

THE

Spirit OF BETHEL

A NEWSLETTER OF BETHEL UMC



December 2026

Sharing Faith. Strengthening Community. Serving Together.

December Calendar of Events

Dec. 1 6:00 PM – Bethel UMM (FH)

Dec. 6 UMYF Christmas Bash & Parade

Dec. 8 Noon – Glory Group (FH)
5:30 PM – Missy Ackerman Circle, Main Street Grille

Dec. 10 2:00–4:00 PM – Food Pantry

Dec. 12 9:00 AM – Christmas Choir Dress Rehearsal

Dec. 13 5:30 PM – UMYF; 7:00 PM – Christmas Concert

Dec. 14 11:30 AM – Sally Starr Circle; meet in parking lot for road trip

Dec. 16 Shut-in meals delivered

Dec. 17 2:00–4:00 PM – Food Pantry

Dec. 20 UMYF Christmas Outing

Dec. 24 5:00 PM – Christmas Eve Service

Dec. 27 No UMYF meeting



Ongoing Activities

Sundays
9:00 AM – Sunday School
10:00 AM – Worship

Wednesdays
10:30 AM – Bible Study (FH)
5:30–6:30 PM – Wednesday Supper

Christmas at Bethel

December 13 • 7:00 PM
Christmas Concert featuring the Charleston Strings

December 24 • 5:00 PM
Candlelight Holy Communion



From Our Pastor

When Glory Shines

The little fellow stood in the empty church with me and looked at the Chrismon tree which had been sparkling during the worship service. The lights on the tree had now been turned off. He said to me as I went by gathering my books up from the pulpit: “It ain’t as pretty when the lights ain’t on!”

The glory of Christmas does need to shine for us to feel and see its splendor. My young friend’s remark gave me a new appreciation for the line in Luke 2:9, “. . . and the glory of the Lord shone around them.”

Every single Sunday I get a fresh awareness of that glory - - the people sitting in worship, the happy faces, the beautiful music, and a confidence that the spirit of Bethel Church is alive and well.

You as a congregation are so generous with your words of encouragement and support, and your pride in Bethel is contagious. Other people in the community are taking note, and we have an opportunity to make an impact upon the religious life and climate of our community.

Glory does shine. I have seen it in your faces. We, again, celebrate the Advent of Christmas. This Year we will celebrate Christmas Eve at 5:00 P.M. with a great service with wonderful music. We will fill the church for our traditional service of Holy Communion by candlelight. It promises to be another outstanding day.

I hope you will share its light and life, and the glory of the Lord will shine in and through us for days to come.

May God bless you - - and have a merry Christmas!

— Tresco



November Memorials

Gifts given in loving remembrance



In Memory of Donald Rizer

Gloria Cummings
Ellison & Marie Young
Tom & Judy Woodward
Sharon Courtney
Tommy & Lynn Evans
Sally Starr Circle
Rick & Deborah Ackerman
Robert Baggett
Bonnie & Leon Langley
Laverne Sanders
Austin & Jessica Williams
Lynn McElmurray
Herman & Joy Hoffman
Carolyn Candler
Tommy & Amanda Fulton
John S. Hiott, Jr.
Chris & Ann Bickley
Dwight & Lisa Mitchell

In Memory of Tony Hamilton

Carl & Patsy Avant
Buddy & Marilyn Creech
Jeffrey & Joanne Herndon
Herman & Joy Hoffman
Carolyn Candler
Perry & Janet Buckner
Tommy & Amanda Fulton
Duncan & Cindy Hunt
Bill & Gail Howell

In Memory of Beverly Ritter

Charles & Sylvia Rowland

In Memory of Lance Sims

Charles & Sylvia Rowland

In Memory of Nell Walters

Herman & Joy Hoffman

In Memory of Wesley Kubik

Herman & Joy Hoffman

In Memory of Miriam Westbury

Herman & Joy Hoffman



When Christmas Holds Both Joy and Sorrow



Christmas brings familiar songs, treasured traditions and the warmth of gathering with those we love. Yet for many, this season also brings the quiet ache of an empty chair and memories of someone dearly missed.

The joy of Christmas does not require us to set aside our sorrow. In the birth of Jesus, we are reminded that God comes near to us in every season of life. His presence is a comfort in our grief and a source of hope when our hearts are heavy.

May we make room for both tears and laughter, cherish the memories of those we love, and extend a gentle kindness to those who are grieving. May the light of Christ bring peace to every heart this Christmas.

Bethel Bulletin Board

Christmas Celebrations



UMYF Christmas Bash & Parade

Sunday, December 6

Our Bethel youth will be spreading Christmas cheer by selling hot chocolate during the Christmas parade. Proceeds will help purchase Christmas gifts for residents of The Magnolias and support In His Name–Colleton, the youth's chosen mission this year.

Stop by, enjoy a warm cup of hot chocolate, and support our youth as they share the love of Christ through the joy of giving!

Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 13 • 7:00 PM

Celebrate the birth of Christ through an evening of sacred Christmas music. Under the direction of Nate and Melody Grav, Bethel's choir and the Charleston Strings will present a musical celebration of the Nativity.

Selections include *Silent Night, In the Bleak Midwinter, Veni, Veni* and Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus*. All are welcome! Invite your family, friends and neighbors.





Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion

Thursday, December 24 • 5:00 PM

Join us for Bethel's traditional Christmas Eve service of Holy Communion by candlelight. Beautiful vocal solos and beloved Christmas hymns will help us celebrate the birth of our Savior. The service will conclude with the singing of *Silent Night*, as the sanctuary is illuminated only by the gentle glow of candlelight.



"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Luke 2:11



The People of Bethel

December 2026



Bethel UMYF

Sharing the Joy of Christmas

Our Bethel youth have been busy sharing their time and talents this holiday season. They decorated our sanctuary for Christmas and continued their commitment to serving others with another visit to In His Name–Colleton.

On Sunday, December 20, the youth will visit The Magnolias to deliver Christmas gifts and spend time with the residents. Following their visit, they will enjoy dinner and a movie together for their Christmas celebration.

The UMYF will take a short holiday break and resume meetings in January. We are proud of our young people and the many ways they put their faith into action.

Preschool Happenings

Little Hearts, Thankful Hearts

Our Bethel preschoolers celebrated Thanksgiving with a delightful program for their families. Following the program, the children and their parents gathered to enjoy a wonderful Thanksgiving meal together.



A Christmas Tree of Wishes

This Christmas season, our preschool will have a special tree decorated with ornaments, each representing a child and containing that child’s wish list. We invite our Bethel family to select an ornament, lift that child up in prayer and, if able, purchase an item from the wish list. Amazon gift cards are also welcome. Thank you for surrounding our little ones with love, prayer and the joy of giving.

Preschool Christmas Program

Friday, December 18



The Spirit of Bethel

DECEMBER 2026



A Day That Will Live in Infamy

If my math serves me correctly, and I believe it does, eighty-five years have passed since that terrible Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. It was, as President Franklin D. Roosevelt said, ‘A day that will live in infamy.’

Many will pause to remember the terror in order to keep faith with the memories of those who died and the suffering of those who survived. None of this should be to preserve bigotry and hatred, but to make sure we learn from the past.

The world has changed drastically, in these years, since Pearl Harbor. Many years ago, Russia’s Premier Krushchev banged a shoe on the table at the United Nations and screamed at the United States: ‘We will bury you.’ But the USSR he led no longer exists, and its atheistic communist ideology had itself been buried, at least for a while.

How appropriate that on this anniversary of Pearl Harbor our choir and congregation would have begun to sing the songs of Christmastime and enjoy all of the symbols of Christ coming into the world. The atmosphere and mood in our world is totally different from those dark days of the past. We live in a day of hope, and more people are free of tyranny than ever before in the history of the civilized world.

A day which lives in infamy is also a Day of Reconciliation. Come hear the voices, the sounds and the Word, each Sunday during this Advent season, and you will be moved to renew your own personal commitment to the Prince of Peace.

I guarantee it.

— Tresco

December Birthdays

1 Melissa McNair
2 Toni Walters
3 Becky Broderick
4 Chris Brownlee
5 Lane Perry
7 Scott Beasley
Grier Frank
John Girardeau
Rusty Riddle
Thomas Warren
8 Joe Flowers
9 Hudson Evans
10 Kirk Breland
Spencer Floyd
11 Adam Langley
14 Cindy Hunt
Sheri Stone
15 Chris Bickley
Jim Brown
Tracy Burttram
16 Elizabeth Stroble
17 Natalie Wilson
20 Emily Edwards
21 Caden Griffith
Doug Magus
Jordan Mitchell
22 Terry Walters
Trudie Wright
23 Johnny Bell
Devin Crosby
27 Kimberly Smith
Charlotte Williams
28 Colin Thomas
29 Carter Sims
31 Forrest Morgan
Aiden Stroble

Wedding Anniversaries

6 Tommy & Amanda Fulton
11 Todd & Ashley Crosby
11 Parks & Phyllis Mangum
12 Bo & Nancy Hetrick
13 Austin & Jessica Williams

Awaiting the Prince of Peace

Advent invites us to pause between the remembrance of yesterday and the promise of tomorrow. As we reflect upon the painful chapters of our world’s history, we are reminded of how deeply humanity longs for peace.

Into a world acquainted with suffering and uncertainty came a child whose birth was announced with a message of peace on earth. His coming reminds us that darkness does not have the final word, that hope can rise from sorrow, and that reconciliation is possible even where divisions once seemed impossible to overcome.



As we light our Advent candles this season, may we remember that peace is not simply something for which we pray, but something we are called to practice. Through forgiveness, compassion, patience and kindness, we can carry the light of Christ into our homes, our community and our world.

May the peace we celebrate at Christmas become the peace we share throughout the coming year.

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” — Matthew 5:9



Christmas Tidings & Tidbits

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The Story of Christmas

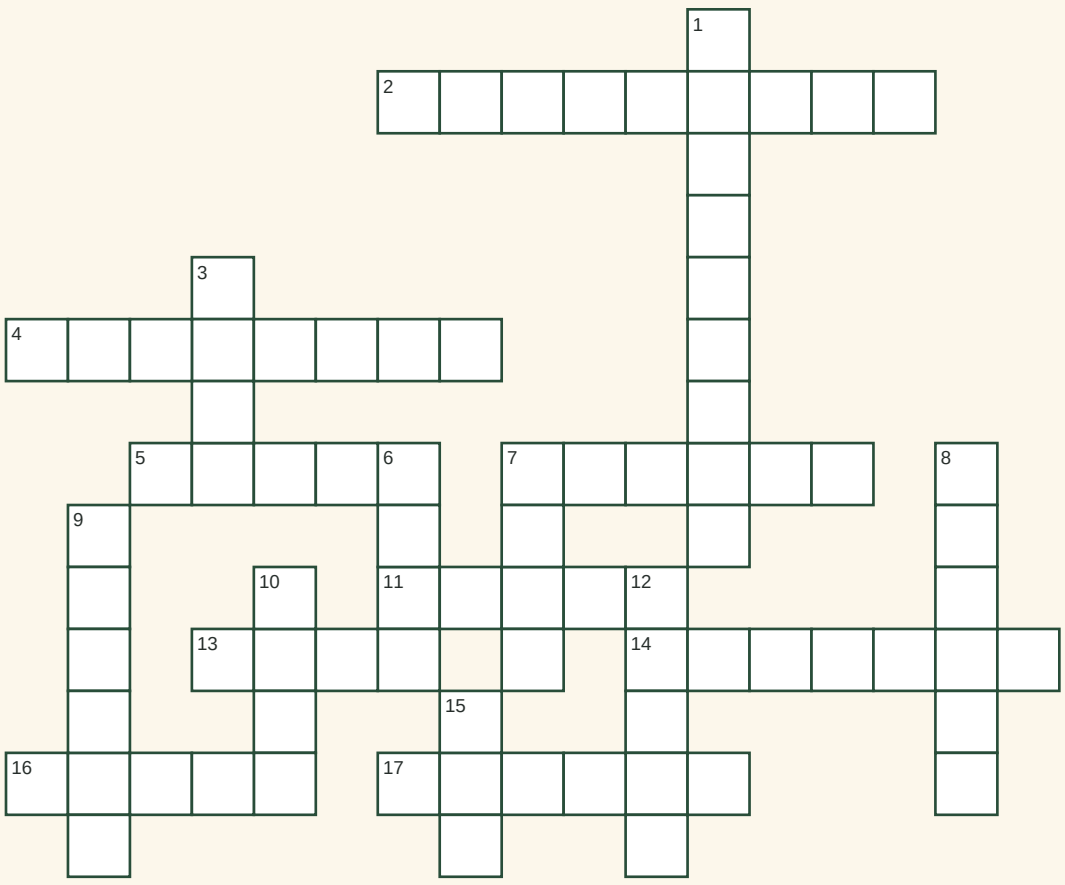
Find all 24 words: across, down or diagonally down. No backward words.

S	S	I	P	M	A	N	G	E	R	Z	A	Y	Z	B	F	W
A	C	H	N	E	G	K	G	I	E	G	Y	W	K	E	D	N
V	H	C	E	M	A	L	D	A	L	L	T	I	M	T	I	A
I	R	Z	B	P	X	C	O	O	B	R	D	S	Y	H	M	T
O	I	C	R	J	H	U	E	R	T	R	L	E	R	L	S	I
R	S	G	W	C	B	E	V	H	Y	Y	I	M	R	E	J	V
C	T	H	D	M	I	O	R	U	L	J	F	E	H	H	L	I
L	G	V	I	W	V	U	C	D	T	L	O	N	L	E	U	T
F	R	M	A	R	Y	X	H	F	S	O	O	S	M	M	I	Y
U	W	M	E	S	S	I	A	H	R	H	A	V	E	V	K	Y
Y	E	M	M	A	N	U	E	L	B	H	B	D	E	P	Z	K
J	E	S	U	S	S	M	I	C	G	S	W	K	V	J	H	G
H	G	O	L	D	T	U	P	M	U	O	E	I	E	E	O	H
O	X	R	F	R	A	N	K	I	N	C	E	N	S	E	N	Y
P	R	I	X	S	R	N	S	M	L	H	E	Q	P	C	Y	T
E	B	D	E	U	F	Z	V	N	T	C	M	M	T	O	Q	I
R	A	V	X	D	V	A	N	G	E	L	S	R	Y	I	Y	U

Advent
Angels
Bethlehem
Christ
Emmanuel
Frankincense
Gabriel
Glory
Gold
Hope
Jesus
Joseph
Joy
Love
Manger
Mary
Messiah
Myrrh
Nativity
Peace
Savior
Shepherds
Star
Wisemen

How Well Do You Know the Christmas Story?

Use the clues to fill in the crossword.



ACROSS

2. They watched their flocks
4. God with us
5. Gift often used in burial
7. ___ Night, holy night
11. Second Advent candle theme
13. Fourth Advent candle theme
14. Angel who visited Mary
16. King troubled by Jesus' birth
17. Mary's husband

DOWN

1. Town where Jesus was born
3. Mother of Jesus
6. First Advent candle theme
7. Guided the wise men
8. Season of preparation
9. Where the infant Jesus lay
10. Precious metal given to Jesus
12. Where the holy family fled
15. Third Advent candle theme