



# BETHESDA BEACON

Bethesda Presbyterian Church | Aberdeen, NC | December 2024

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear members and friends of Bethesda Presbyterian,

I pray you are well in this holy season—if indeed we can keep it holy! Advent and Christmastide are seasons of the year the Church dedicates to contemplating the mystery of the First and Second Coming of Jesus Christ and responding in kind with acts of worship and charity.

So often, however, this season proves to be one that is absolutely antithetical to any serious reflection on our faith. Many of us are entirely too busy. We have events to attend, place to go, and people to see. If we are not hosting family and friends, then we are on the road toward family and friends. Ironically the breakneck pace of Christmas time makes it very difficult to make time for God. Then there is the eating. Many of us have to make that New Year's resolution to shed a few pounds because we know that this season is a time for feasting. Indeed so much of the busyness of the season revolves around consuming food and drink. Speaking of consumption, what about shopping? During this season, most of us will not only gain some weight but likely lose some dough. Most of us not only spend too much money but also too much time preoccupied with purchasing the right gifts.

The point is, all of these activities are sure to make for a hectic instead of holy season. What can we do? How can we slow down? How can we ensure that this season is a season set apart for God?

Pray, fast, and give. These are three things you can do. They won't make the season holy as such, but they are three spiritual disciplines that can safeguard you from the temptation of wasting this season. When you feel the temptation to rush and constantly be on the go, stop and take the time to pray. Make sure that you are drawing near to God. When you find yourself at dinner parties, big breakfasts, and surrounded by good food and drink, don't over do it. This really is the purpose of Advent. If Christmas is for feasting, Advent is for fasting. As far as money goes, remember that the season is not truly about giving gifts for your loved ones—it is actually about giving gifts to those in need. So when you are buying, remember to make offerings to those in need.

Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving—these are three ways you can set aside this season and keep it holy.

Your pastor and brother, Rev. David Priddy

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# Celebrations & Concerns

# December Birthdays

November was Stewardship Month at Bethesda as well as our month of Thanksgiving! We are grateful for our many members and helpers that took part in all the events on campus throughout the month.

We commissioned Travis Driggers as a Sunday School teacher on November 3rd and Dan Wiener as our Stephens Ministry Leader on November 10th.

Our Time and Talent Fair was well attended on the 10th. Thank you to all the committees for providing information and some pretty great snacks!

The last week of November was very busy. We had our Consecration Sunday, elected our officers for the coming year, our Presbyterian Women hosted our Thank Offering luncheon, we had our Community Thanksgiving Service at Page UMC, a blood drive, and hosted our annual Thanksgiving Day lunch!



Prayers and sympathy to the family and friends of Jane Sandroock who passed away November 16 at the age of 94. Jane was a quintessential Southern Lady and long-time member of Bethesda. She will be missed.

- 2 Nora Andersen
- 4 Theo Ardinger  
Laura Byers
- 5 John Wilson  
Nora Driggers
- 6 Ashtyn Adams
- 7 Wyatt Roth
- 8 Liam Priddy
- 11 Craig Fogleman  
Eli Ferguson
- 12 J Cunningham  
Ashlyn White  
Ashley Keith
- 13 Bob White  
Brittany Driggers
- 14 Keisha Smith
- 16 Larry Smith
- 18 Dan Wiener
- 19 Hester Combs
- 21 Harold Williams
- 24 Reggie Smith  
Luke Jacobs
- 26 Flow Hollister
- 27 Haley White
- 28 Hunter Jessup
- 30 Sam Cunningham
- 31 Ginger Wilson  
Rhys Priddy

# Music Notes

I hope you all had a nice Thanksgiving. Our joint service with Page Memorial was a meaningful gathering. It is really moving to watch people renew old friendships and to see people of different denominations come together to worship. Now we move into Advent. We will have a joint Christmas Eve at 5 pm, December 24th. If you did not make the Thanksgiving service, I hope you will make a special effort to come and experience that sense of community and Christian Service. As usual this season is PACKED!!

December 1st 9:00 am was our Hanging of the Greens- Many participated in decorating the Sanctuary with the season's greenery and the Chrismon tree. We heard the Lessons and sang the Carols to begin this time of anticipation, excitement, and penitence. We then adjourned upstairs for breakfast and fellowship. At the 11:00 service the children will sing, "I Saw Three Ships" and the Chancel Choir presented "Will We Know Him."

December 8th Merry Hearts Preschool will bring smiles as they sing for us. 5:00 pm will be the Moravian Love Feast in the Fellowship Hall and we are excited to have Cathy Carpenter and her student, Teresa Numbers, present harp music. Throughout the service, there will be singing of carols.

December 15th will be our Lessons and Carols service. Along with the nine lessons, there will be plenty of Christmas music. You will have an opportunity to sing along with the choir. The children, our quartet, and at least one trio will enhance the service.

December 22nd Moore Brass will bring the spirit of the Season. Our choir and the children will sing.

December 24th at 5 pm, as mentioned above, will be a joint service with Page Memorial. Of course, everyone is invited. We will have a combined choir.

December 25th 9:30 am Christmas Day Service to once again celebrate our Savior's birth. This is a short, family friendly, service. It is another chance to hear God's word and sing carols!

December 29th we will celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord and our last chance to sing the music we love.

Come join us and experience the true message of love and joy during this season.

Blessings,

Earlene

# Youth and Family Ministry Programs

**Bethesda offers programs for the spiritual growth of the whole family.**

**Family Fun Night** The first Sunday of the month from 4:30-6:30 pm. This family Bible Study is perfect for families with children pre-K through 5th grade. It includes dinner, music, games, and crafts.

**Faith Weaving Friends** This program brings together 2nd-5th graders every third Friday of the month from 5:30-7 pm. It includes fellowship over dinner, Bible study, and fun!

**Bethesda Youth Group (BYG)** Geared toward 6th-12th grade students, BYG meets some Sundays from 5-7 pm (check the calendar for exact dates). Each meeting includes dinner, recreation, and a Bible Study. **NOTE:** The Youth Group is looking for adult leaders to help plan & lead activities. The church's leadership is currently working to figure out the best way to proceed with our youth program. If you would like to help in any way, please contact the church office

**Adult Bible Studies** Various Bible studies are offered throughout the year. Check our website for more info or contact the church office to receive notifications.

**Presbyterian Women's Circles** Our women's Bible Study groups meet monthly from September to May. Bethesda offers four women's circles that meet on various days and times. Please see page 9 for all the details and contact information.

**Men of the Church** Gathering quarterly on the first Thursday of the month, Men of the Church enjoy fellowship over dinner, a devotion, and discuss mission, outreach, and congregational support opportunities. Check the church calendar for meeting dates and times.

**Sunday School Classes** meet at 10 am on Sundays after the breakfast hour.

- **Nursery** (Ages 0-2) Our youngest learners enjoy time in the nursery reading books, singing songs, and learning through play and exploration.
- **Lower Elementary** (Ages 3 - Kindergarten) Utilizes curriculum to teach foundational Bible knowledge. Children enjoy activities, crafts, games, and imaginative play to learn and reinforce lessons.
- **Upper Elementary** (1-5 Grade) Utilizes age appropriate Sunday School lessons while keeping children engaged through crafts, games, and fun.
- **Junior and Senior High** (6-12 Grade) Studies different books of the Bible, comparing and contrasting stories and characters.
- **Parlor Class** Studies different books of the Bible as well as theological books to gain a deeper understanding of the Word, how it applies to the world today, and to strengthen faith.
- **Jesse Wimberly** (Adult) Utilizes *The Present Word* curriculum series to facilitate instruction and discussion.
- **The Seekers** (Adult) Currently studying the Gospel of John, this class studies and discusses how they can apply God's Word together.



# Youth Update

The Youth Sunday School class is currently watching Season 2 of The Chosen. Some things that have stood out so far: Jesus healing the crippled at the pool on the Sabbath, meeting John the Baptist, and Simon the Zealot. Jesus keeps telling everyone he is preparing a special message he will give and we will find out what that message is by the end of the season.

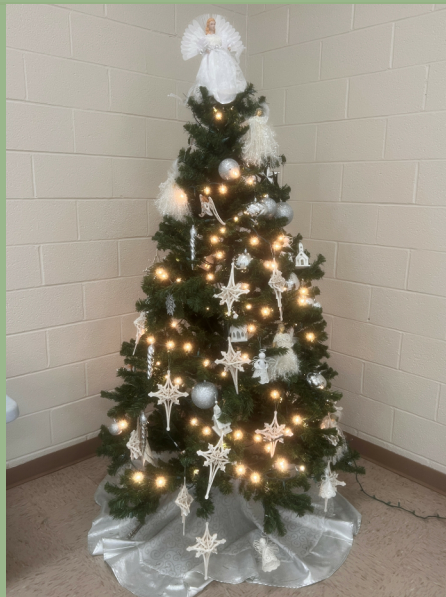
A Christmas Henster Adventure: Saturday Dec 7th (evening). Do you hear the bell? If not, you will. Make sure your name is on the list (not the Naughty List) for your ticket to be punched. There might be even a few special guests such as the Grinch (somebody who is probably on that naughty list), Frosty, Santa's elves, or even better, Henster's Elves. So all aboard the church van, as we head to the magic of Christmas, where there will be LIGHTS, CAMERA (of course), and ACTION.

In case of snow or rain, there will be a plan B (a place that haven't been to in a long time).

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## Girl Scout Troop 624

Thank you to our local Girl Scout Troop, who meets at Bethesda, for decorating the Fellowship Hall tree this year. The girls did a great job!



# November Events at Bethesda



2024  
Time & Talent  
Fair



Merry Hearts  
Annual Thanksgiving Day Program

Bethesda's Thanksgiving Day  
Lunch





# Evangelism

## The Heidelberg Catechism Study

For the past month the Heidelberg Catechism questions have been about **Sin** and the proofs of our sinfulness. We have discussed Original Sin, Actual Sin, Sin per se and Sin by accident. We have also discussed the causes and effects of Sin.

With Questions 8-11 of the Heidelberg Catechism, we will discuss **Freedom of Will**. We must remember that at this time the Church and State were one and the same – God's Laws were the laws of the state. As such, the principal question to be considered is *What is Freedom of Will?* We will consider whether Liberty which is in God differs from that which is in his creatures, angels and men, and whether there is any Freedom of the human will within his four-fold state. Also discussed within the context of Freedom of Will, are the limits of this freedom and the punishments, or unpunishment, of sinning.



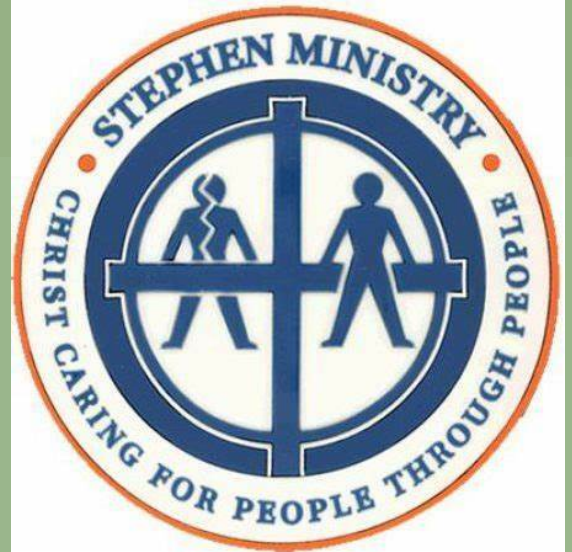
**Faith Presbyterian Church** Rev. Henry D. Wood came South with his wife Annie as part of a vanguard of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, dedicated to helping freed African Americans organize churches and schools. He brought wide experience with him. Born free in New Jersey, he had fought in the Civil War with the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, sailed with the U.S. Navy, and graduated from Lincoln University. By the fall of 1879 Wood was assigned as a licentiate. He was to be the primary assistant for Leonidas Rutherford at Carthage, Cool Springs, and Blue's Crossing (later Faith of Aberdeen), and to aid Thomas Hargrave at Nazareth Church in Cameron and Memorial Church in Spout Springs. Rev. Wood was instrumental in naming Faith Church (Aberdeen) and John Hall Chapel (Carthage). There will be more historical information on Faith next month.



Thanks to historian Jill Snider for providing background.

# Stephen Ministry

## Stephen Ministry Theology



Thinking about becoming a Stephen Minister?

Stephen Ministers are lay congregation members trained to provide one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or relocation. Stephen Ministers come from all walks of life, but they all share a passion for bringing Christ's love and care to people during a time of need.

Stephen Minister training is a Christ-centered experience that equips participants with essential caring and relating skills. Trainees learn how to listen to, care for, and walk with those going through difficult times in life. The training consists of ten (10) two and one-half (2.5) hour sessions. Upon successful completion, you will be commissioned as a Stephen Minister.

Subsequently, you will be matched with a person experiencing a life crisis, the Stephen Minister meets with that person on a weekly basis, usually for one hour, to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support. The caring relationship lasts as long as the need for care exists. It is a Life-Changing Experience for both the Care Receiver and Care Giver (Stephen Minister).

Stephen Ministers meet twice monthly, for two and one-half (2.5) hours, to provide their progress reports, and to receive mutual support and feedback (on a confidential basis). During these meetings, the Stephen Ministers also receive continuing education. As such, your time commitment is roughly 9-10 hours per month.

Is God Calling You? If you sense that God might be calling you to serve as a Stephen Minister, the first step is to find out more from a Stephen Leader or Stephen Minister, and fill out an application. Applications are available in the Church office.



# Opportunities, Initiatives, & Administrative Notes



**BETHESDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**Nov. 28**  
Noon to 2:00 pm  
**Community Thanksgiving**  
Meal in Fellowship Hall

**Dec. 1**  
9:00 am *Worship Service*  
**Hanging of the Greens**

11:00 am *Worship Service*  
**with Communion**

**Dec. 8**  
11:00 am *Worship Service*  
**Merry Hearts Preschool Sunday**

5:00 pm  
**Lovefeast in Fellowship Hall**

**Dec. 15**  
11:00 am *Worship Service*  
**Lessons and Carols**

**Dec. 22**  
11:00 am *Worship Service*  
**Moore Brass**

**Dec. 24**  
5:00 pm  
**Community Christmas Eve**  
**Service at Bethesda with**  
**Pastor Eric Joyce preaching**

**Dec. 25**  
9:30 am  
**Family Christmas Day Service**

**1002 N. SANDHILLS BLVD. ABERDEEN**  
*- the church with the lake out front -*



## The Bethesda Christian Crafters

will have their pillow cases for sale from now through Christmas.

Pillow cases will be \$20/pair and all proceeds will go back into the crafting coffers to support their mission.

Look for the table in the breezeway after worship service or contact Leslie Champion for more information.

# History Corner

Submitted by  
- Shaw Ray

## Christmas

Christmas is the star on top of the tree.

Christmas is a carol in the night.

Christmas is the gift of a cloak when a coat was asked.

Christmas is gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the needy, the humble, and the sorrowing.

Christmas is a present of truth wrapped in beauty.

Christmas is "good tidings of great joy" to a wicked, weary, and incredulous world.

Christmas is a stocking hung with faith and filled by love.

Christmas is homecoming, the orange glow of an open door on the blue snow shadows  
with well-remember in the background.

*originally printed December 22, 1955 in the Pilot*



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### **Sunday Schedule**

9:15 Breakfast

10:00 Sunday School for all ages

11:00 Worship Service

See our calendar on our website  
for days and times of youth  
events.

