



Bethany United Church of Christ

Embracing the Community

2952 Bethany Church Rd, Claremont NC 28610

www.BethanyUccClaremont.org and follow us on [facebook](#)

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Spring News 2021



From the Pastor's Pen...

Rev. Kathy Naish

It's February, and did you hear that the groundhog saw his shadow? Winter is still with us, and the forecasters tell us we have some very cold days to come. Here at Bethany, we're in two different camps regarding snow. Camp No Snow says, "If you want to see snow, go to the mountains." Camp Let It Snow says, "The faith of a snowflake can move the mountains to us!" (I remain a steadfast member of Team Let It Snow!) Snow or no snow, winter is here to stay for a while. So, in these wintry days, I have been thinking of the words of *Psalm 27:13-14*.

**"I believe that I shall see the
goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord;
be strong, and let your heart
take courage;
wait for the Lord!"**

Perhaps more than ever, this is a time to wait for the Lord, to believe that we will all see the goodness of the Lord in the "land of the living." As we wait for this pandemic to end, may we be strong and may we take courage, for God is good and life is a gift. Out of thanksgiving and gratitude for the gift of our own lives and the lives of our neighbors, we continue to do our part to bring the spread under control. We wear masks, social distance, and meet via Zoom. We look forward to the day we can meet in person, but we will wait for the Lord, wait for more vaccines, and wait for the goodness of life to be ensured for ourselves and our neighbors before we gather in our sanctuary.

So, happy winter, Bethany! Find ways to enjoy this season of ice and snow, hearth and home, waiting and caring. The goodness of the Lord is still with us!

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.**

Every Sunday Morning

Zoom Worship 10:30

Email: bethanyuccclaremont@gmail.com
for information to join.



February

- 3 Larry Sink
- 14 Sarah Bostian
- 17 Vivian Cline

March

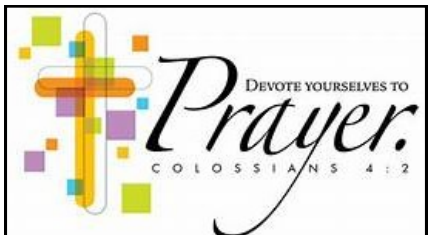
- 20 Gina Beard
- 23 Aris DeJesus
- 27 Jerry Pope
- 29 Beth Graham

April

- 23 Julia McCray
- 27 Jane Campbell

The Church that Prays Together...

It has been almost a year since we've gathered in our sanctuary, yet we remain a vibrant congregation, caring and involved in each other's lives because we pray together. Bethany UCC is a praying and praising congregation. We believe that God is good and that God is able, and so we continue to speak to God in thanksgiving, intercession, confession, and praise. We believe that prayer changes things and changes people, beginning with the people offering the prayers. We meet on Wednesday evenings and on Sunday mornings, sharing our lives with God and with one another. If you are not able to join on Sundays or Wednesdays via Zoom, you may call the church office, send an email, or an old fashioned letter, and let us know your needs. We would love to pray for you.



Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday Worship

The air still snaps with cold, but as the days lengthen, can Lent be far behind? There are many traditions of worship that won't be a part of Lent this year, but our traditions are only expressions of our hearts, symbols of the faith that is with us even when we gather over a computer screen.

It is an Ash Wednesday tradition to burn the palms waved in celebration at the past year's Palm Sunday. Even without that tradition, we acknowledge that hosannas will leave our vocabulary, waiting again for a triumphal Sunday morning. We cannot mark a cross of ashes on each other's foreheads or hands, but we can wait together on the edge of our own wilderness and remember where this journey will end. We can remind one another again, that our Creator God made us from dust and loved us too much to leave us dust-bound and empty.

Perhaps nothing speaks of that love more clearly than Jesus' celebration with his disciples on the night he was betrayed. That night includes John's story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet and giving them the new command to love one another. It includes Matthew, Mark, and Luke's stories of the last supper, of Jesus breaking the bread and sharing the cup. It is a night of holy remembrance, and even in days of worshipping separately, we will tell the story.

We will observe Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, on February 17, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. We will celebrate Maundy Thursday on April 1, at 7:00 p.m., also via Zoom. If you are not on our regular Zoom invitation list, send a request to the church email address: bethanyuccclaremont@gmail.com. Join us for worship, and expand your Lenten traditions.

Property Updates

The Property Committee is currently accepting bids from painters to scrape, seal, and re-paint some of the walls in the church basement. We have long had an issue with dampness on the exterior walls, and both the Church Council and the Property Committee have decided the peeling paint and growing moisture need to be addressed. We will keep you updated once the process begins.

Lenten Devotions:

Telling His Story and the Stories He Told

The focus of Lent is the retelling of the story of the Son of God, our participation in his journey from wilderness to Gethsemane, from temptation to triumphant resurrection. While we tell Jesus' story every Sunday during Lent, we will revisit the stories he told in our personal devotions. On the webpage, you will find a devotional calendar for the days of Lent. It includes a daily reading of Jesus' parables, the stories he told. The gospel readings that tell Jesus' story are listed on Sundays and over the days of Holy Week.

Just like this newsletter, all of our worship bulletins and devotion guides are available in print for those who would like them. Just contact the church office (828-464-5194) and we'll get print copies to you right away. We want everyone to join the journey.

Mission Moments

We have received thanks from all around our community for the help we gave to others in the final months of 2020. Thank you notes cover our bulletin board, telling us of the lives that were touched by our partnership with ministries in our town, our county, and beyond. The Guardian Ad Litem Program, The Corner Table, Claremont Elementary School, and our own Association wrote to thank us for our contributions to their work. Many of these letters included the names of individual members of Bethany, members who represented our congregation when delivering our donations and best wishes. Well done, congregation.

And now it's time to share our next Mission Project. During February, we are helping Church World Services "blanket the world with love." This is a neighbors in need kind of offering, since CWS provides warm blankets and clean sleeping quarters to people at their most vulnerable. Just mark your offering with "CWS blankets" and you'll make the world a warmer place.

Then, during Lent, we are joining with all our LINC partner churches to provide hygiene kits to Church World Services for distribution in times of natural disaster, violence, or extreme poverty. You can learn more about both the hygiene kits and the blankets by going to cwsglobal.org. Click the tab labeled Take Action. You'll see both CWS blankets and CWS kits listed. Again, thank you for your generosity. Your kindness continues to change lives



**Daylight Saving Time Begins
Sunday, March 14, 2021**