

# BETHANY BEACON

**Making All Things New** *by Rev. Colleen Samson*

Frequently in the Bible, God promises to make all things new. In Isaiah 43: 16, Ps. 126: 2, 5-6; and Rev. 21:5, scriptures for one of our Sundays in Lent, God makes such promises to us as God's people. The Bible uses such beautiful descriptive imagery as "out of your fullness you cause life to spring up in barren landscapes." God **is** able to make a way in every wilderness we might encounter; a way to a new life.

These words from Isaiah 43: 16-19, "Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

As your pastor, I have prayed that God would lead us out of the wilderness and into a new life founded in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. No one ever said discipleship was easy. There is a cost of discipleship, and our God never promised that the road would not be bumpy. Having said that, it is our journey that we have traveled together as pastor and congregation, and I am thankful. Sometimes when I look out and see you from the pulpit, I think how my journey has been enriched by each of you. You have taught me a lot, and I hope my ministry is meaningful to you and acceptable to God.

Where do we go from here, and how do we get there? First, we have to keep listening and watching for God among us. Put your faith and trust in the One who has brought us thus far. We have to depend on God's nudge to give us direction. This is an exciting time. Lift up your voices and give God praise. Thanks be to God.

## **How to Listen and Watch for God**

1.) One way you can open yourself to hear God is through Bible study. The Monday night Bible study group will begin sessions on the minor prophets. This is a

timely study, for it will teach us how to have a prophetic voice in our community. What does that mean? What does it mean to have a voice proclaiming justice and peace? These are important questions. The group meets at 6:30 p.m. in the parlor and is open to everyone.

2.) Prayer needs to be continuous. A conversation with God requires both talking and listening. Sometimes in our prayer life, we forget to be silent and let God speak. After all, if we are asking for God's advice, then we should expect to get an answer. Invite God into your space. Ask what step to take next?

3.) Sit quietly. Meditate. Set aside a certain time to just sit and be quiet. There is so much noise in our world. Cable TV, phones, computers, iPads, Facebook-----they are good in some respects, but they are distractions. Sitting in silence for 15 minutes a day is good for your physical, mental, and spiritual health.

4.) Fellowship with other believers. God's voice is frequently heard in conversation with others. A person can say something to you and the Holy Spirit can be at work helping you to hear what you need to hear.

Life with God is exciting! God does extraordinary things. If you take a wrong turn, it is never too late with God. God can quickly get you on a better path, especially when we learn to listen.

Lent and Easter come early this year. The second Sunday in February is the first Sunday in Lent, and Easter arrives by the end of March. Lent is time for reflection and for turning toward God. I encourage you to give me your ideas for Lent this year. Do you want to fast together? Would like to have a special prayer group during Lent? Would you like to give something up or take on a new project for Lent? Think about it! Let's do something together.

May God make all things new for you and our church in 2016. And, may our relationship with God be strong, faithful, and produce healthy fruits.

# BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



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

**Phone: 828-464-5194**

**Email**  
**bethanyuccclaremont@gmail.com**

**Website**  
**www.BethanyUccClaremont.org**

**Pastor**  
Rev. Colleen Samson

**Pastor Emeritus**  
Rev. Nevin Feather

**Director After School All Stars**  
Leona Bolton

**Youth/Teens Co-Directors**  
Megan & Leslie Vann

**Interim Organist**  
Position available

**Bethany Beacon  
Co-Editors**  
Vivian Cline  
Donna Ervin

**Sunday Schedule**  
Sunday School: 9:30am

**"Behold,  
I am making  
all things  
new."**  
Revelation 21:5  
StudioJRU

## WE ARE NUMBER 1327!

When Bethany adopted our new Statement of Inclusion on December 13, 2015, it made our church eligible to be listed among the Open and Affirming churches of the United Church of Christ. Our statement is intentionally very broad and serves as an extravagant welcome to many who are excluded from other churches. We believe that using the word *inclusive* best describes how the Bethany congregation envisions their future.

Our Statement of Inclusion was sent to the national UUC church. In a response email from our national church, Bethany United Church of Christ has been welcomed as an Open and Affirming congregation by the national UCC Open and Affirming Coalition and will be listed among other such churches available to people searching for a church. Our ONA church number indicates the position of Bethany in the chronology of all ONA churches listed since 1985. At our annual congregational meeting on December 13, 2015, the vote was unanimous to accept our Statement of Inclusion that was written by members of our Church Council: Beth Cline, Jose De Jesus, Donna Ervin, Lisa Goins, and Lou Grandmaison.

**Our Statement of Inclusion:** *We are all one, unified in Jesus Christ, and we believe that we are called as Christians to be a Community of Peace and Justice. Therefore, in the Spirit, we the members of Bethany United Church of Christ declare ourselves to be an inclusive Church, open and accepting of all people without qualification including persons of any race, sex, age, nationality, marital status, physical or mental ability, economic status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or gender identity, and open and accepting of all family units including traditional, single parent, divorced, never married, same-sex, parents of LGBT, bi-racial or multi-racial.*

*We affirm the worth and dignity of all persons, just as Christ accepted all people he encountered. We believe that God's wondrous and inclusive love, Christ's church, and the Spirit's power are for all people, and that no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.*

*We invite all who share in this vision to join us in the full life, membership, leadership, employment, and ministries of this Church as we strive to work for peace and justice for all of God's people.*

*Submitted by Donna Ervin*

### LINC Outreach to Exodus Ministry

As we continue our participation donating items for individuals coming into the Exodus Program for rehabilitation, we will be collecting linens for a single bed, pillow, and blanket needed in the Welcome Packet for new residents. Good prices on these items can be found at Walmart or white sales during January. We also will collect paper towels, toilet paper, and dish detergent for Home Maker Packets for persons moving from Exodus into their own living quarters. All items we donate are taken to the LINC Gift and Thrift

Store where they are assembled and passed on to Exodus ministry. This is one more way our five LINC churches working together are able to reach out into the community and make a difference. Please support this ministry and donate as you are able. The donation bin is located on your left as you enter the narthex.

*"Life's most urgent question is: What are you doing for others?" by Martin Luther King, Jr.*

*Submitted by Donna Ervin*

### Interim Organist Resigns

Jane Cadwallader, our interim organist for the past three years, resigned from the position effective December 31, 2015. Jane, a very dedicated community volunteer and member and church worker at Beth Eden Lutheran Church in Newton, was elected as a state officer for the Women of the ELCA. This position often requires her to travel and be out of town. Therefore, she realized it was necessary to cut back on some of her extra jobs. We truly appreciate that Jane

was able to serve Bethany as long as she did. We also enjoyed having Jane and her husband, Joe, join us in many of our outings and events at Bethany. Their friendship and support has been a blessing. We wish Jane and all of her family well and hope she and Joe will have more time also to take some family trips.

We will honor Jane at a dinner meet and eat to be announced soon.

*Submitted by Donna Ervin*



**ADULT FAITH FORMATION**  
The Foundation of our Spiritual Growth  
Join any group, any time

**ADULT DISCUSSION** SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 9:30 AM

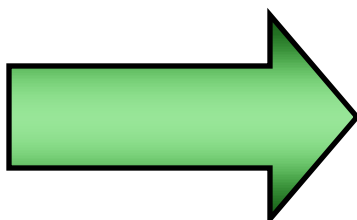
JANUARY 10	John 1-18
JANUARY 17	Luke 3: 15-17; 21-22
JANUARY 24	Luke 4: 14-21
JANUARY 31	Luke 4: 14-21
FEBRUARY 7	Luke 9: 28-43

**A LECTIONARY STUDY**

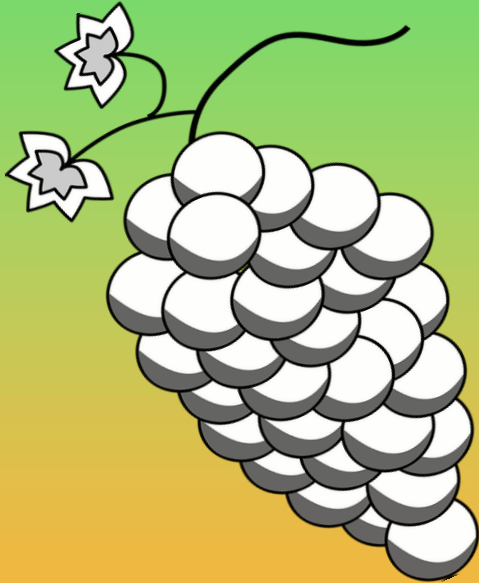
**MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY**  
**BEGINNING MONDAY, JANUARY**  
**11 AT 6:30 PM**

**LED BY SARAH BOSTIAN**  
**NOW STUDYING**  
**THE MINOR PROPHETS**

**THE**  
**PROPHETIC**  
**VOICE**



**LIVING THE QUESTIONS 2.0**  
**INTRODUCTION TO PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY**  
**ADULT DISCUSSION , SUNDAY MORNINGS FROM**  
**9:30-10:20 AM RESUMES FEBRUARY 14**



## **FRESH FRUIT** **& NEW WINE**

2016 Lenten Series  
Begins February 14, 2016

First Sunday in Lent

Sermon: The Temptations

Luke 4: 1-13

Second Sunday in Lent

Sermon: Fox and the Hen

Luke 13: 31-35

Third Sunday in Lent

Sermon: High Ways

Isaiah 55: 1-9

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Sermon: Everlasting Love

Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Sermon: Spring Forth

Isaiah 43: 16-21

Sixth Sunday in Lent

Sermon: Throw Off Your Coat

Luke 19: 28-40

Easter Sunday

Sermon: Resurrection Joy

John 20: 1-18

December was a busy month for youth and teens. Between Christmas plays and Christmas vacation, the kids have sure been busy. We had an excellent turn out for our play, and the kids did absolutely wonderful. I want to thank all of the staff and volunteers from Bethany All Stars. They made the play come to life and kept the kids excited all the way through. A special thank you also goes out to PDQ for catering the refreshments after the play.

It was nice to see the true meaning of Christmas come to life with the youth from Bethany. Children are often the most overlooked teaching resource that a church can have. Thinking about it now, do you think we would have drawn the same number of guests into our church without them? I think we can easily forget how important children are to spreading God's word. This is why we will continue to focus on getting our youth active.

Therefore, on January 23, together with Bethany All Stars, we will have a youth night at Skateland in Hickory from 3-7 pm. Beginning in February, I will

begin the process of setting up some baseball camp days for the months of March and April. This will be a great way for kids to get active. (providing weather conditions allow for outdoor activities) Watch for updates and details of dates and times.

For those of you who do not know, we are selling \$10 PDQ gift cards for only \$6. The purpose is to raise money for the youth and teens group here at Bethany. Our hope is to fill this spring and summer with even more activities. We have also started free transportation for anyone within a 5 mile radius of the church. One of the big things this will fund is a parents' night out. February's night out will be set at a later date when we can iron out the details.

*For any questions about Youth and teens please contact us!*  
*Megan and Leslie Vann*  
*Co-directors of Youth and Teens*  
*(828) 446-7860*

## **Progressive Christianity.org**

*(Spiritual networking and resources for an evolving faith)*

How do you see yourself? Does this describe what you think about Christianity? How do your beliefs differ? This is how Progressive Christianity.org describes a progressive Christian.

1. Believe that following the path and teachings of Jesus can lead to an awareness and experience of the Sacred and the Oneness and Unity of all life;
2. Affirm that the teachings of Jesus provide but one of many ways to experience the Sacredness and Oneness of life, and that we can draw from diverse sources of wisdom in our spiritual journey;
3. Seek community that is inclusive of ALL people, including but not limited to:
  - Conventional Christians and questioning skeptics
  - Believers and agnostics
  - Women and men
  - Those of all sexual orientations and gender identities
  - Those of all classes and abilities
4. Know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe;
5. Find grace in the search for understanding and believe there is more value in questioning than in absolutes;
6. Strive for peace and justice among all people;
7. Strive to protect and restore the integrity of our Earth;
8. Commit to a path of life-long learning, compassion, and selfless love.

Our Sunday Morning Adult Discussion Group has been studying Progressive Christianity. Are you interested but cannot attend on Sunday morning? Would you like to have an early evening group? See Pastor Colleen.



## Bethany After School All Stars News

We had a very busy holiday season with our After School All Stars! It seemed like no time at all between Halloween and Christmas. After many weeks of practice (before and after homework) and then even more practice and costume ideas, the day of the Christmas play "Santa Gives Back Christmas" was upon us Sunday, December 13. It finally came together with lots of help and was a success after all. The children who participated did a great job, and we appreciate all the additional help that we received during that time. A special thanks to Jessica Shook (aka Santa) for her tech expertise, Jane and Pastor Colleen for playing the piano during practices, and to Eva Rivera (Valeria's Mom) and my husband Bryan

for the building, painting, and set up of the scenery; also to Jeannine and Megan for keeping the children in check when necessary and, of course, the parents and other family members for their patience and support.

I know the children were looking forward to their Christmas break with their families. It is always nice to have a break of a few days to re-energize and get ready for the New Year and the new possibilities that go with the beginning of the year. Soon there will be extra homework with science projects and reading logs. We wish all of you a very Happy and Healthy New Year, and we really appreciate all the support from everyone.

*Ms Lee and Ms Jeannine*



Catawba County United Way  
Community Partner

## Prayer List

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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  
Dorothy Caldwell  
Bill Cline  
(Conover Rehab Rm.107-A)  
Elizabeth Cline (CVL 104)  
Lyerly Cline (AL Pavillion 248)  
Vivian Cline

Cecil Mae Feather  
(AL Pavilion 141)  
Louise Harris  
Kay Icard  
Jerry Laye  
Carol Neubert  
Cindy Watson  
Barbara Wireman

O.D. Witherspoon (CVL 105)



## **SERVING IN January & February 2016**

### **Liturgists:**

#### January

3 Beth Cline  
Psalm 147: 12-20  
10 Lisa Goins  
Psalm 29  
17 Norma Boggs  
Isaiah 62: 1-5  
24 Jose DeJesus  
Neh 8: 1-3, 5-6, 8-10  
31 Vivian Cline  
Jeremiah 1: 4-10

#### February

7 Eddie Ervin  
Psalm 99  
14 Larry Sink  
Psalm 91: 1-2, 9-16  
21 Lou Grandmaison  
Psalm 27  
28 Sarah Bostian  
Isaiah 55: 1-9

### **Elder of the Month:**

#### January

Eddie Ervin

#### February

Donna Ervin

### **Ushers:**

#### January

Gina Beard 3  
Beth Cline 10

#### February

Donna Ervin 17  
Eddie Ervin 24

### **Counting Offerings:**

#### January

Beth Cline 7  
Lou Grandmaison 14

#### February

*To be decided*

### **Safe Church Child Rep.**

#### January

Beth Cline 4  
Sarah Bostian 13  
Gina Beard 24  
Vivian Cline 3  
Beth Cline 14

#### February

Sarah Bostian 14  
Gina Beard 21  
Vivian Cline 28  
Beth Cline

### **Acolytes:**

#### January

Donna Ervin 3  
Vivian Cline 10  
Eddie Ervin 17  
Tommy Little 24  
Donna Ervin 31

#### February

Vivian Cline 7  
Eddie Ervin 14  
Tommy Little 21  
Gina Beard 28

### **Happy Birthday!**

#### January

Tommy Little  
Adam Smith  
Colleen Samson

#### February

Larry Sink  
Sarah Bostian  
Vivian Cline



*Thank  
You!*

*TO ALL WHO  
SERVE THESE  
MONTHS .....  
WE COULDN'T  
DO IT WITHOUT  
YOU!!!  
.....AND.....  
THERE IS  
ALWAYS ROOM  
FOR NEW  
VOLUNTEERS!*



**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.**

**NO MATTER  
WHO YOU ARE  
OR WHERE  
YOU ARE ON  
LIFE'S  
JOURNEY  
YOU ARE  
WELCOME  
HERE!**



**EVERYONE  
IS  
WELCOME**

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

**Phone: 828-464-5194**  
**E-mail:**  
**bethanyuccclaremont@gmail.com**



**We Are on The Web**

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

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

*Worship Committee Meet January 10- at 3:00 pm*  
*Deacons Meet at 4:30 pm*  
*Council Meeting 5:00 pm*

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*Evening Bible Study Mondays at 6:30 pm*

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*Fellowship and Yearly Planning Meeting*  
*Tuesday January 19 6:00pm*

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*Youth Night at Skateland*  
*January 23 3 - 7 pm*

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*Ash Wednesday Service*  
*February 10 7:00 pm*  
*Location to be announced*

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