Night Dinner 5:30PM fellowship hall

8th      Food Pantry 2:00PM - 4:00PM

12th     Sally Starr Circle 2:00PM in church library

19th     Finance Committee 5:30PM in church library  
       Trustees 6:30PM in church library

22nd    Food Pantry 2:00PM—4:00PM

25th    Walterboro District Meeting 2:30PM

26th    Church Council 6:00PM

27th    Worship Committee 5:00PM in church library



Upcoming Events

Fellowship & Groups

Serving Together



The Pastor's Bible on Wednesdays at 10:30AM and 6:00PM.

The UMYF continues to meet Sundays at 5:30PM

Chancel choir practice Wednesdays at 6:00PM.



from the  
**PASTOR**

**"THE ENGINEER HAS TO KNOW WHERE THE CABOOSE IS!"**

I had always wondered about the signs along the railroad tracks until an old railroad man told me the numbers let the engineer know how many car-lengths there are back to the switch. If it's a long train, the engineer can't see it all but, he has to know where the last car is. He can't assume all of it is on the main line when half his train is sidetracked.

The church is no different. We must check the whole train; else we may think it is ready to roll when it is actually not. We must keep a forward look -- with an eye to the rear and think backward, too.

During Advent, the end of a year has given us an opportunity to read the signs, to see where we've been and where we're going. It always holds true, in every church that, not all of us are "up front" in our religious life, in our service to the church or in our giving. At Bethel, we are ready to move forward, but we cannot move faster than the slowest elements.

In our hurry to get on down the track we could lose part of the train. Every person is a wonderful gift of God's love and is an important contributor to the life and vitality of this great church.

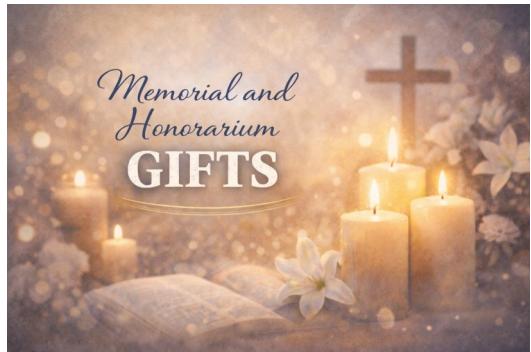
The couplings -- the ties -- that bind our hearts in Christian love are more important than anything else.

They make the engine and the caboose move together.

- Tresco E. Shannon

*"If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it."*

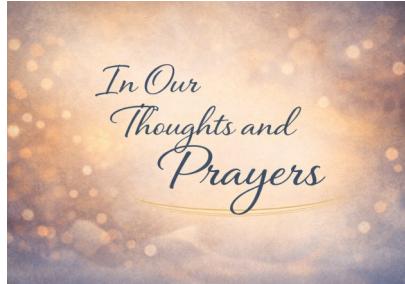
**— 1 Corinthians 12:26**



*In Memory of Wanda Carter* given by Lynn McElmurray

*In Memory of Madison Utsey* given by Tony & DeLoris Hamilton

*In Honor of Perry and Janet Buckner* given by Joan Hobbs Paster, Jean H Davison



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#### NURSING HOMES/SHUT-INS/DISTANT MEMBERS

Jane Brown, Nina Crosby, Sarah Anne Dean, Lynn Harrison, Joy Lawson, Vera Newington, Jeanine Price, Rusty Riddle, Kay Speaks, Miriam Westbury

#### MILITARY SERVICE

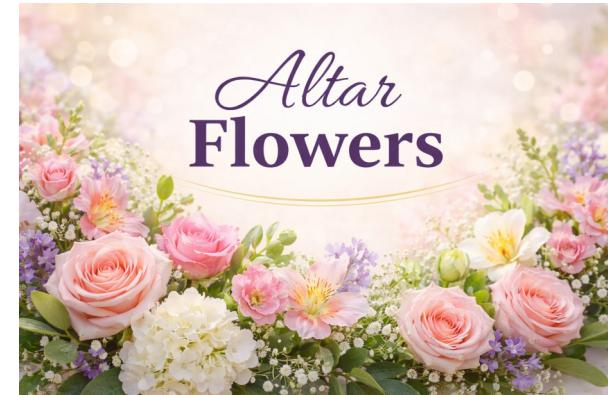
Cody Keeney, Elijah and Kaeleigh Forni, Jackson Long, Matthew Mangum, Jordan Ray, Tristan Ray

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## Altar Flowers for 2026

Dates for altar flowers for the 2026 calendar year are available for signup. This is a beautiful way to honor or remember loved ones, celebrate special dates, or simply offer praise and thanksgiving.

Please contact the church office to reserve your Sunday.



### A Prayer for Direction

Gracious God,  
as we plan for the year ahead,  
guide our steps and shape our choices.  
Help us trust where You are leading  
and walk faithfully in Your ways.

Amen.

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart... and He will make your paths straight."*

— Proverbs 3:5–6



Join us for our **first Wednesday Night Supper on January 7 at 5:30 PM**.

We'll be sharing a comforting meal of **spaghetti, bread, and salad**, along with good conversation and fellowship.

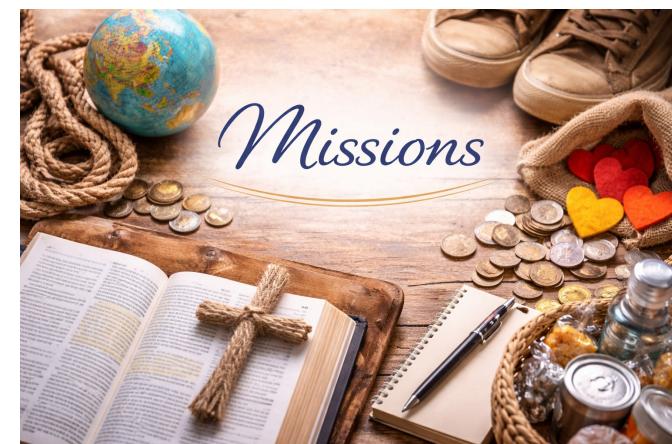
After supper, you're invited to **stay for the Pastor's Bible Study or choir practice**. This is a wonderful opportunity to connect, grow, and spend time together mid-week.

Additional activities will be added as the year progresses, and we look forward to seeing how these evenings continue to grow. The entire church family is welcome!

As we begin a new year, we want to share just how much your generosity has meant to our community. Through your faithful support, individuals and families across **Colleton County** have received food, clothing, and assistance with clean laundry. Because of you, we were also able to support meaningful outreach efforts such as **First Steps** and **Shop with a Hero at Christmas**, as well as contribute to ministries and activities within our own church family.

This work is truly a community effort. We are grateful for neighboring churches that provide quarterly donations of food and funds for our Food Pantry, for local organizations that host food drives on our behalf, and for individuals who generously bring frozen meals—and even fresh eggs—to share. None of this would be possible without your kindness, compassion, and continued commitment to serving others.

Thank you for all you do to make a difference. Your generosity is touching lives—please keep up the good work. **- Carol A**



***“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”***



Happy New Year from the **Bethel United Methodist Men**!

We pray that **2026** will be filled with **love, hope, and peace** for all. **A Few Good Men** will meet on **Tuesday, January 6 at 6:00 PM** in the **Fellowship Hall**. The evening will include dinner, a devotion, a brief business meeting, and Christian fellowship. We look forward to seeing our regular members and warmly invite new faces as well. All male church members—and a guest—are welcome.

Plans are underway for an **oyster roast on March 3**, and we are looking for **steamers** to assist with preparation. If you can help, please contact **Mike Kuszmaul** or **Buddy Creech**.

We have also been asked to help provide a meal and devotion for **FCA at Salk**, serving the men's and women's basketball teams and the women's volleyball team. Possible dates include **January 19, February 2 or 16, and March 2**, with approximately **35 people** expected.

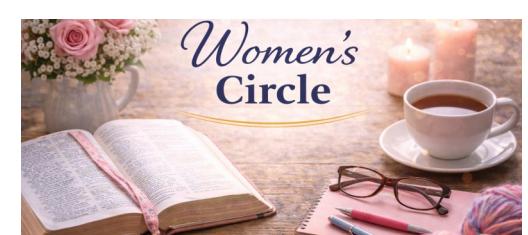
Again, Happy New Year, and may God bless each and every one of you.

**- Mike K**

The **Sally Starr Circle** was blessed to help **twenty-one children under the age of 10** who are currently homeless and living in a hotel. Through your compassion and generosity, these children received care, kindness, and a reminder that they are seen and loved. **- Nona R**

***“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.”***

**— Matthew 18:5**



# YOUTH GROUP NEWS

Thank You from the UMYF!



The UMYF would like to thank the congregation for your generous support of the **Bethel Christmas Bash**. Because of you, we were able to purchase and deliver Christmas gripper socks for the residents at Magnolias, and we couldn't be more excited!

A special thank-you goes to **Mike K.** for being such a wonderful Santa's helper—your joy and enthusiasm made the event unforgettable!

- Sharon C



The Bethel Preschool had a surprise visit from Santa's best helper! Thanks to **Mike K** for the joy and happiness you spread to the children. They loved it! The office helper wasn't quite as impressed.





## Did You Know?

The word “church” in the New Testament does not refer to a building. It comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, meaning “a called-out people.” From the very beginning, church has always been about **people**, not places.

## A Little Something to Think About

Today, we continue that same tradition whenever we worship, serve, and walk alongside one another in faith.

## Fun Question

If the early church met in homes and shared meals, **what do you think mattered most to them—place or people?**

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**“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”**

— Acts 2:42

## Why It Matters

From the very beginning, church has been about people gathering in faith, not buildings or programs. Every time we worship, serve, share a meal, or care for one another, we continue the story of the early church.

## FAITH & REFLECTION

### A Question to Carry With You

As we move into a new year, take a moment to pause and reflect:

**Where have you seen God at work—  
in your life, in our church, or in our community—  
over the past year?**

Sometimes God's presence shows up in quiet ways:  
in a kind word, a helping hand, a shared meal,  
or a moment of unexpected peace.

As we walk forward together, may we continue to notice, give thanks,  
and remain open to how God is moving among us—  
often closer than we realize.

*“Surely the Lord is in this place—and I was not aware of it.”*

— Genesis 28:16



## WALKING TOGETHER INTO THE NEW YEAR

As we step into a new year, we are reminded that faith is not a journey meant to be traveled alone. God calls us to walk together—with patience, compassion, and care for one another.

Each person brings unique gifts, experiences, and stories that strengthen the life of our church. When we move forward together, supporting one another along the way, we reflect God's love more fully to the world around us.

May this year find us listening more deeply, serving more faithfully, and remaining connected in Christian love—no matter where we find ourselves on the journey.



*“So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”*

— Romans 12:5



January 23

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