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Spartanburg, SC 29306
864-585-4801
bethelmethodist.org
Child Enrichment Program 864-585-8356

October 2025

I want to start with an apology. What follows is a rant. I've really struggled to figure out what to say to you in this October newsletter article. So, I have just decided to be honest and throw it out there.

Like many of you, I have been overwhelmed recently by all the issues that seem to be bombarding us daily in our community, nation, and world. Violence, hatred, anger, resentment, all cascading down. I would love to blame it all on one thing, but I cannot. We are complex creatures as individuals and then you put a bunch of individuals together and the complexity is multiplied. We have difficulties plaguing our society and our culture and if anyone wants to give you a simple solution and point a finger at one person or one group that is responsible for all our issues, they are just plain wrong. They are lying to you, and it is the voice of the deceiver and the accuser ringing in your ears. They are trying to make someone or something a scapegoat.

As complex as things are, Jesus is clear about not being able to serve two masters. You cannot claim to be a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ and at the same time bend the knee to the powers and principalities of this world, whether they be political or economic or social or cultural. Jesus would tell his own disciples that though they are in the world, they are not 'of the world, just as he was not of the world', which meant that we are to be wholly different from the ways around us.

One of the biggest issues we have today is with people who claim to be Christian, but it appears questionable, at best, if they have ever met Jesus. The fruit that they are producing is rotten. I know, that's judgmental of me. If pastors can spout hate-filled, racist, misogynistic rhetoric from a pulpit that claims to follow Jesus, then I, as a pastor, need to be offering an alternative to that hate. Because you cannot hate people in Jesus' name. You cannot do it. I rarely, if ever, speak in absolutes, but on that I am absolutely convinced.

Furthermore, as much as I would love for our country to be a Christian nation, I do not believe it can be. Here's my reasoning: The only thing that can be Christian is that which can be baptized. You cannot baptize a nation-state. We can only baptize people. Do I want there to be more followers of Jesus Christ in our country and in the world? Absolutely. But what I long to see even more so, is that the people who claim the name start acting the part. If the 62% of people in the USA who profess to be Christians lived into what Jesus said, what difference would it make if we called ourselves a 'Christian Nation'? A tree is known by its fruit.

Friends, these are serious times calling for serious followers of Jesus to stand up to the awful, anti-Christ ways that seem to be prevailing all around us. We are called to think shrewdly or wisely, and to act like Christ, to act in ways that match our kingdom values. Kingdom First demands nothing less than following Jesus Christ in all that we do. I do not know what all of this means for us at Bethel, but I look forward to exploring the ways Jesus is calling us to be a part of the solutions to what is ailing our community, our nation, and our world. Rant over. I hope to see you soon!

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Brad

Sidewalk Hope invites you to an evening of celebration – reflecting on all God has done in the past 10 years and looking forward in faith to all He will do in the decade ahead! Join us on Friday, October 10th in celebrating our 10 years of service to the children in our community. The event will be hosted at Hope Point Church, 1185 Asheville Highway. The event will include heavy hors d'oeuvres with historical and interactive displays, a student performance and art exhibit, and a time for praise and worship. Tickets are $50 each.

Prayer REQUESTS

Beth Brewer
Gary Brewer
Dan Buckner
Tim Durham
HJ Fleming
Matt Gilley
Tony Green
Cathy Hanks
David Holder
Toni Holder
Patti Moran
Rita Petoskey
Tracie Powell-Wilkin
Beverly Rakestraw
Andrew Reitzel
Jerry Reitzel
Maxine Reynolds
Linda Seifert
Scott Smith
Ann Towery
Shelley Winkler

United Women in Faith Happenings

United Women in Faith

Fall is officially here, and our Unit is back to work. Circles are planning their meetings, missions, and fundraisers ahead. We are assisting with the Annual Meeting at St. Paul's on Friday, October 24 and Saturday, October 25.

If you are interested in a small group, a Circle is a great way to get connected with other members at Bethel.

United Women in Faith's mission is to connect and nurture women through spiritual formation and leadership development, act for justice through advocacy and compassionate service for women, children, and youth, and transform communities by inspiring them to put their faith into action to create a more just world.

The organization focuses on spiritual growth, empowering women and girls to become leaders, providing education, and organizing for flexible and effective mission work.

Lydia Circle meets on the second Wednesday of the month in October, December, February, April, June, and August. Their Circle time is 10 AM at Bethel. Leader: Maureen King

Mary Circle meets on the first Tuesday of the month in September, October, March, and April. Their Circle time is at 2:00 PM at Bethel. Co-Leaders: Hattie Haulbrook and Rita Petoskey

Susanna Circle meets on the third Tuesday of the month in September, November, January, March, May, and July. Their Circle time is 6 PM. Co-Leaders: Peggy Taylor and Sheila Worley.

Happy Fall,
Jan

Upcoming:
10/24-25: South Carolina Conference Annual Meeting, St. Paul's, UMC
11/5: Planning Meeting at noon.
11/16: Lunch after church and Frozen Feast Pick-up and Bake Sale
12/8: Holiday Lunch at noon

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Wednesday Night Supper

October 1
Pork tenderloin, scalloped potatoes, green beans

October 8
Turkey, dressing, gravy, green beans, sweet potato casserole, cranberry sauce, rolls

October 15
Breakfast casserole, grits, bacon, gravy biscuits, mixed fruit

October 22
Potluck – Bring your favorite dish
Bethel will provide the meat

October 29
Vegetable beef soup, chicken stew, broccoli cheddar soup, toasted cheese sandwiches, crackers, cornbread

October Movie Night

October 9, 7 pm

Join us in the gym for *"Hocus Pocus"*!
Bring a comfortable chair or a blanket.
We will supply popcorn and snacks.
Everyone is invited!

Trunk or Treat

Sunday, October 26
Set up begins at 3 pm
Event is 4 pm – 6 pm

Host a trunk for our Trunk or Treat Event. All you need is your vehicle and some candy to hand out.

You can also donate candy by bringing it to the Children's Wing on the 2nd floor.

Looking for a way to serve? Consider becoming an usher. This ministry is a wonderful way to serve the church, helping people find seats, assisting with the offering, and creating a smooth and sacred worship experience for all. Please contact the church office.

	Sunday Date	In-Person	Gifts to Budget	Other Gifts
35	August 31	Worship: 104 Children: n/a	$5,932	$63
36	September 7	Worship:142 Children: 21	$11,872	$743
37	September 14	Worship:170 Children: 21	$12,664	$424
38	September 21	Worship: 127 Children:	$8,384	$616

2025 Annual Budget:	***$825,935***
Goal per week:	*$15,883*
Year-to-date Budget Goal:	*$603,568*
Year-to-date Gifts Received:	***$350,923***
Remaining 2025 Goal:	***$475,012***

Executive Pastor
Rev. Brad Gray
Director of Youth
Chad Deetz
Coordinator of Children's Ministry
Jennifer Bartless
Director of Music
Dale Fischer
Church Secretary
Shannon Evans
Financial Secretary
Donna Hopkins
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

October Birthdays

1	Jessica Kulas	13	Haley Dill	25	Matthew Gilley
3	Paula Williams	14	Andy Burns	25	Alex Henderson
3	Sherrie Grant	14	Patrick Moran	26	Sissy Bush
4	Janis Green	15	James Padgett	26	Chris Ollinger
4	Lynne Koch	15	Vivian O'Dell	27	Thurman Anderson
4	Owen Gilley	15	Sharon Mack	28	Nita Parker
4	Kendall Overbay	16	Gene Foust	28	Steve Smith
6	Greg Mack	17	Kendyl Mason	29	Lisa Benfield
6	Mary Downs	21	Mac Turner	29	Liz Jilling
7	Allen Wilson	22	Bill Woofter	29	Melodi Wall
8	Cindy Bailey	23	Sarah Deetz	30	Macie Buckner
8	Peden Mahaffey	23	Aggie Romansky	30	Blaine Gray
9	Cathy Hanks	23	McKenna Hawley	31	Casey Miller
9	Barbara Terrell	25	Dianne Trisler	31	Drew Connolly
10	Buddy Bush	25	Patti Moran	31	Emmie Brady
10	Gladys Rivera	25	Elliott Lane		
10	Julie Huckabee	25	Crew Miller		
12	Louise Ready	25	Aiden Berryman		

Sundays

Worship Services

Contemporary Worship
9:00 am, Fellowship Hall

Sunday School
10:00 am

Traditional Worship
11:00 am, Sanctuary

D Groups:
5th – 12th Grade
5:30 – 7 pm
for studies & activities
Fellowship Hall

Please check bethelmethodist.org for more information.

Wednesdays

Game Time – 3 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

Dates to Remember

October 5
Blessing of the Animals
4 pm

October 9
Movie Night
7 pm, Gym

October 26
Trunk or Treat
4 pm – 6 pm