



Bethel Presbyterian Church

203 S. Kentucky Street
Kingston, TN 37763

To Contact Us:

Phone: 865.376.6340

Email: 1bethel@bellsouth.net

Website: www.bethelpcusa.org

THE OPEN DOOR

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December 2019

Dear Friends,

It's Advent once again. I know it may feel like Christmas with stores decorated, playing Christmas music and selling Santas and Snowmen along with wreaths and gifts items. Though merchants and the consumer culture have moved to the money making time of Christmas, we in the church are just beginning to get ready, not for the buying and selling of gifts necessarily, but for the Christ Child to be born once again.

It's hard to prepare and wait, to ponder and imagine what it means in our lives that the Christ child will be born again in stable, to poor parents, with smelly animals and shepherds as his first visitors. It's hard when "Deck the Halls" is blaring and at every turn we are reminded of what we need and what we need to give to others. The temptation to join the crowd and go along so that Christmas consumes us is strong, but the rewards of staying in Advent for four weeks are also great.

This year at Bethel, as we wait and prepare, as we ponder and imagine, we have the Straw for the Manger Advent devotional to guide us along. The acts of kindness and love that will provide straw for the manger are tangible things to do and see as we buck the cultural trend and celebrate Advent. They are also ways to help us imagine what it means for us that Christ is born again. It means justice, peace, love, light and joy not just for us, and certainly not just in the forms of presents under a tree, but for everyone through us.

Happy Advent. May your preparations be meaningful. May your waiting be fulfilled on Christmas Eve when at last the Christ Child is born and we can celebrate Christmas – just in time for the stores to move on to Valentine's day and our neighbors to put away their trees and wreaths. Still we will happily sing Joy to the World and Silent Night and We Three Kings all the way to January 6, 2020.

Grace and peace,
Wendy

Hanging of the Greens

Join us Sunday, December 8 for an afternoon of activities followed by dinner and worship. Beginning at 3:30, children and youth will join adults in making crafts, decorating cupcakes, and decorating the fellowship hall. Adults will also assist our Christmas basket recipients in collecting their basket items. The basket distribution will be in the Gathering Area. Everyone is welcome to join in the fun. If you would like to volunteer to help with crafts or basket distribution, please contact Jan Rybka or Joan Pharis for crafts and Mariana Oonk for baskets. Join us for dinner, worship and decorating the Gathering Area Christmas tree following the crafts and basket distribution.

Christmas Pageant and Supper

Please join us for the Christmas Pageant and supper on Wednesday, December 18th. We will share a potluck supper at 6:30 in the Fellowship Hall. The Christmas Pageant will immediately follow supper in the Sanctuary. After the pageant, we will enjoy finer desserts in the Fellowship Hall.



Service Outing Opportunity

Service outings near and far have long been an important part of Bethel's outreach. While visiting the Southwest in October, I explored prospects for an outing next summer. Since returning, I met with Reverend Neff and Service Team Chair, Sue Jones and exchanged follow-up e-mails with my SW contacts. At this early juncture, here are some tentative and general details about a possible outing.

- Several small, largely Hispanic Presbyterian churches in northern New Mexico and the Ganado Presbyterian Church on the Navajo Reservation (AZ) have indicated that they have needs that we might help them complete next summer. These include several small-scale carpentry, home repairs, and landscaping projects.
- This would require a mixed generational group of 12-15 participants that would include several adults with skills suitable to these tasks, energetic and willing youths, and several additional adults to work with the young people.
- Based on schedules here and out there, the second half of July appears to me the most opportune time for this to happen. Depending on travel arrangements, the outing would last somewhere between eight and twelve days.

Other details - including projected individual costs - will depend on responses to this opportunity. Toward that end, we will have an **organizational meeting after worship on Sunday January 12 in the Barber Library.**

In the meantime, if you have questions, would like to express interest in participating, or would simply like to know more, get back with me in person, by phone (376-2118), or by e-mail (mtbanker1951@gmail.com)

Mark Banker

H.O.M.E. Food Collection

Thank you to everyone who contributed food for our November HOME collection, which helps to support our local food pantry and helps feed hungry folks in our community.

For the month of December, our focus food will be **Baby Supplies** (diapers, pull ups, wipes, lotion, shampoo, diaper rash cream, baby bath, etc.). These and other non-perishable food items can be brought in throughout the month and placed in the HOME collection basket in the Gathering Area. Our in-worship collection will be **Tuesday, December 24th during the Christmas Eve Service at 8 pm.**



Laundry Love

Laundry Love will now be held on the second Tuesdays of the month for the remainder of this year. The date for Laundry Love is December 10.



Straw for the Manger

This year's Advent Devotional is titled: Straw for the Manger. Each day has a devotional as well as an action - something to do that helps us take care of those around us as we get ready for baby Jesus. Each Sunday, you will bring your straw with you to worship in order to place it in the little boxes that will be on each pew. The children will collect the boxes as they come down for the Children's Moment and place everyone's straw in the manger. By Christmas Eve, our manger will be filled with straw. All of our collective acts of love and kindness will provide a soft, warm place for baby Jesus to lay.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Worship

Join us for the Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Worship on Tuesday, December 24th at 8 pm. We will receive the Baby Jesus offering during the service for Hands of Mercy. Please bring baby items such as baby food, formula, diapers, wipes, shampoo, baby bath, lotion, etc. for babies in need in our

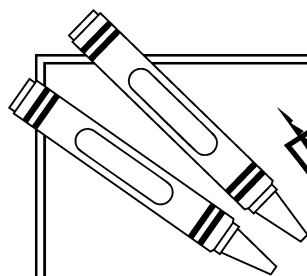


- 11 Krista Kolwyck
- 12 John Walker
- 13 Orlando Vanegas
- 14 Bob Jones
- Donna Walker
- 16 Ted Dailey
- 22 Tom Pickel, III
- 28 David Standridge
- Maria Vanegas
- 29 Jessica Choate
- Jim Schall

Reminders

- The Church office will be closed, December 25th and 26th for Christmas.
- Looking Ahead: the church office will be closed January 1st for New Years Day.





PUZZLE

Symbols of the season

Many traditional decorations convey the meaning of Christmas.

Directions: Use the picture clues to the right to complete the words. Then write the boxed letters in order to complete 2 Corinthians 9:15, NIV.



shepherd's staff _ ☐ ☐ _ _ _ _ ☐

tree that keeps its leaves _ _ _ _ ☐ _ _ _ _

shines to lead the way _ _ _ ☐

green for eternal life, ☐ _ _ _ _ &
red for Jesus' blood _ _ _ ☐ ☐ _ _

sounds to announce ☐ _ _ _ _
good news

has no beginning or end _ _ _ _ ☐ _

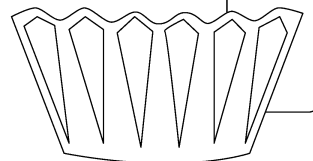
Th ☐ ☐ ks b ☐ to ☐ od fo ☐ ☐ is
indesc ☐ ☐ ba ☐ le gif ☐ !

2 CORINTHIANS 9:15, NIV

Answer: candy cane, evergreen, star, holly & berries, bell, wreath.
Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! 2 Corinthians 9:15, NIV

Light the way

Make some Christmas candles to remember Jesus, the Light of the world.



What you need:

- Unlined white notecards
- Hot glue (and adult help)
- Yellow tissue paper
- Mini muffin liners
- Clothespins

What you do:

1. Roll a notecard from side to side into a "candle" tube. Secure with glue.
2. Insert a piece of tissue paper "flame" in one end.
3. Glue the other end to a muffin liner. Then glue the liner to a clothespin.
4. Repeat to make many paper candles. Pin them to the branches of a Christmas tree.

December 2019

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5 Book Club 10	6	7
8 Hanging of the Greens 3:30 Children's crafts 5:30 Dinner and Service	9	10 Laundry Love	11	12 Women's Bible Study	13	14
15 Session 12:25 Caroling 4 pm	16	17	18 Christmas pageant and Supper 6:30	19	20	21
22	23	24 Christmas Eve Christmas Candlelight Service 8 pm	25 Christmas	26	27	28
29	30	31 New Years Eve				

EACH WEEK:

Bethel Arts Ministry: Art Club Monday 10-Noon & Monday 5-7 pm

Taoist Tai Chi: Tuesday 5:30 -7 pm, Friday 9:30-11 am

Choir Practice: Wednesdays 7 pm

Yoga: Thursdays 5:30 pm