

# BETHANY BEACON

*The Christmas Story and Beyond* By Rev. Colleen Samson

The Christmas story found in the first two chapters of Luke is a wonderful reading for people of all ages. Luke is the only gospel that gives us the details of that starry night. Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, the innkeeper, baby Jesus, and all of us are part of the story.

How many Christmas plays have you participated in or watched over the years? I have heard many of you tell about being in Christmas plays over the years at Bethany. The beautiful stored costumes are reminders of years gone by and the hard work by many people in preparing and setting the stage for the birth of Jesus. It is important to retell the story, for often we discover something new or have an epiphany about some part of the story. Who will you tell the Christmas story to this year?

In the days when I was growing up, it was the role of Mary that all the girls wanted. As I recall, I don't think I ever got to be Mary. But today, it is Mary's hymn of praise, the *Magnificat*, that moves my soul. This humble young girl who sees herself as God's servant is so willing to accept her call to be the mother of Jesus. Mary's devotion to God and her acknowledgement of God's glorious works are an example to all who want to be servants while on earth. Who could you talk to about Mary?

It was the part of the angel that was given to me year after year. Like many of you, I was probably chosen for the part of the angel because I was female; as good a reason as any. But, wasn't Gabriel a male? We tend to romanticize the part of angels and make them all pretty, blond girls with halos. Or, at least those who make angels for the top of our Christmas trees visualize them that way. Biblical angels are important figures who deliver important messages from God. In the Christmas story, an angel delivers God's message to Mary and Joseph. A multitude of angels appear to the shepherds, but it is Gabriel who speaks to them. Who will recognize you as an angel this Christmas season?

Most of us recognize all the important figures in the Christmas story, because

we have repeatedly heard the story. There are people who do not know the story. Who will you invite to one of our Christmas programs to hear this magnificent story?

But, how do you carry the Christmas story into January and beyond? How is Jesus being born into our lives at other times during the year? My reading of the gospel always refers back to Jesus' mission in this world and our responsibility to live out His mission. Let me start here---I believe that God creates anew continuing to unfold a plan for His Kingdom here on earth. Jesus continues to call ordinary people, like those in the Christmas story, to be His hands, feet, and voice in our world. And, the Spirit of Christ works within us to accomplish the work of bringing the Kingdom of God to earth.

During the season of Advent, we anticipate the coming of Jesus by lighting candles of hope, love, peace, and joy. These candles represent Jesus' coming reign on earth. Therefore, if we are the hands, feet, and voice of Christ, then all year it is our work, as disciples, to be about those things that represent Jesus Christ.

Who will you tell about the hope, love, peace, and joy of Christ? We have a great story to tell about the one who arrived on a starry night in Bethlehem. God loves each one of us equally. It is that love that everyone needs to know. Tell someone that God loves them. May your Christmas be filled with the love and peace of Christ and your New Year overflowing with hope and joy.

Blessings to all,  
Pastor Colleen



## BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

December 2013



January 2014

**2952 Bethany Church Road  
Claremont, NC 28610**

**Phone: 828-464-5194**

**Email**

**bethanyuccoffice@aol.com**

**Website**

**www.BethanyUccClaremont.org**

**Pastor**

Rev. Colleen Samson

**Pastor Emeritus**

Rev. Nevin Feather

**Minister of Faith Formation**

Pastor David Samson

**Director After School All Stars**

Brenda Josey

**Youth/Teens Minister**

Rev. John Barnette

**Interim Organist**

Jane Cadwallader

**Bethany Beacon**

**Co-Editors**

Vivian Cline

Donna Ervin

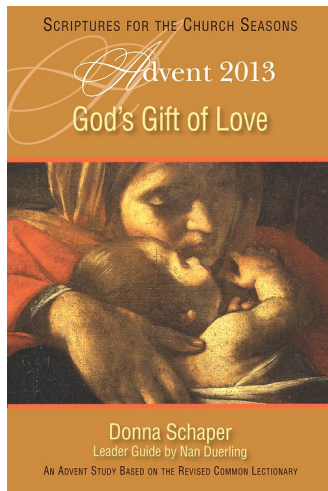
**Sunday Schedule**

Sunday School: 9:30am

Worship: 10:30am



**Mark Your Calendars**  
**Annual Congregational Meeting**  
**Sunday, December 8**  
**Immediately following the Worship Service**



**Adult Discussion Group Begins  
Advent Study on December 1<sup>st</sup>**

Advent is a busy and sometimes stressful time of year, but in *God's Gift of Love*, Donna Schaper reminds us that Advent also gives us an opportunity to slow down, recognize that God's love has found us, and live in peace. By changing our attitude and our understanding of time, we can prepare for and look forward to the coming of Jesus Christ. We can be ready to conceive God's love in us and reconceive our lives and our behavior toward others. Schaper's writing helps us understand that love is not a sentiment but a way of life that emerges from the knowledge that in Jesus Christ, we experience God's love.

*God's Gift of Love* offers the opportunity and challenge to appreciate and live in the amazing gift of God's love by studying the Revised Common Lectionary readings designated for Advent, Year A. Donna Schaper helps readers experience the blessings of Jesus' birth and Christ's second coming in the fullness of time. Donna Schaper serves as Senior Minister at Judson Memorial Church in New York City. She has also served churches in Florida, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Arizona.

*Submitted by Pastor David*

**Bethany Welcomes Teen and Youth Minister**

Rev. John Barnette has joined Bethany United Church of Christ of Claremont and Grace United Church of Christ of Newton as their Teens Minister.

In addition to serving as Teens Minister for those two churches, John will also be serving as the Youth Minister for Bethany UCC's children's programs and as the Regional Teens Coordinator for LINC Ministries, a collaborative outreach comprised of seven local UCC churches. John is excited about the upcoming year, and he is looking forward to getting to know the

youth and teens from Bethany and Grace churches as well as teens from other LINC churches and our community! Please contact Bethany United Church of Christ 828-464-5194 to see what Pastor John has going on!

**For more information on these events and other ministries of Bethany UCC, visit us at [BethanyUccClaremont.org](http://BethanyUccClaremont.org) and like us on FACEBOOK.**



# Bethlehem's *Child*



*May the Spirit of Christmas fill your hearts. Please join the Bethany adult choir on Sunday, December 22, at 10:30 a.m. for a Christmas Cantata.*



# Teens

For grades 7 - 12

Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12

By Pastor John

**Greetings!** It's Pastor John Barnette here. I'm excited to be serving Bethany United Church of Christ as your youth minister! Let me tell you a little about myself. I was raised right down the road in Lincolnton, North Carolina. After graduating from Lincolnton High School (go Wolves!), I took a quiet stroll down the road to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where I earned my bachelor of science in biology. I then went on to attend Gardner-Webb University's School of Divinity, from which I graduated with a master of divinity with a concentration in Pastoral Care and Counseling. My wife, Cathy, and I have been married for 5 years, and we have a wonderful 16 month old daughter, Charlie!

My personal interests include reading, horseback riding, tennis, and anything else outdoors. My ministerial interests include youth and teens ministry. I am passionate about helping young people grow in their relationship with Christ while also helping them find their place in the church community.

As we begin this journey, I am looking forward to getting to know each and every one of you! During our time together, as we laugh, learn, and play, we will form lasting relationships with each other and learn what it means to be brothers and sisters in Christ. I can't wait to see what God has in store for us!



## Mark Your Calendars!



### Winter Jam 2014!

We will be heading to Charlotte on **January 5** for "Winter Jam 2014!" Sign-up sheets will be available at Bethany UCC and Grace UCC. If interested please sign up by **December 15**. A \$5.00 deposit is also required upon signing up.

Unfortunately, if you have not signed up by December 15, you will **NOT** be able to attend.

More details to follow.  
Please contact Pastor John if you have any questions:  
828-292-9410.

**Sunday, December 1** – Come join the church as we deck the halls for Christmas! We will be hanging the greens at 3:00 pm. Then, at 5:15 pm, we'll load up the van and hop on over to Grace UCC to partake in their Love Feast Service (it will be cool, I promise!). After the service, we **EAT!!** Pizza will be provided! Parents, I'll bring the teens back to Bethany for pick-up at 7:00pm.

**Sunday, December 15** – Don't forget the teen Christmas Program and Social at 4:00 pm. We will then head on over to Grace UCC for fellowship and devotionals. We'll be back at the church by 7:00 pm.

**Sunday, December 22** – Let's **PARTY** – in tacky style!! At 6:00 pm, we'll be celebrating Christmas with the teens from the LINC Ministries churches with a "Tacky Sweater" party! Head to your local thrift store/Goodwill and purchase the **TACKIEST** Christmas sweater you can find and wear it to the celebration. If you can't find a tacky sweater, buy the first plain one you see and tacky it up! While you're there, pick up a funny, tacky gift that is \$5.00 or less (or bring some unwanted item that you've tucked away in the back of your closet **KEEP IT CLEAN, PLEASE!!**). We'll end the night with a round of "Dirty Elf" where we'll be exchanging our "beautiful" gifts! And, **YES!** There will be snacks and treats!



### Thanksgiving Sunday at Bethany

Pastor Colleen and Norma Boggs at our Can Tree and Lots of Food and Fellowship!



## **Christmas Excitement from Bethany After School All Stars**

Please come by the All Stars facility, and you will hear us practicing music for the Christmas play. The shepherds are herding, the angels are singing, and the wise men are studying the stars!

Our efforts will be presented on Sunday, December 15, at 4:00 in the afternoon. We would really like to have you present as we perform "Sing a Song of Christmas." We have enlisted several Bethany youth to help us make this a memorable moment for all. I promise that you will enjoy our efforts and come away feeling blessed with Christmas spirit just in time for this precious holiday. Remember, Sunday, December 15, at 4:00 pm, followed by refreshments in the church Fellowship Hall.

Report cards came out about a week ago. The grades were great, and each student should be congratulated. A and A-B Honor Roll ribbons were given to 20 students. We also saw your children receive Terrific Kid awards and Citizenship Awards. I am especially impressed with the grades of our 6-7 graders. Sometimes, at this age, they struggle a bit. Not our All Stars; they excelled! Please keep in mind that these are well- rounded students who participate in other activities. Our students take part in running clubs, volleyball teams, cross country running, basketball, football, swimming teams, cheerleading, and student councils. What a blessing they are for us.

We are very thankful for the up-coming December work that will give us new paint and floors. We have a lot to pack up but will be glad to do it for the needed improvements. It is also good to note that we now have a full size refrigerator. This was a generous donation from Duke Energy.

In January 2014, we will become a funded partner with Catawba County United Way. This will increase our visibility in the community and give us the opportunity to receive funding in a set amount for 2014. We will be telling you more about that in an upcoming newsletter.

We would like to say a special thank you to Ms Lou for all the delicious apples that we enjoyed for snacks. Thank you also to Pastor Colleen and Pastor David for a huge amount of wonderful snacks. We could not operate without your generosity. Thank you everyone for each can of kool aid mix, packs of crackers, or paper products for our children. They come in very hungry from school and need food before homework. Your generosity is a blessing to us.

When we are in the school and do not see familiar faces, it gets kind of lonesome. We sometimes feel as if we are here alone. I know that is certainly not true, because we feel your prayers. Thank you for your concern and consideration. Your prayers are the best way to help us as we teach these children.

Brenda Josey/Program Director  
Jeannine Poole/ Assistant Director



## Prayer List



If you want to activate the **Prayer Chain**, please call **Becky Cline at 828-464-4346**.  
Anyone can activate the Prayer Chain with a prayer request or gratitude for a prayer answered.

Faye Beard	Lyerly Cline (AL Pavilion 210)	Dorothy Lassinger	Richard Rizzo
Gina Beard	Raymond, Diane & the Michael	(Rm 106 - CVL at Rock Barn)	Daniel Sanford
Robert Belk	Cline Family	Kenneth Lockwood	Bob Shadowens
Linda Brooks	Barbara Dighton's Family	James Lowe	Judy Sink
Lena Campbell	Sheila Earp	Teresa Miller	Bill Wahl
Carl Cansler	Julian Gibbs	Hughleen Murray	Cindy Watson
Brian Chapman	Louise Harris	Nadine Pennell	O. D. Witherspoon
Bill Cline	Faye Hicks (in Hospice)	Gene Phillips	Jeannie Willis
Aileen Cline (AL HC 103)	Samuel Jarrett	Maxine Reinhardt	Clarise Witt
Elizabeth Cline	Donald Laney	(A L Pavillion Rm 123)	



## SERVING IN December 2013 & January 2014



### Elder of the Month:

#### December

Eddie Ervin

#### January (2014)

Steve Kale

### Liturgists:

#### December

1	David Samson
	<i>Isaiah 2: 1-5</i>
8	Lauren Stewart
	<i>Isaiah 11: 1-10</i>
15	Louise Setzer
	<i>Isaiah 35: 1-10</i>
22	<b>Choir Cantata</b>
29	Carolyn Kale
	<i>Matthew 2: 13-23</i>

#### January (2014)

5	Norma Boggs
	<i>Jeremiah 31: 7-14</i>
12	Vivian Cline
	<i>Matthew 3: 13-17</i>
19	Eddie Ervin
	<i>Psalms 40: 1-11</i>
26	Larry Sink
	<i>Psalms 27: 1, 4-9</i>

### Ushers:

#### December

Eddie Ervin  
Steve Kale

#### January (2014)

Gina Beard  
Jessica Laney

### Counting Offerings:

#### December

Lou Grandmaison  
Vivian Cline

#### January (2014)

Eddie Ervin  
Louise Setzer

### Staff -Parish Relations Committee

Rev. Samson's SPRC  
members are:  
Chris Brooks  
(459-4491)  
Becky Cline  
(464-4346)  
Vivian Cline  
(464-6471)  
Larry Sink  
(612-8042)

### Acolytes:

#### December

1	A.J. Ellison
8	Zach Stewart
15	A.J. Ellison
22	Zach Stewart
24	A.J. Ellison
29	Zach Stewart

#### January (2014)

5	A.J. Ellison
12	Zach Stewart
19	A.J. Ellison
26	Zach Stewart

### Childcare

### Providers:

#### December

1	Stacey Mosteller
8	Lynn Brooks
15	Louise Setzer
22	Vivian Cline
29	Gina Beard

#### January (2014)

5	Beth Cline
12	Stacey Mosteller
19	Lynn Brooks
26	Louise Setzer

### Happy Birthday!!



#### December

5	Leah Boggs
10	Lanie Stewart
21	Shon Kale
23	Katie Barrett
27	Becky Cline
28	Claudia Pope
30	Louise Harris

#### January 2014

4	Tommy Little
9	Joshua Stewart
13	Adam Smith
17	Lynda Wilkinson
23	Raymond Cline
23	Melissa Wike
24	Colleen Samson
26	Zachary Stewart

# Thank You!

To  
ALL WHO SERVE THESE  
MONTHS.....  
WE COULDN'T DO IT  
WITHOUT YOU!!!!



## WANTED--Audio Visual Team

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Are you someone who loves gadgets? Do you like making videos, running slideshows, fine-tuning microphones? Then Bethany needs you!

Members of our congregation have been curious for some time about how to increase our use of technology. Things that have been mentioned are better use of recordings or maybe live streaming of some worship services. Some would like to experiment with more audio-visual (AV) use in worship.

Our latest grant from the National UCC has provided funds for an initial investment in equipment to move us forward in taking on this challenge. But what we need is the talent and the time of those in the pews who know how to or who want to learn how to use it.

We need a Bethany AV Team. Our Church Council has requested that Joey Mosteller, John Barnette, and Beth

Cline form the core of the team, but we need as much help as we can get.

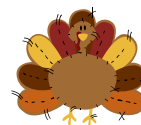
If this is of interest to you or you know of someone in our community who has A/V expertise - would you please contact me? I won't ask you to come to monthly meetings or to make a long-term commitment. But I might ask you to give us ideas on the best way to begin, what equipment is the best to use, or I may ask you to run a slideshow, or record a gathering. No matter what your particular interest or skills, I will definitely ask you to help us build a team that will use technology to strengthen connections within our congregation and reach out to our greater community.

*Please, contact me at [BethanyUccOffice@aol.com](mailto:BethanyUccOffice@aol.com).*

Thanks! Pastor David



**Senior Fall Outing 2013**



**Bethany United Church of Christ**  
**2952 Bethany Church Road**  
**Claremont, North Carolina 28610**

**Bethany is a  
Community of Justice  
and Peace serving the  
needs of people on  
their spiritual journey.**



**Rev. Colleen E. Samson**  
**Pastor, Bethany UCC**

**Phone: 828-464-5194**  
**E-mail:**  
**BethanyUCCOffice@aol.com**

**EVERYONE  
IS  
WELCOME**



**We Are on The Web**

**[www.BethanyUccClaremont.org](http://www.BethanyUccClaremont.org)**

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**Annual Congregational Meeting**

Sunday, December 8  
Immediately following the Worship Service

**Christmas Program & Social**

Sunday, December 15 - 4:00 pm

**Christmas Eve Service**

December 24 - 6:00 pm

**Remove Christmas Decorations**

January 5 - 3:00 pm

**Sunday Meeting Changes, January 12, 2014**

Worship Committee - 3:30 pm  
Deacons Meet - 4:30 pm - Council - 5:00 pm