



# Bethany Beacon

*A Community of Peace & Justice*

## From the Pastor's Desk – *The Gift of Awe and Wonder*

*"Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs" – Psalm 65:8*

A number of years ago, while spending a couple days at a cabin out in the wilderness, I had a profound experience of awe and wonder. It was a very clear night, and I was standing out on the porch. I looked up at the sky and saw the stars dotting the heavens. I kept looking, and the longer I looked the more stars I noticed and the deeper the blanket of stars felt. I held my gaze to the sky and it was as if the stars were multiplying before me. And in the awe of it all, I just couldn't help but feel a sense of gratitude for the wonders of this God-given world.

In many ways, I approach the season of Advent with the same awe and wonder. This season is often seen as a time of waiting, preparing, and awakening to the awe-inspiring love of our God revealed through Jesus. And so, this year, may we gaze upon the love of our God as one might look at the sky. And may we see just how deep and expansive that love is, just like the heavens themselves.

May God bless our waiting, our preparing, and our awakening to the grandeur of love divine!



*Rev. Josh Fitterling, Pastor*

## Connect with Us!

Call: (828) 464-5194

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Visit: 2952 Bethany Church Road

Claremont, NC 28610

If you have a pastoral emergency or need to reach out to Pastor Josh directly, you can call (610) 750-2688 or email [josh.fitterling@gmail.com](mailto:josh.fitterling@gmail.com).

## Giving Back this December! – Ashure Ministries

Are you looking for a way to give back this Advent season? Grab a box and join us for this year's Ashure Ministry Reverse Advent Calendar! Fill a box with the non-perishable food items listed here to help feed our neighbors!

Boxes can be dropped off at Bethany UCC beginning Christmas Eve! We will bless the boxes on Epiphany Sunday, January 4, before we deliver them to Ashure. Individual items are also welcome and can be placed in the basket by the Sanctuary doors.

Dec. 1 - box of cereal  
 Dec. 2 - peanut butter  
 Dec. 3 - mac and cheese.  
 Dec. 4 - canned fruit in juices  
 Dec. 5 - canned tomatoes  
 Dec. 6 - canned tuna  
 Dec. 7 - apple sauce (plastic jar)  
 Dec. 8 - canned beans

Dec. 9 - mayonnaise (plastic jar)  
 Dec. 10 - oatmeal  
 Dec. 11 - pasta  
 Dec. 12 - spaghetti sauce (can or plastic jar)  
 Dec. 13 - tomato soup  
 Dec. 14 - chicken noodle soup  
 Dec. 15 - canola or olive oil

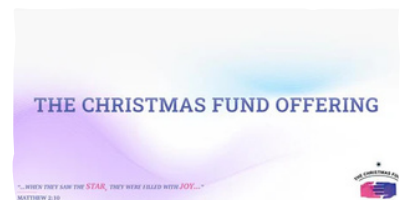
Dec. 16 - canned chicken  
 Dec. 17 - pancake mix  
 Dec. 18 - canned vegetable  
 Dec. 19 - hearty canned soup  
 Dec. 20 - rice  
 Dec. 21 - corn muffin mix  
 Dec. 22 - instant mashed potatoes  
 Dec. 23 - ketchup



Volunteers are always welcome to our 3 monthly visits to Ashure! New volunteers would especially be appreciated on the first Thursday of the month to help package donated chicken. See the calendar for dates/times or talk to Judy Kirby for more details.

## Christmas Fund Offering of the United Church of Christ

For over 100 years, The Christmas Fund has provided direct financial assistance to UCC ministers, church workers, and their families in their deepest times of need. Envelopes will be available in the bulletins throughout December for those who wish to contribute.



## Christmas Eve Service – Wednesday, December 24 at 5:00pm

You are invited to join us this Christmas Eve as we sing carols, light candles, and celebrate the gift of God's great love to all people! Invite your family and friends as we rejoice in the birth of Jesus Christ!





## Happy Birthday to Our Pastor Emeritus!

You are invited to celebrate the 100th birthday of our own Rev. Nevin Feather on **Sunday, December 7 after worship** at a lunch in the fellowship hall. Nevin's family is graciously providing the meal for us, and we will need volunteers to help set up and then clean up after the meal.

Then on **Monday, December 8, at 2:00 pm at Spirit Place, Abernethy Laurels**, Carol Feather Martin, Nevin's daughter will perform a concert of holiday music which will be followed by a birthday reception. Please let Judy Kirby know by Monday, Dec. 1, if you plan to attend so she can give our count to Carol.

## Thank You to Lisa Goins and Donna Ervin!

A BIG THANK YOU to Lisa and Donna for producing our weekly bulletins this past year while we were searching for a new pastor. After a crash course on this from Pastor Kathy, Lisa very ably and faithfully took on the task. Donna proofread everything and kept up with the church calendar and other events to keep us on track. This was a huge undertaking for these two ladies, and we want them to know how much we appreciate them.

Thank  
You



## New Roof on Fellowship Hall/Office Building Complete!

Thank you to Hipps Roofing and the Property Committee for their work and dedication!

## Annual Congregational Meeting – Sunday, Dec 14 after Worship

The annual meeting of Bethany UCC will take place following worship on Sunday, December 14. Please plan to join us as we vote on the 2026 Budget and slate of candidates for church leadership. See the official call to the annual meeting for more details.

ANNUAL  
MEETING

December Calendar

Thursday, Dec 4	TBD – Volunteer at Ashure Ministry (Chicken Packing)
Sunday, Dec 7	9:30am – Faith Formation 10:30am – Worship with Holy Communion w/ catered lunch to follow in honor of Rev. Feather’s birthday
Monday, Dec 8	2:00pm – Piano Concert by Carol Feather Martin at Abernethy Laurels (please sign up in advance)
Tuesday, Dec 9	10:00am to 12:00pm – Volunteer at Ashure Ministry
Sunday, Dec 14	9:30am – Faith Formation 10:30am – Worship (Congregational Meeting following service)
Monday, Dec 15	10:00am – Council Meeting
Sunday, Dec 21	9:30am – Faith Formation 10:30am – Worship
Wednesday, Dec 24	5:00pm – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Sunday, Dec 28	9:30am – Faith Formation 10:30am – Worship w/ Lessons & Carols
Monday, Dec 29	10:00am – Removing Christmas from Sanctuary
Tuesday, Dec 30	1:00pm to 3:00pm – Volunteer at Ashure Ministry (NOTE: this is the 5 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday for this month only!)

December Birthdays

Dec 8 – Rev. Nevin Feather      Dec 15 – Hunter Ervin