



Bethany Beacon

A Community of Peace & Justice

From the Pastor's Desk – Preparing for Ministry

"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness..." – Matthew 4:1

Rooted in the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness after his baptism, the spiritual practice of giving something up for Lent mirrors Jesus' time in the wilderness before his ministry began. Throughout the years since then, many Christians have taken this season as an opportunity to fast and reflect in ways which will enhance their spiritual life and prepare them for the ministry yet to come. Sometimes, giving something up is what we need to make room to listen to God's Spirit more intentionally. Other times, we may pick up a practice, carving out time on this journey to deepen our connection with the Divine and to more faithfully follow Jesus. If such a practice is meaningful to you, now is the time to consider what that practice will be for this year. May we open ourselves to what we need on this Lenten journey. Where do we need to make room for deeper connections? How will we open ourselves more fully to hear God's still speaking voice? What will help us to prepare for our ministry?

And through it all, may we follow where the Spirit is leading.

Pastor Josh will be on vacation from Jan 28 through Feb 3. If pastoral care needs arise, please reach out to one of our Church Elders (Judy Kirby, Donna Ervin, and Nancy Rockett).



Rev. Josh Fitterling, Pastor

Connect with Us!



Bethany UCC Claremont NC

Call: (828) 464-5194

Email: bethanyuccclaremont@gmail.com

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/text (610) 750-2688 or email josh.fitterling@gmail.com.



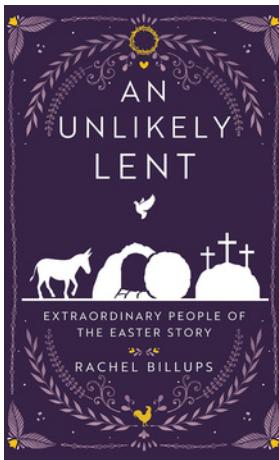
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Ash Wednesday Service at Abernethy Laurels

Wednesday, February 18 at 11:00am

As we begin our Lenten journey, we will share a worship service with the imposition of ashes alongside our friends and neighbors at Abernethy Laurels. The service will take place in the Healthcare portion on the back side of the main building. Please use the entrance around the back off of Shuford Circle Drive.

When you arrive, you will need to check in at the reception desk and they will help direct you to the service. Please plan a few extra minutes to get checked in. This 40-minute worship experience will be co-led by Rev. Maria Yocom and Rev. Josh Fitterling.



Lenten Adult Faith Formation Series

Everyone is invited to join the Adult Faith Formation class at 9:30am on Sundays during the season of Lent for this video study entitled "An Unlikely Lent". In this 6-week series, we will explore some of the lesser-known characters in the story who all have something to teach us as we journey toward Easter.

Our Lenten study will begin on Sunday, February 22 at 9:30am in the parlor. All are welcome!



Ashore Ministry Update

Thank you to all who contributed to our Reverse Advent Calendar collection! Together, we donated 455 pounds of food! WOW!

In February, the requested items are **macaroni, pasta, and canned sauce**.

Donations can be placed in the baskets outside the sanctuary. Plastic grocery bags and egg cartons are always welcomed too!

Blanket Sunday – February 8 to benefit Church World Service

Blanketing the world in love is easy when people of faith unite through the Church World Service (CWS) Blankets and Kits ministry. Special offering envelopes will be available in the bulletin. \$10 provides a blanket. \$25 provides a blanket and hygiene kit. \$60 provides a family bundle!. Gifts of all sizes are deeply appreciated!



Catawba Valley Pride Fundraiser – Saturday, Feb 14 – 5:30 to 7pm



Hosted at the Women's Resource Center in Hickory, this fundraising event will feature sweet treats, artwork, gift cards, and the joys of community! Tickets are \$10 to enter and light refreshments will be served. Check out www.catawbavalleypride.org for more information or to buy your ticket. Tickets will also be available at the door.

THE CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING

"...WHEN THEY SAW THE STAR, THEY WERE FILLED WITH JOY..."
MATTHEW 2:10



\$310 Raised to Benefit the Christmas Fund

Thank you to all who gave to our collection for the UCC Christmas Fund offering. For over 100 years, this fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gifts to our lower-income retirees.

January Offering Report

Thank you to all who contribute to our weekly offerings! Your generosity makes the ministry of Bethany possible! In 2026, our goal is to average \$1,000 per week to meet our offering goal of \$52,000.

January Total Offerings*	\$3,101.00
January Weekly Average*	\$775.25
Year-To-Date Total Offerings	\$3,101.00
Year-To-Date Weekly Average	\$775.25

*Due to snow, we missed in-person worship one Sunday. Weekly averages are based on the number of total Sundays.

February Calendar

Sunday, Feb 1	9:30Am - Faith Formation 10:30Am - Worship with Holy Communion led by Nancy Rockett, Caleb Johnson & Rev. Maria Spada
Thursday, Feb 5	11:45am - Volunteer at Ashure (Chicken packing)
Sunday, Feb 8	9:30Am - Faith Formation 10:30Am - Worship (Blanket Sunday for CWS)
Tuesday, Feb 10	10:00Am to 12:00pm - Volunteer at Ashure Ministry
Saturday, Feb 14	12noon to 2pm - Private Birthday Party Event in Fellowship Hall partnered with Cardinal Kids
Sunday, Feb 15	9:30Am - Faith Formation 10:30Am - Worship (Transfiguration Sunday)
Monday, Feb 16	10:30Am - Council Meeting
Wednesday, Feb 18	11:00Am - Ash Wednesday Service at Abernethy Laurels
Sunday, Feb 22	9:30Am - Faith Formation Lenten Series 10:30Am - Worship (First Sunday of Lent)
Tuesday, Jan 27	1:00pm to 3:00pm - Volunteer at Ashure Ministry

February Birthdays

Feb 3 - Larry Sink

Feb 13 - Teshera Kimbrough

Feb 14 - Sarah Bostian

Feb 17 - Vivian Cline