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

October 2026

from the PASTOR

One of the hardest things to do is stop something that is not working or has ceased to serve its purpose. I have been thinking about this recently, especially when it comes to how we do church together. I'll never forget an experience I had when serving another church. For years, they operated a food pantry, and I was the pastor who shut it down. That probably sounds awful and, I'll admit, it was painful. Unfortunately, folks had learned how to game the system that was set up to help people. On top of that, no relationships had been formed through the ministry. People would literally drive up from all over town, open their trunks, a bag of food was placed in their trunk, and they drove off. I am sure it met some kind of need, but was it the most effective way to serve our community? No, it was not. So we made the hard decision to close the food pantry. Six weeks later, God moved within someone in the congregation and they brought an idea to meet a new need. From that moment on, Backpack Manna was born. Forming relationships with local teachers who were in the schools, the church began preparing gallon-size bags of non-perishable food items that kids who were in need received on Friday afternoons. It was meant to sustain them over the weekend until they could return to school on Monday. The ministry was fully supported by the church and still exists today, some 15 years later. Something had to end in order for something new to be born.

I have been thinking about our church, too. Two years ago, following a hard season in the life of Bethel, we created the Bethel Council on Ministries. Our reasoning was two-fold. First, our Church Council was extremely large. We had 50 people who were voting members of Church Council. That is entirely too large to serve as a governing body of any organization. So in an effort to downsize the Church Council, we created BCOM. Secondly, we had hoped that BCOM would be a venue where leaders of different ministry areas could gather to plan, vision, and coordinate our focus toward the betterment of the whole church. After two years of attempting this new idea, we realize that it has not yielded the results that we had hoped. So one of the changes that we are making to our leadership structure starting in 2027 is to go back to having just a Church Council in which ministry areas are represented. Some ministries that were a part of the church in the past are no longer needed, so the Council will be a bit smaller. The Church Council will continue to meet quarterly and serve as a place where reports are given and plans are made for the ongoing ministry of the church. I am proud of Bethel for trying something different. I may be even more proud of the fact that there is a willingness to adapt. We have been able to have honest conversations with people and to hear them confess, "I do not think it has worked like we thought it would." With that honesty, we can make some changes that will continue to move us in a positive direction in the future. As always, the Church Council meetings are open to anyone to attend to stay up to date with what is going on and to ask questions.

We know there are shifts occurring all around us, what feels like all the time, so much so that it can be overwhelming. But always remember that God wants nothing but the best for us and we must remain open to the movement of God's spirit. Some things will end only so that other things may spring up and grow. God's goodness never changes. I am excited to see all the ways God is continuing to use Bethel to bring about the Kingdom in Spartanburg and beyond.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Brad

Join us at Bethel UMC on Wednesday nights from 6:30 - 7:30 pm, starting October 14th, for Created to Create. This is a six-week series exploring what the bible teaches us about emotional well-being and creativity. Through scripture, creative activities, and meaningful conversation, we will discover ways to nurture our faith, find rest, and connect with one another. No artistic experience needed – just bring yourself and a willingness to try something new. Come cultivate, create, and connect with us. Contact Sarah Deetz for more information.

Mom's Night Out

Are you a mom navigating the new adventures that come with older teens, college students, and young adults? Join us for fun, friendship, and fellowship with other moms in the same season of life! We will meet once or twice a month in the evenings at different locations for dinners, activities, outings, and plenty of time to connect and laugh together. Whether your nest is getting quieter or you're still juggling teenagers at home, there's a place for you! Contact Sarah Deetz for more information.

Prayer Requests

Tim Durham
Dale Fischer
Matt Gilley
Martha Greenlee
Cathy Hanks
David Holder
Toni Holder
Jack Lewis
Myra Morrison
Marie O'Dell
Rita Petoskey
Beverly Rakestraw
Ann Towery
Shelley Winkler
Lee Helen Youmans

KAIROS PRISON MINISTRY

Our mission focus for October is Kairos Prison Ministry. Kairos is holding a 4-day event at Tyger River Correctional Facility from November 5 – November 8. We will be collecting cookies for this event. Cookies are a tangible, prayerful expression of Christ's love for inmates during this weekend. They serve as an ice breaker and a treat for the participants. Each inmate receives a bag of cookies with a blessing from God and a reminder that Jesus loves them.

The types of cookies that are acceptable include: oatmeal, chocolate chip, molasses, ginger, and sugar. It is very important not to use icing, sugar or any other type of coating on the outside of the cookie. Do not add any kind of fruit or nuts to the cookies. Cookies must be at the church by Wednesday, November 4. So, if you are baking cookies, make an extra batch for Kairos and put them in your freezer. If you have any questions, please contact the church office.

United Women in Faith

Fall has arrived, so that means United Women in Faith is in high gear. We just finished our reports for the Circle year, and we are starting a new year on September 1. Circles are busy with missions, gatherings, and fall fundraisers.

Lydia Circle will meet this month to review our 2026-27 Reading Program book list. After their review, we will order the books, and they will be on the shelf by November 1 for anyone who would like to check one out.

Congratulations to our Reading Program participants:
Plan One: Jane Burns, Jan Fleming, Maureen King, Diana Johnson, Amelia Smith, Libbi Smith, Layne Stone, Peggy Taylor, and Sheila Worley.
Plan Two: Peggy Horner and Sandra King.

At our District Meeting, Bethel was awarded our Five-Star Unit certificate and our Mission Today Unit certificate. Thank you to all the Circles for your hard work, and to Bethel members and friends for making our mission giving possible, transforming the lives of women, children, and youth around the world.

Next up is our Annual SCC in the Walterboro District at the end of the month.

Upcoming:
10/6: Mary Circle meets at Bethel at 2 PM.
10/14: Lydia Circle meets at Bethel at 10 AM.
10/22-24: SCC United Women in Faith Annual Meeting.
11/1: Boxed Lunch and Fall Bake Sale sign-ups.
11/15: Bake Sale pick-up.

Grateful,
Jan

Wednesday Night Supper

October 7
Turkey and gravy, green beans, dressing, sweet potato casserole, cranberry sauce, rolls

October 14
Pulled pork, baked beans, slaw, fries, salad

October 21
Potluck – bring your favorite dish
Country style steak will be provided

October 28
Vegetable beef soup, broccoli cheddar soup, chicken stew, toasted cheese sandwiches, salad, cornbread, crackers

TRUNK OR TREAT

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25
4 PM – 6 PM
SET UP BEGINS AT 3 PM

HOST A TRUNK FOR OUR TRUNK OR TREAT EVENT. ALL YOU NEED IS YOUR VEHICLE AND SOME CANDY!
YOU CAN ALSO DONATE CANDY BY BRINGING IT TO THE CHILDREN'S WING ON THE 2ND FLOOR.

	Sunday Date	In-Person	Gifts to Budget	Other Gifts
36	September 6	Worship: 150	$12,765	$1,099
37	September 13	Worship: 166	$6,706	$594
38	September 20	Worship: 161	$11,664	$51

2026 Annual Budget:	***$741,248***
Goal per week:	*$14,255*
Year-to-date Budget Goal:	*$541,681*
Year-to-date Gifts Received:	***$375,874***
Remaining 2026 Goal:	***$365,374***

Executive Pastor
Rev. Brad Gray
Director of Youth
Chad Deetz
Coordinator of Children's Ministry
Jennifer Bartless
Director of Music
Dale Fischer
Organist
Lane Hill
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

3	Paula Williams	15	Vivian O'Dell	25	Alex Henderson
4	Janis Green	15	Sharon Mack	26	Sissy Bush
4	Owen Gilley	16	Gene Foust	26	Chris Ollinger
4	Kendall Overbay	17	Kendyl Mason	28	Steve Smith
8	Cindy Bailey	21	Mac Turner	29	Lisa Benfield
9	Cathy Hanks	22	Bill Woofter	29	Liz Jilling
9	Barbara Terrell	23	Sarah Deetz	30	Blaine Gray
10	Buddy Bush	23	Aggie Romansky	31	Drew Connolly
10	Julie Huckabee	25	Dianne Trisler		
12	Lulu Ready	25	Patti Moran		
14	Andy Burns	25	Aiden Berryman		
14	Patrick Moran	25	Matthew Gilley		

Sundays

Worship Services

Contemporary Worship
9:00 am, Fellowship Hall

Sunday School
10:00 am

Traditional Worship
11:00 am, Sanctuary

Sunday Night Youth
5 pm – 6 pm

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
Tiny B.U.M.S. – 6:30 -7:30 pm
Youth Group – 6:30 – 7:30 pm
Sanctuary Choir – 7 pm

Dates to Remember

October 4
Charge Conference
12 pm

October 8
Comfort and Joy
10 am

October 11
Pumpkin Painting
4 pm, Fellowship Hall

October 25
Trunk or Treat
4 pm – 6 pm