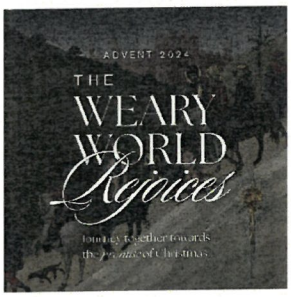
DECEMBER

245 S. Church St.
Spartanburg, SC 29306
864-585-4801
bethelmethodist.org
Child Enrichment Program 864-585-8356

Dear Bethel UMC,

How is it possible that it is already December? I remember thinking early in the year, if we can just make it to January 2025, we will be okay. Well, we are close and while things feel a bit tenuous at times, it does feel as if we have survived a tough year. This month will be filled with opportunities for us to worship, serve, and be together is some traditional ways and in some new ways.

On Sunday, November 24, we will make (or by the time you read this, will have made) our 2025 commitment cards available. This year not only are we receiving financial pledges, but we are also asking you to consider different areas of ministry that you would like to serve in next year. Even if you are already serving, we will still want you to fill out the card and check the box for the ministry area that you are interested in. After the office receives your card and records your pledge amount, your name and interest area will be forwarded on to the ministry leader who will be reaching out to you to get you plugged in. Our hope is that every member serves somewhere in the life of the church in 2025.



Our worship this month will be filled with opportunities to sing and praise. Each Sunday during Advent, I will be preaching through a series called "The Weary World Rejoices: Journey together toward the promise of Christmas". The series comes from one of my favorite authors, professor, and podcast host Kate Bowler. It uses lectionary texts to talk about the promises that Christmas brings to us. I will be preaching each week in the Contemporary service in the gym at 9 am. On the first (December 1) and fourth (December 22) Sundays of Advent I will be preaching the same sermon in our Traditional sanctuary service at 11 am. On the second (December 8) and third (December 15) Sundays of Advent, our traditional service will be led by our choirs with our children's musical on the 8th and the adult cantata on the 15th. In addition, on December 22 during Sunday school, our Special Education class will be offering a Christmas program that I am sure you will want to come and enjoy. It is always such an amazing time to be with these special friends. The Sundays of Advent will be a wonderful time to celebrate the coming birth of Christ.

In additions to these worship opportunities, we will also have a special service of grief on Wednesday, December 18. We are calling this service our Blue Christmas service acknowledging that for some this is a hard time to feel the joy of the season. We will allow space for all who want to be together and simply grieve what has been lost.

Of course, we will have Christmas Adam and Eve. Chad and the praise band are looking forward to leading a contemporary musical presentation of Christmas on Monday, December 23 at 6 pm in a service that we lovingly call "Christmas Adam" (because Adam comes before Eve). Then, on Tuesday, December 24 we will have our Family Christmas Eve service at 3 pm and our traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve service at 7 pm. Notice that it is later than in the past. Megan and I will be preaching together, first at St. Paul at 5 pm and then at Bethel at 7 pm.

Friends, this Advent and Christmas promise to be a beautiful season filled with hope and light. We pray that you would join us as often as you can. I hope to see you soon!

Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Brad

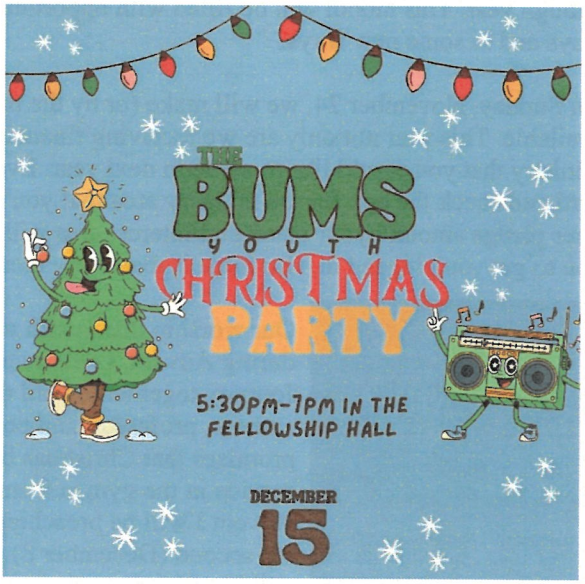
	Sunday Date	In-Person	Gifts to Budget	Other Gifts
43	October 27	Worship: 156 Children: 9	$6,171	$6,375
44	November 3	Worship: 163 Children: 23	$9,915	$486
45	November 10	Worship: 164 Children: 20	$20,274	$386
46	November 17	Worship: 162 Children: 24	$8,307	$454

2024 Annual Budget:	***$1,047,704***
Goal per week:	*$20,148*
Year-to-date Budget Goal:	*$926,815*
Year-to-date Gifts Received:	***$578,853***
Remaining 2024 Goal:	***$468,851***

Sunday, December 8, 11 am
Children's Musical – *"Inside the Outside Inn"*
Come meet Chloe, the orphan girl, as she discovers the baby in the manger. May you rejoice in the miracle at the "Outside Inn".

Sunday, December 15, 11 am
"Peace Has Come"
Sometimes the chaos around us destroys our peace. That chaos is sometimes self-imposed and sometimes it comes from outside sources for which we have no control. I chose this cantata with its emphasis on peace. Will you come and be remined that Christ came to bring peace? "For it is in the stillness, where I find God-the Author and Giver of true inner peace." - Mary McDonald, composer

Beth Brewer
Gary Brewer
Arthur Cummings
Cathy Hanks
David Holder
Toni Holder
Patti Moran
Carol Mueller
Tracie Powell-Wilkin
Andrew Reitzel
Jerry Reitzel
Maxine Reynolds
Fred Robinson



United Women in Faith Happenings

Christmas Quilt

We are preparing for our Holiday Dinner Meeting to hear about our community mission as we continue supporting "Sidewalk Hope." Most of you are familiar with this mobile children's church that makes weekly visits within the inner city of Spartanburg. Chip Walters, Executive Director and Founder, will be our guest speaker.

We are selling raffle tickets for our Christmas Quilt for $10. See Jan if you would like to purchase a ticket. We will announce the winner at our Holiday Dinner Meeting. You do not have to be present to win.

If you cannot attend, you can turn in your mission item to your Circle Leader: hats, gloves, and socks for ages 3 years to 18 years of age.

Susanna Circle – meets on the third Tuesday of the month at 6 PM. Their co-leaders are Peggy Taylor and Sheila Worley.

Lydia Circle – meets the second Wednesday of the month at 10 AM. Their leader is Maureen King.

Mary Circle – meets the first Tuesday of the month at 2 PM. Their co-leaders are Hattie Haulbrook and Rita Petoskey.

Welcome New Member: Betsy Henderson

Happy Holidays,
Jan Fleming

Upcoming:
12/9: Holiday Dinner Meeting
1/6: Planning Meeting
1/19: Boxed Lunch Sale after church

United Women in Faith

Advent Schedule

December 1
1st Sunday of Advent

December 8
2nd Sunday of Advent
Children's Christmas Program
11 am, Sanctuary

December 11
Children Christmas Craft Day

December 15
3rd Sunday of Advent
Christmas Cantata
11 am, Sanctuary

Youth Christmas Party

December 18
Blue Christmas Service
(A service of grief during the holidays)
6 pm, Sanctuary

December 22
4th Sunday of Advent
Special Education Christmas Program
10 am, Fellowship Hall

Special Education Christmas Party
12 pm, Fellowship Hall

Project Noel Cookie Packing & Caroling
4 pm, Fellowship Hall

December 23
Christmas Adam Worship
6 pm, Gym

December 24
Christmas Eve Worship
Family Service, 4 pm
Candlelight Service, 7 pm
Both in the Sanctuary

December 29
Combined Worship
10 am, Sanctuary
No Sunday school

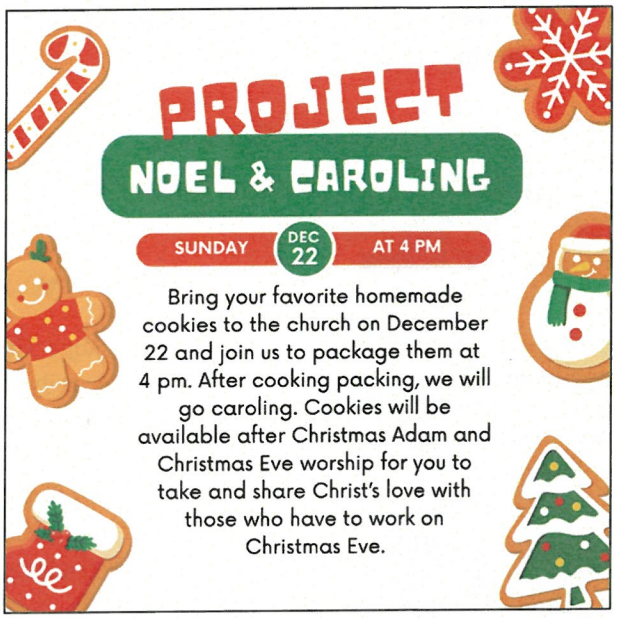
Wednesday Night Supper

December 4
Ham, potato salad, lima beans, cranberry apple, biscuits

December 11
Chicken & Rice, glazed carrots, green beans, rolls

December 18
Vegetable beef soup, broccoli cheese soup, chicken stew, toasted cheese sandwiches, cornbread, crackers, salad

Suppers will resume January 8



Executive Pastor
Rev. Brad Gray
Director of Youth
Chad Deetz
Coordinator of Children's Ministry
Jennifer Bartless
Director of Music
Dale Fischer
Organist
Dr. Kristine Lee
Business Manager
Colette Duncan
Church Secretary
Shannon Evans
Church Hostess
Lisa Durham
Building Superintendent
Bob Werner
Custodians
Jacob Sawyer
Carlos Cobo (every other Sunday)
Child Enrichment Program
Chella Hamrick, Center Director

OFFICE HOURS
Mon – Thurs: 9:00 am – 4 pm
Fri: 9:00 am – 12 pm

December Birthdays

1	Lauren Alspaugh
2	Beth Merrill
2	Rachel Moore
2	Lynn Wilson
2	Brenda Pitts
2	Isaac Gray
2	Steve King
3	Pam Davenport
3	Dee Dyson
3	John Wilson
4	Noel Helms
4	Hank Farmer
4	Caleb Cantrell
6	Jeff Peterson
6	Diana Johnson
7	Beth Lambert
7	Scott Wiley
7	Roger Parham
8	Kay Vinson
8	Avery Gilley
9	Kristy Peterson
9	Chris Thalassenos
10	Matthew Winter
10	Lanie Ready
11	Layne Stone
12	Katie Wofford
13	James Alexander
13	Blair Kimbrell
13	Brandon Somers
15	Richard Davenport
15	Dale Fischer
15	Martha Greenlee
15	Amelia Smith
15	Michala Patterson
15	Daniel McNeill
15	Wanda Kalina
15	Donna Bailey
16	Hope Al-Khalil
18	Adam Blumer
18	Joe Burchette
18	Jane Brown
18	Jenifer Steller
18	Betsy Henderson
19	Mary Nichols
20	Alex Daves
20	Laura Painter
20	Megan Gray
21	Doug Mueller
22	Timothy Bain
23	Papi Perez
26	Amanda Willingham
27	Kyle McIntyre
28	Rosemary Gray
29	Doris Fowler
29	Sandra King
30	Fred Stewart

Sundays

Worship Services

Contemporary Worship
9:00 am, Gym

Sunday School
10:00 am

Traditional Worship
11:00 am, Sanctuary

Sunday Night Youth:
5th – 12th Grade
5 pm – 6 pm
for studies & activities
Fellowship Hall

Please check bethelmethodist.org for more information.

Wednesdays

Game Time – 4 pm – 5 pm
Family Supper – 5:30 pm
Children's Choir – 5:30 pm
Small Groups – 6:30 pm
God Squad – 6:30 -7:30 pm
Youth Group – 6:30 – 7:30 pm
Sanctuary Choir – 7 pm

The last Wednesday night of the year is December 18th.
Wednesday night fellowship will resume on January 8th.

Dates to Remember

December 1
Adult/Youth Cantata Rehearsal
4:30 -5:30 pm

December 3
Finance Meeting
6 pm, Builders Classroom

December 4
Children's Choir Rehearsal
5 – 6:10 pm

December 6
Children's Choir Rehearsal

December 8
Joint Adult/Youth Cantata Rehearsal
3:30 – 5:30 pm

December 16
Church Council
7 pm, Fellowship Hall

December 24 & 25
Church office closed

December 31 & January 1
Church office closed