



Bethesda Presbyterian Church | Aberdeen, NC | April 2025

A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear friends and members of Bethesda,

This month takes us into Easter-time. The Gospel of John, chapter 20, paints a picture of the first Easter as one of disciples rushing around in the twilight, frantic to find Jesus' body. Mary Magdalene is up before the sun to get to the tomb. It's empty so she rushes to find the disciples. Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved run together to the tomb in response to her report. In many ways, we too are like that during Easter. We rush around. We hasten. We are so busy. If you notice in the Scripture, Jesus never appears when the disciples are running around looking for His body. He springs on them when they don't expect it. Mary Magdalene is the first to encounter Jesus. She doesn't find Him in the tomb. She doesn't find Him on the trail. She doesn't really find Him. The Risen Jesus finds her. He calls her by name when she is in the midst of tears, when she is at a loss. It is when she is devastated that she can't find her Lord that the Lord speaks to her. How can we prepare for Easter this season? I think we look around and take stock of where we don't sense God's nearness in our lives. And, we allow ourselves to weep and be devastated by His absence there. The truth is we probably aren't devastated by His absence in certain parts of our lives. The parts we isolate, compartmentalize and keep away from Jesus. Places of sin and pride. These days before Easter notice where the Lord isn't in your life. It may not be a place of sin. It may be a place where you are hurting and do not find relief. It may be an area you have never thought to bring into contact with your "religious life." Take stock of these places. It is probably there, more than anywhere else, that the Risen Christ will show up and bring you new life. - Pastor David Priddy

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Celebrations & Concerns

April Birthdays

Please keep the families of Ruth Sinclair and Neill Caldwell in your prayers. Ruth passed away March 5 and her funeral was held March 11 at Bethesda.

Neill passed away March 13 and his memorial service was held March 29 at Bethesda.

The memorial service for Chuck Dearborn will be held April 6 during our 11 o'clock worship service.

Merry Hearts Preschool Sunday was March 30. We had a great turnout and enjoyed lunch and the kids' art show after the service!



- 1 Mary Katherine White
- 4 Patrick Hardison
- 6 Kim Clark
- 10 David Henry Priddy
- 12 Elena Roth
- 14 Matt Forbis
Leslie Champion
- 17 Gail Cunningham
Chris Auman
- 17 Linda Parke
- 19 Natalie Patton
- 20 Joe Gradzewicz
- 23 Eleanor Hamme
Nancy Clark
- 24 Cookie Crowley
- 25 Jim Shaffer
- 26 Curt Proctor
Erin Jessup

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

Finally, the Youth Sunday School class has finished the book of Acts, all 28 chapters. The past two years, the class has read Luke and now Acts (I recommend these two books should be read together). The books take us from the birth of Jesus to the spreading of the Gospel through different Apostles, especially Peter and Paul. In Acts we learn Paul's journey was not easy, especially after becoming a disciple for Jesus. The mobs were always trying to kill him, he was arrested, shipped off to Rome (his request when he appealed to Caesar), shipwrecked on the way, a viper fastened to his hand, and finally he ended up preaching in Rome where Luke ends his writing. Now, if you want more details about Paul, you will need to read his letters/books in the Bible. A question one must ask oneself, what can we learn from Paul as well as the others found in Acts including Peter, Phillip, Barnabas, John Mark, Aquila and Priscilla, and many others. One major thing is for us to remember is God can and will use anyone. Paul went from being a persecutor of Christians, and was good at it, to one of the greatest disciples who spread the word all over, even to Rome. He influenced many on the way. In fact Luke's last words are 28:31 *Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.* This is while he was in Rome for two years.

On Saturday March 29, the youth and some adults went on an Henster Adventure Hike. Like all adventures, they did not know where they were going.

Clues:

1. It will be roughly 2 miles but will be more if adventure out some.
2. Rocky Top
3. Never know if Bigfoot will be around
4. Breath taking views
5. Rocky Mountain High (Got you singing the John Denver song now)
6. Rock & Roll
7. You might even learn something and see something out of the ordinary.

We went to the Ridges Mountain Nature Preserve. We went back in time to the ice age and hiked among the boulders. As we were hiking we got on the red trail (the rock climber trail) where we saw some rock climbers coming in with their gear. We tried to follow but they disappeared. Our very own youth were amateur climbers and tackled some of the easier boulders, but you can tell they were still high above the ground. The weather was great, a breeze, not much pollen at that high level, and the dogwoods were blooming. See some pictures on the following page. We finished up with lunch at American Roadhouse, where no one wanted to try the frog legs. Oh well, maybe next time.

Where will the next Henster Adventure be? - Henry Hogan

Music Notes

The children have started practicing for Palm Sunday and we have several new members. They sound great and lift my spirits every time I get to work with them. I know they will make you smile when you hear them. On Palm Sunday we will start the service with Christ's triumphant entry and will end the day with the beginning of Holy Week. We will have scripture readings and special music. There will also be a Maundy Thursday service and a Good Friday Service. Both will be at 7 pm in the sanctuary. On Easter Sunday, Moore Brass will help us celebrate the resurrection. Please plan to join for these special services.

Blessings,
Earlene

Youth Outing



Evangelism

As we have discussed before, evangelism is the sharing of the message and teachings of Jesus Christ. It is delivering the message that Jesus Christ is not only the Son of God but also gave His life as a sacrifice for our sins. We have also discussed the six approaches/styles: direct, intellectual, testimonial, interpersonal, invitational, and service. That which we have not discussed are the three levels of receiver groups: Church Family, Community, and World. At Bethesda, we view the church family and community as one – given our close ties to the Aberdeen community. Let's look at Bethesda's Evangelical activities:

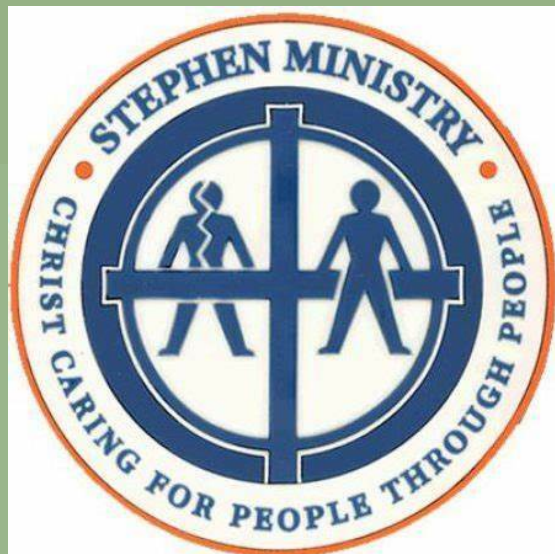
Through the posting of our church services on the internet, the pastor's sermons, our Westminster and Heidelberg Catechisms reviews, and our prayers, we are reaching all levels. Within the Church Family and Community, we are continuing to advertise the Church in Pilot and Pilot-related publications. We are also revitalizing our Stephen Ministry, participating/sponsoring the Easter Egg Hunt, Date Night, Pre-school Sunday, birthday celebrations, Catechism reviews, lemonade on the lawn, and greeters. We also support the Aberdeen Christmas parade. In the past we have supported missionary activities in Asia.

As a church, we have much, of which to be proud.

Presbyterian Women

In keeping with our "Year of Bethesda Heritage," the Women of the Church invite you to join us for a tour of the Old Bethesda Cemetery at 2:00 PM on Sunday, April 13th. David Keith will conduct a walking tour through the older parts of the cemetery, providing insight into the families who built our congregation, with some interesting comments about life in the early days of this community. After the tour, return to the picnic area for some tasty sweets, lemonade, and fellowship.

Stephen Ministry



The good news is the training of a new cohort of Stephen Ministers for Bethesda is going well. By Easter, we will have completed over 30 hours of instruction, including themes of: a Process Approach to Caring, Assertiveness: Relating Gently and Firmly, Maintaining Boundaries in Caregiving, Crisis Theory and Practice, Confidentiality, and using Professionals and other Community Resources. The cohort group will be quick to point out that they'll still have 20 hours to go.

We ask you to keep our trainers and the cohort group in your prayers as they teach/learn the practical ways to live out the reality that a Stephen Minister is the Caregiver and God is the "Curegiver."

Opportunities, Initiatives, & Administrative Notes

Memorial Service for Chuck Dearborn

April 6, during the 11 o'clock worship service

Family Fun Night Easter Egg Hunt

April 6, 4:30 pm

Red Cross Blood Drive

April 7, 10:30-2 pm in the Fellowship Hall

PW Year of Bethesda Heritage Walking Tour

April 13, 2 pm Old Bethesda Cemetery - all are welcome



- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| April 13 | Palm/Passion Sunday Worship 11 am |
| April 17 | Maundy Thursday Worship with Communion 7 pm |
| April 18 | Good Friday Worship 7 pm |
| April 20 | Sunrise Service at Old Bethesda Cemetery 7 am
Easter Worship with Moore Brass 11 am |



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www.bethesdapres.church

Easter Breakfast Sign-Up

[Bethesda Presbyterian Church: Easter Breakfast](#)

Bethesda Christian Crafters

The Christian crafters will meet on April 24th 1 pm in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome. Our project will be backpacks for Samaritans Purse. If you have questions please call Leslie Champion at 910-220-1616

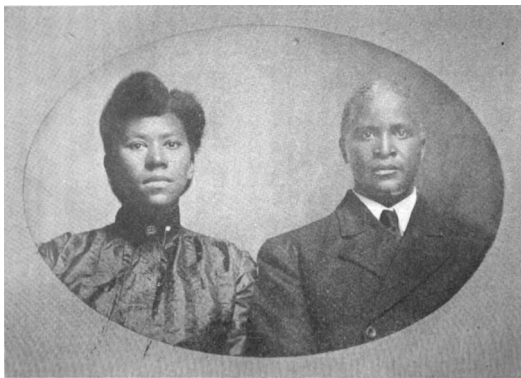
Habitat for Humanity

Apostles' Build Pastor's Day is April 24. Bethesda is asked to help on any of the weekends in May and June where there are volunteer openings.

Opportunities, Initiatives, & Administrative Notes



Faith Presbyterian Church



WILLIAM JONES RANKIN AND WIFE



SARAH LINCOLN ACADEMY

Last month we introduced you to Pastor William Rankin and his wife Elizabeth. In 1894 they moved to Aberdeen where they quickly noticed the lack of facilities for the education of Black children. They began a school in their home which grew into the Sarah Lincoln Academy. First known as the Aberdeen Preparatory School, it's name was changed to the Elizabeth School in honor of Mrs. Rankin whose indefatigable efforts made the school possible. In 1903 the school was turned over to the Board of Missions and at the request of one of its benefactors was re-named Sarah Lincoln School and finally, by action of the Presbytery, made Sarah Lincoln Academy. The school remained open until 1930 when public school options were available.

Dr. Rankin served as pastor at Faith Presbyterian Church in Aberdeen and Emanuel Presbyterian Church in Southern Pines. He was instrumental in erecting new houses of worship at both sites. The Faith Church building standing today was built in 1894 shortly after his arrival. Dr. Rankin was twice a member of the General Assembly of PC USA. He served as Moderator of the Synod of Catawba from 1909-1910. He was also Moderator of the Yadkin Presbytery three times. Not active in politics, he and his wife continued to work in their community for years patterning their lives after Him "who went about doing good."

History

Friday, February 23, 1945

Churches Unite in Service on World Day of Prayer

Members of the various denominations in town met at Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church Friday afternoon for the observance of World Day of Prayer, an observance which has spread until it now reaches into more than fifty countries. Mrs. Dan S. Ray, president of the auxiliary of the hostess Church welcomed the assembly and led in the opening unison prayer, after which the impressive program adopted by the Elected Council of Church Women was followed with many women from area churches as leaders of the responsive readings. Mrs. T.K. Gunter, Jr. was soloist accompanied by Mrs. Dan R. McNeill at the piano. A freewill offering for four missionary objectives was made. Members of the American Legion Auxiliary sat in the body.

submitted by: Shaw Ray



Aberdeen, NC 28315

<https://bethesdapres.church>

[Facebook.com/bethesdapres](https://www.facebook.com/bethesdapres)

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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.

