



Bethesda Presbyterian Church | Aberdeen, NC | May 2026

A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear friends and members of Bethesda Presbyterian Church,

Brothers and sisters, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a promise. It is a promise that if you follow Jesus, if you live a life of sacrificial service, if you live a life of love, then you too will be raised. This is good news. Because if you follow Jesus, if you live a life of sacrificial service, if you live a life of love, then it will most certainly be suffering love. It most certainly will be cross-carrying love. It most certainly means you have to battle the powers of evil and death. But we can follow our Lord Jesus, we can lay down our lives for others, and we can love—because Jesus invites us to share in his victory, too.

I hope you had a great Easter.

I wanted to kick off this Beacon with a quotation from the end of my Easter sermon to remind you that Easter is not over. It is an ongoing liturgical season, yes, but, more than that, it is also an invitation to live a certain way, to live a life of sacrificial service and suffering love. For the Christian, Easter is a promise and a challenge: a promise that Jesus Christ will share eternal life with you, and therefore a challenge to live in service to others. That is my hope for Easter, and that is my hope for Bethesda.

This Easter season, let us pray that God would make us a community that can pour out our lives for others in Christlike service because we believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Amen.

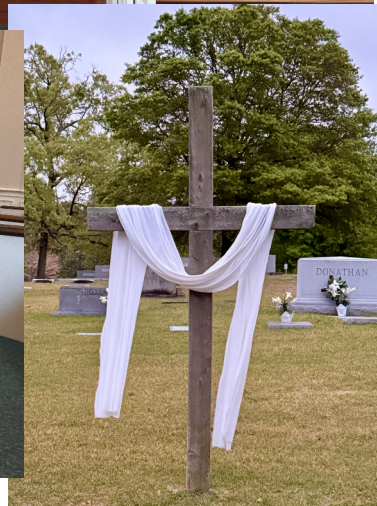
Rev. David Priddy

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May Birthdays

Scenes from Easter



- 1 Dell Crumpton
Dean McNeill
- 2 Kitty Kuzminski
Ian Blue
Mary Lawrie
- 7 Michael Bean
Paula Cadell
- 10 Logan Cunningham
- 11 Georgia Proctor
Ron Schuch
- 12 Tammy Clarke
- 14 Tom Blue
- 15 Amelia Driggers
- 17 Mary Wilkinson
- 19 Jakob Gorba
- 21 Lisa McDonald
- 23 Jimmy Gorba
- 24 Jean Snively
- 26 Trinity Andersen
- 28 Jackson Smith
David Keith
- 29 Sam Smithson
- 30 Mike Pace



Easter Poem

His Love

God sent His Son to take the punishment
For all the thoughtless, sinful things we do;
Jesus gave his life because He loves us;
His love is boundless, sweet, forever true.
On Easter morn He showed He is our Savior;
His resurrection proves He is our Lord.
That is why we tell you, "Happy Easter!"
He secured our heavenly reward!

By: Joanna Fuchs

Submitted by: Shaw Ray



Egg Hunts

Our Recreation Committee hosted an Egg Hunt on April 4th and our Merry Hearts kids had thier egg hunts before they left school for Easter Break.



Merry Hearts

Our Merry Hearts Preschool has had a busy few weeks! We had Preschool Sunday at church on March 22 followed by lunch and their art show.



April 17th the kids had their annual Zoophonics Parade and lunch. This is always a favorite day on campus!



Henry's Sunday School Update

As we wrap up the Sunday School year, we are trying to finish reading the book of Psalms, or as we like to say, David's journal. We do not know how you could sing some of these Psalms. We do get to feel how David felt and realize how much he is like us today. In fact, as we read, some of the chapters could be written today during our times. We have read through Ch. 79 so far; here are some notable ones:

Psalm 58: Seeking God's justice. Read this Psalm and see if you can relate it to our times. In fact like Solomon said there is nothing new under the sun. Can you see someone standing up today and saying this?

Psalm 61: David is praying for security. Notice what he is not asking for (material items) but what God can give us. Maybe we should be doing more of this. In fact, continue reading 62 and 63.

Psalm 65: Reminds us God provides abundantly to us.

Psalm 67: Joy, spread the Good News.

Ch. 68: Remembering God's glory and power.

Ch. 69: Crying out for help in trouble.

Ch. 70: An urgent prayer for help.

Ch. 71: God's constant help.

Ch. 72: The perfect King (note Solomon is credited for this one.)

Ch. 73: It appears the wicked is winning but not the lasting rewards of the righteous (when you read this one, can you relate it to today's world).

Ch. 74: A plea for God to help his people.

Ch. 75: God is the final judge, the wicked will be dealt with.

Ch. 76: A call for God to punish the wicked.

Ch. 77: Remembering God's help from the past.

Ch. 78: Lessons from history (the Exodus story).

Ch. 79: In times of injustice and being outraged, cry out to God but not against him.

Keep Your Light Shining!!

Henry

BYG Update

On Saturday April 25, the Bethesda Youth Group (BYG) went on a Henster Adventure to Starworks. Once again, they knew where they were going but not what they were doing. This time even had two special guests go along with us, Ashtyn and Kim. It is time to start with the clues that I gave out each week.

1. Creative possibilities
 2. Matthew 5:13
 3. Colossians 4:6
 4. Mark 9:50
 5. Daniel 3:17 (hopefully you recall this, you better)
 6. Revelation 9:2
 7. Job 10:9
 8. Isaiah 64:8
 9. Jeremiah 18:1-6
 10. Romans 9:21
 11. SHAKE, RATTLE, AND ROLL
- They got to make Salt and Pepper Shakers and a few other items under the great instructor Casey. Smiles, laughs, and creativity was had by all.



Music Notes



Welcome spring and Happy Easter. We still have several Sundays left in the Easter season and our music will continue to focus on the resurrection. I am really proud and thankful for the hard work the choirs did during Lent, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Easter Day. The pieces they offered for Worship were varied in genre and quite difficult. They did a beautiful job. The children were absolutely a joy. It never ceases to amaze me how quickly they learn. I want to talk briefly about the last song sung on Palm Sunday when we visited the cross. "The Crown" by Adams is quite difficult, not only in terms of notes and parts but in terms of bringing the message of the crucifixion and a passing tribute to the resurrection. The song is in a minor key and is presented from Mary's point of view as a mother. She pictures a crown of gold and then the scene changes and she sees a crown of thorns. As a mother, parent, or Christian there are few thoughts that could hold more anguish. Adams ends the song with a Major Chord which is musical foretelling of the Resurrection. A powerful piece that is hard to sing but I felt the choir really told the story well. Many thanks to Katherine Stuber and Mikaela Priddy for their help. As always their music is beautiful and meaningful.

Blessings, Earlene



May 3 - Bethesda Hosts Presbytery Session Records Review

No Session/Deacons Meetings in May

May 21 - Merry Hearts Graduation

May 24 - Pentecost Sunday (wear **RED**) - Special offering for local benevolences. Lunch sponsored by Mission/Evangelism after worship service.

May 31 - Trinity Sunday - last Sunday the Chancel Choir sings before summer hiatus.

June 7 - Youth/Graduation Sunday

June 14 - Bethesda Presbyterian Women Birthday Lunch/Offering

June 22 - Red Cross Blood Drive in Fellowship Hall 10 am-2:30 pm

Heritage

The Heritage Committee, consisting of Kristy Ransdell, David Keith, Mary Lawrie, Julie Formanski, and Pastor David Priddy, recently took a field trip to visit the heritage rooms at Ephesus, Summerville, and Barbeque Presbyterian Churches. The group is gathering ideas for revamping our heritage items to make them more accessible to everyone.





Adventure awaits at Bethesda Presbyterian Church's Rainforest Falls VBS!

Step into a world bursting with colors, creatures, roaring waterfalls, and towering trees! At Rainforest Falls VBS, every day is a brand-new expedition filled with excitement, fun, and unforgettable discoveries. Kids will explore powerful Bible stories, grow in faith, build lasting friendships, and dive into hands-on activities that make learning about God an unforgettable journey.

Grab your gear, invite your friends, and join us for a week of faith, fun, and adventures you won't want to miss!



Bethesda Presbyterian Church
1002 N. Sandhills Blvd.
Aberdeen, NC 28315

DINNER WILL BE SERVED!

Enjoy dinner, a Bible story, music, crafts, games, STEM activities & more!



REGISTER NOW:

<https://bethesdapres.church>



Register online: <https://bethesdapres.church> or call the church office, 910-944-1319 for a hard copy.

VBS is for children age 3 yrs - 12th grade. Nursery is available for children 2 yrs and under. An adult VBS is also offered. Call the church office for details.



<https://bethesdapres.church>
910-944-1319

Presbyterian Women

2026 PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Birthday Offering

"May the God of hope
fill you with all joy
and peace in believing,
so that you may
abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit."

—Romans 15:13*



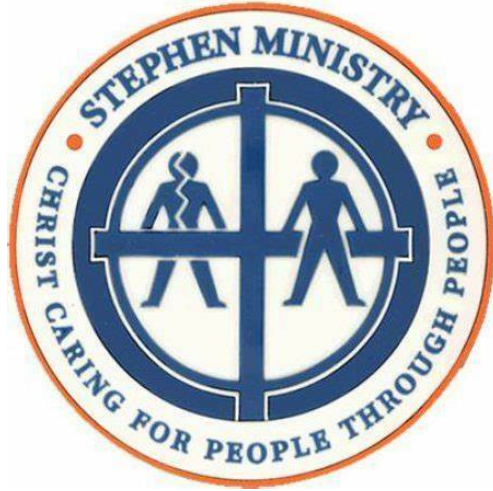
Learn more about the Birthday Offering of Presbyterian Women by visiting presbyterianwomen.org/birthday.

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The women of the church will host a luncheon for the annual Birthday Offering after church on **June 14th**. The offering supports missions of the Presbyterian Women. We will also hold a bake sale at the same time to fund our local efforts. Please consider making a baked item, and having lunch with us for a time of fellowship and giving. Joyce Robinson will be making calls for the bake sale.

Stephen Ministry



As we celebrate our twenty-fifth year as a Stephen Ministry church this month, we are also celebrating the fifty-first year of Stephen Ministry in the world.

As a reminder, the organization is named for St. Stephen, one of seven deacons appointed by the Apostles to distribute food and charitable aid to poorer members of the community in the early Church (Acts 6:5). The mission of the Stephen Ministries organization is summed up in St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians. "To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13).

Stephen Ministry is a lay caregiving program that specially trains members of a congregation to offer confidential, one-to-one Christian care to people experiencing life challenges: grief, medical diagnoses, relationship conflict, loneliness, life transitions, and more. A trained Stephen Minister meets weekly with a care receiver, offering presence, prayer, listening, and encouragement grounded in Scripture and Christian compassion.

People often ask whether volunteers can really provide meaningful care. The answer is a resounding YES, because the training is extensive. Stephen Ministers typically complete around 50 hours of structured training, spread over several months. This training covers: Christian caregiving foundations, Confidentiality Boundaries, Listening and Empathic Communication, When to Refer to Pastoral or Professional Help, Grief and Crisis Support, and Caring for People in Long-term Difficulty. Furthermore, Stephen Leaders (those who coordinate the ministry) complete additional intensive training to ensure the program maintains accountability and quality. This is not "winging it." It is organized discipleship for caregiving ministry.

I have been approached by friends of potential care receivers with concerns as to how Stephen Ministry interacts with formal programs. Stephen Ministry is not counseling, and it's not a replacement for pastoral care.

- continued on next page

Stephen Ministry cont. from page 10

It is a structured, Christ-centered system that equips lay people to walk alongside hurting individuals in ways that complement both pastoral work and clinical care. Consider three important points:

1. Clear Role Boundaries: Stephen Ministers are trained to provide emotional and spiritual support; not to diagnose, treat mental illnesses, interpret trauma responses, or offer clinical advice. Their role is presence, prayer, encouragement, and listening; not therapy. For the clinical professionals, think of individuals who may qualify for specific Z-codes, Adjustment Disorders, Unspecified Anxiety or Depressive Disorders, and parental or marriage frustrations.

2. Emphasis on Referral: Stephen Ministry teaches lay caregivers to recognize when someone's needs go beyond lay care and should be referred to a pastor or a professional counselor. I've seen the power of referrals from Stephen Leaders who recognized that someone needed specialized help, a sign of healthy boundaries and mature caregiving. The great thing is that many times the individual continues to see the Stephen Minister and the client signs a release of information for the counselor to work with the Stephen Minister and other church staff who are amazing supports.

3. Complementary Relationship: When someone is in counseling and receiving Stephen Ministry care, the two supports work beautifully together, e.g. A grieving widow receive therapy for trauma, while a Stephen Minister visited weekly to pray, listen, and accompany her. Both roles were vital, but distinct. Stephen Ministry offers the consistency and spiritual companionship that many clinical environments simply aren't designed to provide.

When all is said and done the easiest way for me to help you understand Stephen Ministry is to remember the old Beatles' song refrain from the Care Receiver's perspective: *"I get by with a little help from my friends . . . I'm gonna try with a little help from my friends."*

Prayers and Sympathy to the family of Jackson Smith who passed away April 26.

Please Note: Bethesda Christian Crafters are no longer accepting fabric donations.

Mission/Evangelism

“As the Mission/Evangelism Committee, we will guide and encourage Bethesda to glorify God by proclaiming our faith in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in word and deed in our church and world”

Evangelism is the act of spreading the Christian Gospel (the "good news" of Jesus Christ) with the aim of persuasion and personal conversion; and a church mission is the God-given, organized effort of believers to proclaim the Gospel, make disciples, and demonstrate Christ's love locally and globally.

Your committee is active on many levels. Internally, we are supporting the new Audio/Visual subcommittee, which is looking at improving our services and on-line offerings. We are also offering Date-Night, Lemonade-on-the-Lawn, Auction, etc. to build our Bethesda community. Locally, we are supporting activities related to Faith Church and Page Memorial Church. Our global activities include support for the missions of the Pastor Forrest Strickland and his family in the UAE and Pastor Peter Kanjaye in Malawi.

Mark your calendars - MAY 25 - Pentecost Sunday. This will be our Minute for Mission service and we will be holding a luncheon after the service to discuss and the many other wonderful things your committee is doing.

Please continue to pray for those spreading the Gospel around the world.



Local Events



Healing through GARDENING

**A FREE GARDENING EVENT
FOR OUR NEIGHBORS LIVING WITH
DEMENTIA/BRAIN CHANGE & THEIR CARE PARTNERS**

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6 | 10 A.M.-3 P.M. | COME BY ANYTIME!

**Community Presbyterian Church
125 Everette Rd | Pinehurst**

Attendees receive fresh cut flowers, decorative containers, ribbon and helping hands in making Mother's Day bouquets for themselves and community members. No cost to participate.



Stained Glass Garden Art Raffle

by Artist Diane Flanagan

1 TICKET/\$10 OR 3 TICKETS/\$25 DONATION

PERFECT MOTHER'S DAY GIFT!
ON DISPLAY FOR THE EVENT
DRAWING SATURDAY, MAY 9



**QUESTIONS? CARRIE@STILLUS.ORG
GET A RAFFLE TICKET 910.800.3065**

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Faith Church



After seven long and tedious months, the original balcony windows (seen in the picture to the left) have been refurbished and reinstalled utilizing salvaged wavy glass from the time period of construction. This completes the twelve double-hung window restoration process for the church. We have now moved on to scraping, cleaning, and painting the back wall of the balcony and staircase. External washing and painting will commence soon as will some foundation work.

In April we entered into an agreement with Preservation NC. This will place a preservation easement on the deed to the church building and property as well as architecturally relevant contributing elements of the interior (columns, wainscoting, pews, bell, molding, and pediments). The organization is thrilled that the church and our restoration work will be protected in perpetuity.

If you'd like to make a tax-deductible donation to support the continued efforts to restore this historic church, please make checks payable to Friends of Faith and send to Bethesda's church office, or you can place your check to Bethesda Church in the offering basket with the designation in the memo line for Old Faith Church. Online donations may also be made, contact me for details.

Blessings and peace,
Julie



Aberdeen, NC 28315

<https://bethesdapres.church>

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

BPC28315@gmail.com

Sunday Schedule

9:15 Breakfast

10:00 Sunday School

11:00 Worship Service

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

