

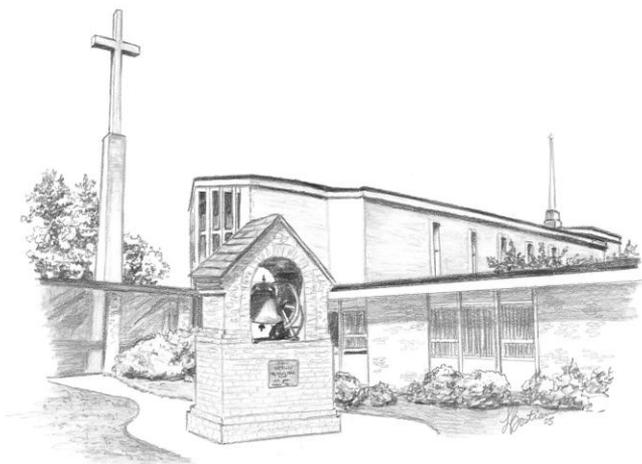
The Beacon



“I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

✝ WHOEVER FOLLOWS ME WILL ✝
NEVER WALK IN DARKNESS

BUT WILL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE” (NRSV)



BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH • HICKORY, NC

JANUARY ✝ 2018

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

With the end of the Calendar Year of 2017 we observe the First Sunday of Christmas with a reading from the Gospel According to St. Luke 2:22-40. The Gospel writer tells us of the Holy Family's traveling the few miles from Bethlehem.



To the west from Bethlehem is Jerusalem with its Temple. Luke combines three ritual requirements under Jewish law. The first is the circumcision of the male child (mentioned prior to the Sunday periscope in verse 21). Circumcision of male Hebrew children was commanded to be done on the eighth day after birth along with the giving of the name. He is named Jesus or in Hebrew Joshua, and we are told he is given this name which means savior. We are told this is the name given to Mary by the angel before the savior of the world was conceived in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit. The second ritual is that of the purification of women after giving birth. A woman, according to Leviticus 12 was to avoid touching anything sacred for thirty-three days after the birth of a male child and sixty-six days after the birth of a female child. At the end of the days of waiting she was to go to the temple and sacrifice that she might be declared ritually pure.

The third rite mentioned by Luke in Chapter 2 is the rite of dedication. Exodus 22:28 had called upon the people of Israel after having been freed from Egypt to dedicate their first-born sons to the Lord. That is to say, like the first-born cattle, sheep, oxen, or the first of any of their livestock, the People of the Promise were to offer even their firstborn sons as a living sacrifice. Unlike the livestock offered under the two-edged sacrificial knife, the first-born sons were offered to God, that their whole lives might become one in sacrificial obedience to God. The significance of this offering of the first-born sons in the Exodus story, is that Pharaoh had directed, while Israel was in Goshen, in the Land of Egypt, that the first-born sons of the Hebrews be thrown into the Nile (The ancient symbol of Egyptian fertility in Egyptian cultic worship). Then therefore, in the tenth and final plague, in the night of the Passover, God had struck down the first-born males of Egypt, including the livestock. Any household not marked with the blood of the lamb on the lintels and doorposts was to suffer the tenth plague, that of having the firstborn males struck down in that household. The Pharaoh who had come to power, (possible Thutmose II reigning from 1493 or 1479 to 1479 BC) "who did not know Joseph" wanted to maintain power of the Hebrew by keeping them as slaves in Egypt. The Lord God of Israel turned things around on the Pharaoh and instead took the lives of the progeny of Egypt. Israel, when it came again to dwell in the land of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were constantly surrounded and infiltrated by those who commonly offered sacrifice. Among the Canaanites who worshiped among other gods, Moloch the sacrifice of children was expected. What is extraordinary in the ancient world, especially in the whole region of Palestine (the

land of the Philistines between Phoenicia and Egypt) which contained the Land of Promise, is in a culture where the sacrifice of Children was expected, the God of Israel took no pleasure in the blood of children, only that their lives might be in obedience to him.

Looking back a bit, in Genesis 22 there is the startling story of God directing that Abraham take his only son Isaac and offer him as a sacrifice on Mt. Moriah. In the end, God provides the ram for the sacrifice, and though Abraham had been fully prepared to offer the sacrifice of his long-awaited first-born by the aged Sarah, God instead provides the sacrifice of a ram (a male goat) that Abraham may offer the sacrifice on the holy mountain. By tradition, later Mt. Moriah would eventually be obtained by David. It is what was his capital, the holy city of Jerusalem. It became the resting place of the Ark of the Covenant and of the tabernacle which surrounded it. In time, Mt. Moriah would become the site of the Solomon's Temple. After the Exile it was the site of the restored Second Temple. It was the site of the enlarged second Temple commissioned by Herod the Great, who according to Matthew, still reigned at the time of the birth of Jesus.

Herod was so ruthless and ambitious that the Romans permitted him to administer Roman Palestine as a vassal state. In the year 65 C.E., about the time the Gospel of Mark was written, that Herodian Temple was totally destroyed, and the words of Jesus came to fruition, and truly not one stone was "left upon another." (Mark 13:2) The temple vessels were taken to Rome and the treasures were used to pay for the new venue in Rome, the famed Roman Coliseum. All that remained of the once glorious enlarged Herodian Temple area, was the Western Wall, or what many Gentiles like to inappropriately call, the "Wailing Wall." By the time of the writing of the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of Matthew, all of the Jews were thrown out of Jerusalem and any who had participated in the war of rebellion were crucified, sent to the arenas in cities across the Empire, or sold into slavery. Today on the site of the Temple Mount, where Abraham was prepared to offer Isaac, where David as it tells us in 2 Samuel 6 with the aid of thirty thousand men brought the Ark on a cart from Baalah (or Kiriath Jearim 1 Chron. 13:6) to Jerusalem; on that site today, there is a golden domed Mosque called *Al-Aqsa*, meaning "The Temple" in Arabic. This site was the place where in the third and fourth centuries a Church once stood. It was that Church presided over by Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem where the custom of Palm Sunday Processions began, marking the beginning of Holy Week. The Processions in the third and fourth centuries recalled Jesus' own "Triumphal Entry" into the Holy City, just a few hundred years before. Cyril's congregation likely began using a Creed for Baptism which comprised much of the text which we know as the "Apostles' Creed." There are so many historical connections between the historical setting for the story in Luke 2 and modern and ancient Jerusalem, and the centuries in between.

But there is also another textual link between the story in Luke 2 and the Hebrew Bible or the *TaNakh* (Acronym referring to the Hebrew Scriptures, which includes the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings). The *TaNakh* is that part of the Bible we call the Old Testament. In 1 Samuel 1:21-28 there is a story of another aged woman who like Sarah, wife of Abraham, feared that she might die childless. In the story of Hannah, she takes her only son Samuel to Shiloh, the site of worship for the people who lived in land of Israel to the North of the Kingdom of Judah. She waits until he no longer needs to be nursed and brings the young child, Samuel to Eli along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine. After the bull is slaughtered she offers the young boy to serve the rest of his days with the Priest Eli, whose own sons as we will learn in the next couple of chapters, are thoroughly corrupt. Hannah offers her son to serve as priest in the temple, and as a prophet of the Lord. He will be reared by Eli, and Samuel will minister with Eli at the temple at Shiloh in Israel. He is dedicated as a Nazarite, meaning he will live a very disciplined life of prayer and abstinence. He will not marry, drink any strong drink, nor will he cut his hair. In 1 Samuel 2, Hannah sings a song in celebration for what God has done through her in the birth of the young boy Samuel. God has brought justice and is the protection to Hannah and God's people. If one looks at the text, one immediately sees the similarities between "Hannah's Song" and "Mary's Song" or the *Magnificat* of Luke 1. There are so many Scriptural links or what bible scholars would call hermeneutical links (from a Greek word for interpretation that comes to mean interpretation of Scripture) as well as links connecting historical places in the story of the three rites required by the Jewish Law in Luke 2. In the circumcision, purification of the mother after childbirth and the rite of offering of the first-born son, there are so many connections that Luke is making for his listeners. Paul writing to the Galatians reminds us:

⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.
(Galatians 4:4-5)

In this Season of Christmas, begun on the Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord and running through the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6 (this year falling on a Saturday), we are reminded that the one who was conceived in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, has been revealed to us in his birth among us. Born in a town meaning "house of bread," he is fully God and fully man, born in the midst of human history, in a land full of history and plagued by violence and conquest. By being fully human he was as St. Paul reminds us, born under the law. This is fully expressed in the three Jewish rites depicted in Luke 2. He came as one who was fully human, yet fully God. This Jesus fully of his two inseparable, and yet unmixed, and unconfused physical natures has obediently

offered his life by a death on the tree, that we might be claimed as children of God, and joined to him as his siblings.

It is Christ Jesus whom we receive as gift, who is the one who clings to us in Holy Baptism. In the Season of Epiphany, on the First Sunday After the Epiphany, known also as the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord, along with the Sundays following, we are reminded how the incarnation of God in our midst is revealed to us and to the world. To illustrate the significance of this season I will borrow for illustration, a custom followed among the royal family in the United Kingdom. Several days after the birth of a child to the royal family, there is the custom of holding a public revealing. In the 21st Century, these public affairs at Buckingham Palace are accompanied with lots of video cameras. The event usually coincides with the royal child's Baptism. The word Epiphany comes from a Greek word that means "revealing," usually of a supernatural being or god. For Christians, at the Epiphany, and for the Sundays that follow, the royal child and Son God is revealed to the world. This Son of God, our brother, who is wholly God and wholly man, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a woman in the village near Jerusalem meaning "House of Bread" is a gift offered by God, to and for us in our Baptism. He is revealed as the savior of the world and the one who is our bread. When we partake of the of Eucharist in the form of bread, we receive Christ, bread for the world. In Baptism we receive the gift of Christ himself, who is always available to us as gift from God. We are adopted sons and daughters of God, with Christ as our brother. But as the advertisers say, "But wait! There is still more!"

We have been given the gift of faith. Many of my students and many of my members over the years have fallen back into Rationalist and Enlightenment understandings of what faith is. The Enlightenment Movement of the 17th and 18th Centuries and the Rationalist Movement of the following century, give rise to lots of political and economic theories that are in many ways embodied in our American form of a democratic republic, and many economic systems in our world to the present. But the philosophical movements of the 17th – 19th Century, and in many ways of the 20th Century taught us that faith comes from within us. Faith is often imagined as being based in our ability to comprehend and then to trust on something within each individual to trust enough.

Thus, often in tough times people revert to seeing faith and something must come from us and which will assist us to get through the hard or difficult time. What goes along with this is an element of fearing that we not ask too many questions. Too many probing questions may cause us to doubt. Yet, we have been taught through ancient Greek Stoicism, along with Enlightenment and Rationalist Philosophy to depend upon the faith from within. With enough of this faith, like the "little engine that could" we repeat the mantra, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can. . . ." Soon that

will become, “I know I can, I know, I know I can.” One need to have never studied philosophy to see the world in this way because the messages of the Stoics, the Enlightenment, and Rationalism are messages we take in as easily as drinking water or as hearing a children’s story. The tragedy is that this is **NOT THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL** (emphasis added intentionally).

Luther who fortunately, or unfortunately lived in the 16th Century before the Enlightenment or Rationalism did not have to contend with the rampant and pervasive Philosophy that prized the individual over and against the community. He did not have contend with a world view which prizes the necessity of everything being evaluated and tested by the individual, who in turn decides for himself or herself whether something was valid for themselves. Often validity, if it is seen to be true in our world must be to the exclusion of the perceptions and collective wisdom of what others might offer. Luther lived in an age, which instead believed that authorities in the Church, whether Bishops, Popes or Church Councils were the sole determinants of the validity of something. The challenge confronting Luther and others in his era was that many of these separate authorities did not often agree. Yet it was an age when Church authority even trumped reason. Many of the authorities could not offer explanations to the differences found in Scripture early sources in the Church, Church when compared to Bishops, Popes and Church Councils. God’s grace was something carefully mediated and carefully controlled and managed by the authorities in the Church. If one wanted to live in a higher state of grace, give up a family life and enter the convent or monastery. Some who mediated God’s grace though the authority of the Church bought their positions of power and right to make decisions.

Luther, in keeping with the traditions of early great thinkers and sources including Scripture understood “faith” as having three elements. First and foremost, faith is a gift from God. It does not come from us, or from obtaining enough knowledge. Instead as a gift, it completely comes, as Luther said, *extra nos* (apart from us). Secondly, faith is that which trusts the promises of God. Faith predisposes us to hear the Word of God. In Luke 1, in the Annunciation Story of May we hear:

³⁰The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’ ³⁴Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’

Against all rational possibility, God accomplishes through Mary the impossible. God through the Holy Spirit, conceives in Mary the Son of the Most High God. This is faith that is being described in Luke's narrative. Faith comes completely apart from Mary as a Gift from God, and through faith Mary trusts the promises of God. She not only trusts that conception by the Holy Spirit in her who is a virgin is possible, she believes and trusts the promises that God's Kingdom is breaking in upon the world. God's Son will rule as David, and this reign begun at the pronouncement of the Angel's words to Mary will know "no end."

The next words in the Gospel are significant:

³⁵The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.' ³⁸Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

The promises are not just for Mary. The promises are given through Mary for the sake of the world. The aging Elizabeth, the barren cousin of Mary will be affected. Mary through the gift of faith that predisposes her to hear the promises of God through the angel Gabriel, she believes, for she through the gift of faith that comes apart from her, believes that "nothing will be impossible with God." The future has not even been realized yet in the months of pregnancy, the birth, the life, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, and the coming again. Through the gift of faith, like Mary we trust the promises.

So, first faith is a gift and secondly, faith is that which trusts the promises of God, even predisposing us, to hear and received those promises before we hear and receive them. Yet, for Luther there is a third essential element of faith. For Mary it is realized when she grants her willingness to let God use her as a vessel for bringing his Son into the world for the sake of the world. In any pregnancy, the unborn child is not just carried in the womb of her or his mother. The mother and the unborn child are as intimately connected as they will ever be. I have said on other occasions that the most intimate connection we will ever know apart from our having been carried in the womb of our mother is the intimate connection we personally have between us and God. Luke tells us of Mary's response: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her." In what is called the "Marian Fiat" Mary grants her assent that she become the handmaid of the Lord in his ongoing work of salvation. Through the assent of Mary, that is Mary's

fiat or authorization, God through the Holy Spirit in the annunciation sends his Son, to be joined intimately in the body of Mary. Mary is still called by Church by her Greek title *Theotokos* or God bearer. We are like Mary are God bearers. This is the third part of Luther's definition of "faith." Thus: faith 1) is first and foremost a gift. 2) Faith trusts the promises of God, 3) Faith enables God in Christ to cling to us. We thus all become like Mary, a *Theotokos* or God bearer. Faith in this understanding is clearly not from us. It can not be strengthened by our own doing. We receive both God's grace and the gift of God in Christ who himself clothes us Baptism. The grace with which we are immersed and showered in Baptism and the gift of Christ being joined to us enables us to enter into a life of faith. Baptism is our initiation into the faith. It is God's Word, apart from us that continues to strengthen and stir up the faith given solely by God's grace.

This coming year the Congregation Council will begin using as a devotional resource Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Prayer Book of the Bible: An Introduction to the Psalms*. Bonhoeffer wrote the brief book while teaching at the underground Seminary for the Confessing Lutheran at Finkenwalde after Heinrich Himmler, ruled such seminaries illegal in 1936. Bonhoeffer wrote on the Book of Psalms because of the very frank way, the Psalter, throughout the collection of the Bible's 150 Psalms offered prayer to God. Many of them are very honest and blunt. When you look at some of the lament Psalms, if one did not know they were from this prayer book of the Bible, one might think that someone was being impertinent or disrespectful to God. In my classroom to make my point, I often use a film clip from the movie *Forrest Gump*. Remember the scene with Lieutenant Dan in the "Crows nest" on the *Bubba Gump* fishing boat during a harrowing hurricane. Lieutenant Dan, who in the story has lost his legs in Vietnam, has been angry for years afterward that he didn't just die in Southeast Asia. Now in the midst of a storm, he screams at God, rails at God, and in short gives God a "good piece of his mind." I can remember when I first saw the film years ago when living in Columbia, SC. I can remember that I could hear collective gasps from some of my fellow audience members who seemed appalled how such an "unfaithful and unchristian scene were put into this film." I could have imagined that some might have said, "that is just like Hollywood these days to make something so spiteful to people of the Christian faith and not show greater respect for God." To the contrary, that scene in this fictitious story is one of the most Christian examples of prayer as it cuts to a truly Biblical understanding of lament.

Now, here is the connection with Luther's threefold definition of faith. Only in faith can the Psalmist declare in Psalm 22 "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me." Only in faith, can one of us, with the Psalm on our lips declare, "8 You have caused my companions to shun me; you have made me a thing of horror to them. I am shut in so that I cannot escape;" The Palmist does not bury emotion and ignore the pain. The Psalmist, in faith turns to God, and lets God have it and in the process,

finds hope, comfort, and peace.

I invite us during twelve days of Christmastide and the Season of Epiphany to follow, to take time and rediscover the Biblical understanding of faith, as something that is *extra nos*, a gift; that which trusts the promises of God, and that which enables us to cling to Christ who is the one to who we turn, “the **pioneer** and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2) I invite us to look in faith at the prayer book of Israel and the Bible, and to rediscover the rich language of frank and honest prayer, whether, thanksgiving, lament, confession, or songs of confession or of pilgrimage. If you would like a copy of the devotional guide from Bonhoeffer, we will have some on the Narthex table after Christmas. In the process I hope that with Mary we in our prayerful assent to what God declares to us, we may all be *Theotokos* (God bearers) to the world.

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "C. Pessier Thant." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



WORSHIP & MUSIC COMMITTEE MEETING

immediately after the 10:30 worship service in the choir room.
Please join us for our next meeting, **Sunday, January 28.**



COME SING WITH US! We need you!

Choir practice is held each Wednesday at 7:00 pm.

Now is the time to think about giving God your glory by joining our choir here at Bethany. We pray that you will consider joining us.



GOLDEN AGERS

Will not be meeting in January... have a Happy New Year!



KNITTING & CROCHETING MINISTRY meets each Monday at

2 pm, no experience necessary. Working on projects for our church as well as for outside our congregation. Bring your needles, hooks and yarn and join us. We will meet in "Fox Den" in the Peeler Bldg. Call Karen Shaw with any questions at 828-328-8665.



QUILTERS meets each Wednesday at 4 pm. We need your help in putting together some quilts. Please come and join us in the Quilters Room located in the Peeler Building.



These dates are open for placing flowers on the altar during 2018, please feel free to contact church office at 322-5002.

January 7, January 14, February 4, February 11, March 18, April 1, April 8, April 22, June 10, July 8, August 12, August 26, September 2, September 30, October 7, October 14, November 11, November 25, December 2, December 9, December 16, December 30

WEDNESDAYS TOGETHER MINISTRY
will be starting back for the new year on
January 10, 2018

Many thanks to our cooks, serving & clean up teams and our dessert makers each week for their faithful service here at Bethany on Wednesday evenings. We need everyone's help in order for Wednesdays Together to continue.

We need a few more folks to help clean up after the meal time. Would you please consider helping? Contact Carol in the church office.

We would like to see our Mid-Week Celebration begin with worship, then a meal, followed by a great time to be together in other ministry opportunities.

Please invite others to come out with you and be a part of this great fellowship and ministry here at Bethany each Wednesday evening.

5:15 pm	Mid-Week Service
6:00 pm	Dinner
7:00 pm	Choir

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD ~ Check it out! Please stop by and see what's going on in your area. This bulletin board is located across from the church office. Lots of important information and events that you can take advantage of.

DEAR MEMBERS....YOU'VE GOT MAIL ~ Do you check your mailbox each Sunday? Hopefully the answer is "yes." Don't want you to miss out if something important has been placed there. Thanks from your friendly mail carrier.



Our food drive for CCM is an ongoing service project. Please keep bringing items for the needy. Food supplies are running low and the need is great. Place in the BLUE collection bin in hallway.



God has asked that we study his word and especially bring the little children unto Him and to bring them up in the word of God.

Sunday School is not just for kids.
Getting into God's Word is awesome!

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES ~ We encourage everyone to find a class to attend and grow together in God's Word.

SUNDAY SCHOOL Classes

Held each Sunday morning at 9:30 am.

We encourage everyone to find a class to attend and grow together in God's Word.

Ladies & Men's Class ~ meets in the Margaret Pauline Deaton SS Classroom

Children's Class ~ meets in the Peeler Bldg – 2nd room on right



For ages from Birth to 3rd Grade

Children's Church for age's birth to 3rd grade.

Children's Church will follow the Children's Time message which is held in sanctuary until communion.

Our "Little Faith Builders" leaders are very excited to start this ministry and will be available to assist in taking your child over to Children's Church.



OPPORTUNITIES ~ Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us every day.

THE SPIRIT'S HAND will continue to move the patients to the chapel. Need volunteers each third Sunday of each month (**January 21**) to help move residents at Trinity Ridge to and from Sunday Worship. Helpers need to be there by 3:45 pm; chapel begins at 4:30 pm. We have been asked to recruit at least one more helper. Keep up the faith and prayers!

EVANGELISM/SOCIAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE ~ Our monthly meeting will be held this month on **Tuesday, January 8 at 6 pm. (Please note the date change)** Please consider joining this most important Committee, as it reaches out into the community and spreads Bethany's mission to **BE THE CHURCH!!!!** Thank you.
Beth Brittain & Linda Lutz, Co-chairs

The EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE is embarking on a new partnership with the Hickory Soup Kitchen. Thanks to Cindy Johnson, Tommie Johnson, Patsy Nikbakht and Linda Lutz who volunteered (were BEING the Church) at the Hickory Soup Kitchen on December 19 as Bethany's representatives. **If you are available on Tuesday, January 16 to spend a two hour time period at the Soup Kitchen between 7 AM and 1 PM, please let Linda Lutz know.** This date is so important because as we are celebrating Thanksgiving this same week with a bounteous meal and family fellowship, many of those who live among us in the Catawba Valley area are very hungry, very cold, and very alone. We thank God for the ministry of the Hickory Soup Kitchen.

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTRY provides to our shut-in members with means of visits and communion. Our shut-in members are very important to us and they love the visits.
If you wish to go with Roger and Gene to visit our shut-in members please contact Roger at 310-7120 so they can plan with you a date and time. We would love more people being involved in this ministry with our shut-in's. It's very rewarding!

"MINISTRY OF THE MONTH"

Evangelism/Social Ministry Committee has decided that each month they will choose a ministry in our area to sponsor by collecting donations at our Wednesday's Together. The month of January we have chosen to adopt **"Hickory Soup Kitchen."** *Thanks for helping in this ministry.*



MONTH OF JANUARY

Meeting at Bethany this month:

Group Mary – No meeting is scheduled at this time for January.
Patsy Nikbakht, Chair

Group Ruth – Meeting on **Sunday, January 7** at 2:30 pm
Becky Buchanan, Chair

SAVING TABS FROM CANS~ Group Mary is now collecting tabs from drink cans for Ronald McDonald House service project. Every tab means money to help. A collection basket has been placed near the CCM food bin for your convenience in the hallway. Please start saving and bring each Sunday. Thanks, Patsy



We encourage **all men of Bethany** to come out and be a part of Bethany's Men in Mission. This month's breakfast meeting is on **Sunday, January 14 at 7:30 am at Snack Bar**. Looking forward to seeing you then.

COMMITMENT CARDS ~ As of December 3 we have received 28 Pledge Cards indicating a commitment of \$94,018.00 for 2018 in the amount of \$180,643.00. As things currently stand, our current commitment stands at only 52%.

If you have not turned your pledge card in yet, please do so. Extra cards can be found in the narthex.



CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED

New Year's Day
Monday, January 1



Those who are serving our congregation during 2018:

President: Linda Lutz

Vice-President: Robbie Mozeley

Secretary: Melonie Harmon

Treasure: Terri Childers

Congregational Life: Terri Childers / Tommie Johnson

Evangelism/Social Ministry: Beth Brittain

Finance/Stewardship: Melonie Harmon

Property: Robbie Mozeley / Ken Harmon

Worship & Music: Dot Alexander

Youth & Family Ministry: Tammy Locke

OUR SINCERE THANKS goes out to the following who have serviced on Bethany's Congregational Council for the past 2 years:

*Bill Buchanan ~ Cindy Elder ~ Brenda Fox
Tina Hart ~ Wynda Howerton ~ Sabrina Pendry*

Thanks for a job well done, but remember just because you're not on council doesn't mean you're not to be active and involved within Bethany's Ministry and Missions.

COUNCIL MEETING

Council will be held **Tuesday, January 9th - 6:00 pm**. Please notice the time change from 7 pm to 6 pm.

REMINDER TO COUNCIL MEMBERS (YEAR END REPORTS): Please get your reports into the church office by Monday, January 8th for the Yearbook.

SPECIAL NOTE TO COUNCIL MEMBERS: Please check your mailbox weekly to see if you need to sign off on purchase orders and if by chance other important items might have been placed in your mailbox during the week that needs your immediate attention. *Make sure your council reports are turned in to the office one week prior to that month's council meeting so packets can be ready to be picked up and read prior to the meeting.*

Installation of 2018 Officers of Congregation will be held next **Saturday, January 6, 2018** during the Feast of the Epiphany Service at 7 pm. All Officers are asked to be in attendance.

Those who are serving our congregation during 2018:

President: Linda Lutz

Vice-President: Robbie Mozeley

Secretary: Melonie Harmon

Treasure: Terri Childers

HEARTFELT THANKS for all those that volunteered to make our sanctuary beautiful for Christmas: Brenda Fox and Richard Fox, Gene Rector, Kevin Reed, Ken Harmon and Roger Webb.

Thanks to those that helped put the poinsettias out and kept them watered. The church was beautiful and the services were even more so.

Thanks to our organist and choir members who put in a lot of time to practice and to lead us during our Christmas season in songs and music. Beautiful!

And last but not least, thanks to Pastor Pierson Shaw for his dedication in preparing the services and his message here at Bethany during December. His ministry here at Bethany is so very much appreciated and enjoyed.

“Thank you good and faithful workers”.

THANK YOU to everyone who contributed in any way to the success of our Angel Tree project. Members delivered the clothes, toys, shoes, and much needed food to a very deserving family whose child attends SW Primary School. This six year old, along with her 4 year old brother and 3 year old sister, will have gifts under the tree and a variety of food in their pantry. We now know that this is what “being the church” is about: reaching out to others who may not be as fortunate as some of us here at Bethany. Thrivent’s generous grant plus the generosity of our members enabled us to accomplish our goal, and we thank everyone who helped make this possible. May we all continue to “Live Generously” in the coming year. Merry Christmas to everyone!! *Evangelism/Social Ministry Committee*

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

January Birthdays

1/1	Jan Middleton
1/4	Liam Reese
1/6	Mary Emma Smith
1/10	Rodney Pope
1/12	Beth Brittain
1/15	Ivory Powell
1/18	Mary Helton
1/19	Terri Childers
1/21	Tammy Poovey
1/23	Kevin Middleton
1/23	Jennie Reece
1/30	Thel Alexander

*This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Psalm 118:24*

January Anniversaries

1/12	Larry & Denise Powell
1/18	Jason & Carmen Watson
1/31	Paul & Elaine Johnson, Jr.

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.' 1 Thessalonians 3:12

(Please call the church office with additions or corrections to this list)

The Prayers of Intercession

WE PRAY FOR ALL PEOPLE IN THEIR DAILY LIFE AND WORK;
FOR OUR FAMILIES, FRIENDS, AND NEIGHBORS, AND FOR
THOSE WHO ARE ALONE.

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SHUT-IN:

Gene & Lucy Alexander • Dean Compton • Lucy Frye • Mary Ellen Glass •
Ruby McCray • Lucille Marshall • Calvin Mull • Gail Reese •
Frances Reinhardt • Ray Ritchie • Virginia Whisnant • Martha Witherspoon

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED OF HEALING, ESPECIALLY:
MEMBERS OF BETHANY

Helen Barger • Bill Buchanan • Jackie Childers • Terri Childers •
Pam Connelly • Brenda & Richard Fox • Lucy Frye • Mary Ellen Glass •
Melonie Harmon • Wynda Howerton • Theda Isenhour • Max Johnson •
Kathleen Plemons • Jayden Poovey • Payton Poovey • Zachary Poovey •
Gene Rector • Nancy Seagle • Glenn & Novella Shoaf • Ray & Sherry
Stilwell • Roger Webb • Virginia Whisnant

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Roger Abernathy • Gennie Katherine Blanton • Willie Blanton •
Arthur Brittain • Alice Buck • Rachel Burke • Jennifer Clinch •
Paul Cody • Pat & Richard Correll • Coty Davis • Summer DeHart •
April & Steve Ewaka • Tony Frye • Cathy Gibson • Alice Godbey •
Jessie Harmon • Debbie Hayes • Curtis Kiziah • Rader Kiziah •
Dickie Locke • Mary Norris • Leon & Rozelle Owen • Ricky Powell •
Diane Rappaport • Elizabeth Roberts • Lisa Robinson • C.P. Shaw Sr.
Betty Sherrill • Erin Sipe • Dot Sisk • Ethel Smith • George Watson •
Peggy Woods



Family of Berlie Kanipe Deal
Family of Edward "Bud" Winebarger
Family of Danny Williams

PARISH DIRECTORY

ALL BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS, MINISTERS

The Rev. Dr. Timothy Smith, BISHOP

The Rev. Dr. C. Pierson Shaw, PASTOR

Carol Alley, SECRETARY

Thomas Bumgarner, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Cindy Elder, CONGREGATION COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Robbie Mozeley, CONG. COUNCIL VICE-PRESIDENT

Linda Lutz, CONG. COUNCIL SECRETARY

Terri Childers, CONGREGATION COUNCIL TREASURER

CHURCH PHONE: (828) 322-5002

CHURCH FAX: (828) 322-5005

E-MAIL : secretarybethanylc@gmail.com

Visit us on the Web: www.bethanyhickory.org

PASTOR PIERSON SHAW: (828) 328-8665 (home)

(828) 238-9065 (cell)

E-MAIL: pastor@bethanyhickory.org

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday – Friday 8:30 am – 4:00 pm.

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Purpose Statement

“Gathered to worship, sent out to serve, and continually enlightened by the Word.”

Mission Statement

As Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church we are:

“devoting ourselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

December 2017

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

January 2018

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

February 2018

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

Sunday	Monday 1 <i>Office Closed</i>	Tuesday 2	Wednesday 3	Thursday 4 6:00p Worship & Music Mtg	Friday 5	Saturday 6 7:00p Feast of the Epiphany Service Install Officers of Congregation
7 8:30a Early Worship-Communion 9:30a Sunday School 10:30a Late Worship-Communion (Baptism-Aaliyah Carlson) 2:30p Group Ruth	8 2:00p Knitting/Crocheting 6:00p Evang/Social Ministry Mtg	9 6:00p Council	10 4:00p Quilters 5:15p Mid-Week Service 6:00p Dinner 7:00p Choir	11	12	13 6:00p Council Dinner
14 7:30a LMIM Breakfast Mtg 8:30a Early Worship-Communion 9:30a Sunday School 10:30a Late Worship-Communion	15 2:00p Knitting/Crocheting	16 <i>Hickory Soup Kitchen Volunteers</i>	17 4:00p Quilters 5:15p Mid-Week Service 6:00p Dinner 7:00p Choir	18	19	20
21 8:30a Early Worship-Communion 9:30a Sunday School 10:30a Late Worship-Communion 3:45p Spirit's Hand-Trinity Ridge	22 2:00p Knitting/Crocheting	23	24 4:00p Quilters 5:15p Mid-Week Service 6:00p Dinner 7:00p Choir	25	26	27
28 8:30a Early Worship-Communion 9:30a Sunday School 10:30a Late Worship-Communion	29 2:00p Knitting/Crocheting	30	31 4:00p Quilters 5:15p Mid-Week Service 6:00p Dinner 7:00p Choir			



JANUARY 2018 RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITY	January 7	January 14	January 21	January 28
Assisting Minister(8:30)	Tammy Locke	Tommie Johnson	Tammy Locke	Tammy Locke
Assisting Minister(10:30)	Karen Shaw	Cindy Elder	Linda Lutz	Melonie Harmon
Children's Church(10:30)	Denise Powell	Tammy Locke	Denise Powell	Tammy Locke
Communion Assist.(10:30)	Cindy Elder	Becky Buchanan	Wynda Howerton	Karen Shaw
Crucifer (10:30)	Jordan Pendry	Gene Rector	Haley Sabey	Gene Rector
Sound Board	David Elder	Ken Harmon	David Elder	Ken Harmon
Greeter (8:30)	Tammy Locke	Tammy Locke	Terri Childers	Mary Emma Smith
Greeter (10:30)	Larry & Denise Powell	Roger Webb	Glenn & Novella Shoaf	Linda Lutz
Bell Ringer (8:30)	Tammy Locke	Marcus Johnson	Nathan Childers	Tammy Locke
Bell Ringer (10:30)	Larry Powell	Larry Powell	Larry Powell	Larry Powell
Altar Flowers	Mary Helton	Brenda Fox	Nancy Brittain	Miriam Sluder
Care Givers	Cindy Johnson Mary Emma Smith	Becky Buchanan Theda Isenhour Roger Webb	Novella Shoaf Gene Rector	Cindy & David Elder Nancy Brittain
Teller Duty	Robbie Mozeley	Terri & Jackie Childers	Cindy & David Elder	Melonie & Ken Harmon
Ushers (10:30)	Robbie Mozeley's Team			
Altar Guild	Susan Drum, Wynda Howerton, Gene Rector, Roger Webb			
Wed. Together Desserts	1/10: Nancy Brittain Theda Isenhour Tommie Johnson Denise Powell	1/17: Dot Alexander Jackie Childers Karen Shaw Mary Emma Smith	1/24: Cindy Elder Mary Helton Tammy Locke Mary Moretz	1/31: Nancy Brittain Theda Isenhour Tommie Johnson Denise Powell
Serve & Clean Up Teams	1/10: Jackie Childers Beth Brittain Tammy Locke Larry Powell	1/17: David & Cindy Elder Tommie Johnson Larry Powell	1/24: Larry Powell Patsy Nikbakht Donna Bush Gene Rector	1/31: Jackie Childers Beth Brittain Tammy Locke Larry Powell

NOTE: If you are unable to fill your assignment, please contact another person to serve in your place.

Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church
1644 Main Ave. Dr. NW
Hickory, NC 28601

★ For
unto
you is
born this
day in the
city of David
a saviour, which
is christ the Lord
luke
2:11