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

September 2026

from the PASTOR

Some years ago, I was doing some leadership development work using Brene Brown's book *Dare to Lead*. In it she talks about core values, a way of being in the world or a belief that you hold that shapes decisions and behaviors throughout your life. She offers a list of words on a page, and the practice is to eventually get down to two that are your core values that serve as a guide for your life. If you have never determined your core values, I would encourage you to look it up online and spend some time thinking about it. Over the years, my core values have not changed. My two words are wisdom and balance.

My core value of balance has been at the forefront of my mind the last few months. Most often I have thought about it being important when it comes to my work life and home life or how I balance being a husband and a father and even a good son. I think about time management and making sure I am taking time to stay healthy so that I can be the best version of myself for all who need me. More recently, however, I have been thinking about balance when it comes to things like control and the future. First, I have been really thinking a lot about what I can control and what is out of control. Some of this has to do with having teenagers at home. My ability to control my 17-year-old son and 14-year-old daughter has become a balancing act. They are seeking more independence, and I wrestle with not having as much control as I once did. The answer is not to throw my hands up and let them do anything and everything that they want. Instead, there is a balance to be found. Of course, this is true for their future as well. One will be graduating next May and there is no telling what is coming. I think it takes balance to enjoy the moments we have as well as to work with him on the future goals.

I have also been thinking about balance as it comes to Bethel as well. As you know, we are working through some vision and dreaming about who God is calling us to be as we write our next chapter together. The Coordination Team will be working over the next month or so to offer a vision and a plan to the church council. Then the council will act upon the recommendations and present them to the church. All of this requires a healthy balance of listening and speaking, taking what we know and stepping out in faith, and praying and acting. While this is a present reality for us, I know a lot of you are experiencing anxiety related to our future together. For me, thinking about the future of Bethel requires balance as well, especially when it comes to what is certain and what is uncertain. I am certain Bethel will continue to be a vibrant and loving United Methodist congregation well into the future. We have so many faithful and active followers of Jesus who have a passion to do life together as a church that I have no doubts about our future together. God has big plans for us. What is uncertain is where Bethel might call home. During the first full week of September, we will share a report with you detailing the status of our buildings with as much information as we can possibly give. Even within the report there are some questions. Costly repairs are needed. Where will the funds come from? Are there alternative options for funding available like grants? Should we look to sell part of our property? Should we look to sell all of our property and move out of downtown? The balance of not knowing answers to these questions and many others while also knowing that God does, well, that is tricky. I wish more than anything else for clarity about our future, just as you do. And I promise you it is coming, so please be patient. Know that Bethel and its leadership are prayerfully working to determine the most faithful path forward. In the meantime, let's keep writing the next chapter together, as we grow together as the 'House of God' that we know and love.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Brad

In Christian Sympathy

...from the ministers and congregation to the family and friends who recently passed:

Lynn Culp, mother of Claire Ollinger

Memorial and Honorariums

In Honor of Gail Allen
Trustee Fund:
Pamela King
Tara Allen Roberts

In Honor of Sally Moore
Operating Fund: Mary Blanton Thompson

Blessing of the Animals

September 27, 2026 at 3 pm
Bethel United Methodist Church

Join us outside at Bethel UMC for a small service to honor the members of our family we get to choose...our pets! Bring your pet to receive a special blessing and have fun with our Bethel family.

Prayer REQUESTS

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

Altar Flowers

The following weeks are available for altar flowers:
September 13
September 20
September 27
October 4
Please contact the church office. The cost of flowers is $55

MUSIC MINISTRY

Our Music Director, Dale Fischer, is having knee surgery on September 21 and will be out for several weeks. Please keep her in your prayers. Choirs will continue to meet during this time. Mark Fischer will be directing our Sanctuary Choir and Sarah Deetz will assist with our Children's Choir.

FYI: No choir rehearsal on September 16

	Sunday Date	In-Person	Gifts to Budget	Other Gifts
29	July 19	Worship:187	$6,064	$35
30	July 26	Worship: 144	$14,617	$940
31	August 2	Worship: 177	$11,221	$531
32	August 9	Worship: 213	$9,985	$672
33	August 16	Worship: 178	$6,896	$85
34	August 23	Worship: 141	$13,548	$228
35	August 30	Worship: 140	$6,063	$1,332

2026 Annual Budget:	***$741,248***
Goal per week:	*$14,255*
Year-to-date Budget Goal:	*$498,917*
Year-to-date Gifts Received:	***$344,740***
Remaining 2026 Goal:	***$396,508***

United Women in Faith

September marks the start of our new calendar year, and we are ready to begin our mission fundraisers. In November, we will have a Boxed Lunch after church, and you will have an opportunity to purchase our beautiful fall quilt.

We will also have a bake sale in November. We will have cakes, breads, and quiche available to assist you with your holiday needs.

Each month, individual circles will have their own missions, and we will also have some unit-wide and global projects for members to participate in.

If you would like to participate in small group, focused, driven missions and be part of a wonderful ongoing group of love and support in action, the Lydia, Mary, or Susanna circles are for you.

Grateful,
Jan

Wednesday Night Supper

September 2
Pork tenderloin, scalloped potatoes, green beans, salad, rolls

September 9
Tacos, nachos & cheese

September 16
BBQ chicken, mashed potatoes, broccoli & cheese, salad, biscuits

September 23
Hamburgers, pasta salad, tater tots, corn on the cob

September 30
Breakfast casserole, grits, bacon, gravy, biscuits, fruit

Amazing Grace Race — Sidewalk Hope — Annual 5K & Fun Run — In the heart of the city...for the heart of a child.

Join us for the Amazing Grace Race on **Saturday, September 26th** as runners and walkers of all ages come together to benefit the children and teens served by Sidewalk Hope. The 5K begins at 9:00 a.m. at Drayton Mills with race day registration opening at 8:00 a.m. Whether you're chasing a personal record or simply enjoying a morning with family and friends, every step helps to make a positive impact and offer hope to local children! **Every dollar raised stays right here in our community, serving local children and teens** through Sidewalk Hope.

Scan the QR code to learn more and to register.

KAIROS PRISON MINISTRY

Our mission focus for September and 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.

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

September Birthdays

1	Davis Owens	17	Sheila Dobbins	25	Mary Ready
3	Kenneth Bobo	17	Jamie Moran	27	George Labanick
3	Jack Cooper	18	Trey McDaniel	28	Holly Raines
4	Clay Ollinger	18	Renee Lane	28	Kay Pederson
5	Preston Bailey	19	Miles Lane	28	Ella Healy
8	Charles Allen	19	Bailey Overbay		
8	Matthew Benfield	21	Nancy Blumer		
11	Leslie Young	21	Michelle Owens		
12	Lee Helen Youmans	22	Andrew Fischer		
12	Jean Hartzog	22	Banks Connolly		
12	Lyle Shook	23	Lori Murphy		
15	Christine Bush	25	Barrett Owens		

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

No Choirs on September 16th

Dates to Remember

September 7
Labor Day
Church office closed

September 22
Spartanburg District Meeting
6:30 pm

October 4
Charge Conference