



Bethany Beacon

A Community of Peace & Justice

From the Pastor's Desk – The “Long Middle” Part

“But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope...God’s mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” – Lamentations 3:21-23

When I was in seminary, I ran a 5K. On the day of the race, I could feel the energy near the starting line. The bustle of the runners and the cheers from the crowd who came out to support gave an added boost as the race began. I started off strong! The same was true near the end. When the finish line came into sight, I was encouraged and as the cheers of the crowd drew me closer, I knew I could make it! Still, there is a part of the race I have left out – the “long middle” part. It was in this part of the journey when I questioned if I could make it. It is when my legs wanted me to stop. And yet, in those middle moments, I still encountered encouragement. These were quieter moments of mercy – a stranger handing out water and a family watching the race from their front porch and cheering.

Lent can often feel like this – we start off strong and yet Easter seems far away. Life can feel like this too – we set our minds on a goal and yet that part between initial joy and completion can feel long and hard. And still I ask, where do we witness God’s mercies in the middle? They are there. Can we see them?



Rev. Josh Fitterling, Pastor

Connect with Us!



Bethany UCC Claremont NC



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

Ashure Ministry March Madness is Back!

Ashure Ministry's March Madness Challenge is back for our 8th year of fun and spirit-filled competition!



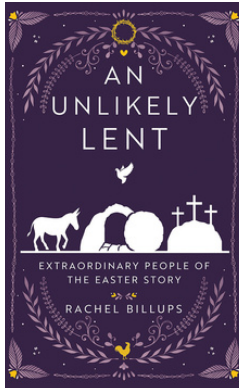
This challenge rallies businesses, churches, schools, and individuals to compete in donating food or funds under their favorite NCAA basketball team's banner, all while supporting a great cause!



At Bethany UCC, we will be participating with our own little friendly competition to see which of the local teams we will support - Duke, NC State, or Carolina!



How will it work? We will vote with our non-perishable food donations! A collection point for each team will be established in the narthex outside the sanctuary. Simply place your donations with your favorite team. The team with the largest quantity of food items will be credited with our food collection as well as a \$500 contribution from our outreach funds! Join us in helping to make a significant impact on hunger in Catawba County!



Lenten Adult Faith Formation Series Continues

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

Did you miss a couple of weeks? Not to worry! You can join us for one week or all of them.

Installation Service of Rev. Josh Fitterling Sunday, March 22 at 2:30pm

Join us, along with representatives from the Western North Carolina Association and the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ as we confirm and officially celebrate the call of Pastor Josh to serve as our Pastor. This time to celebrate our shared ministry at Bethany lifts up our covenantal relationship with one another and with churches throughout the denomination.



Rev. Marcia Charles, a ministerial colleague and friend of Pastor Josh's from the Maine Conference, will provide the sermon. A reception will follow the service in the Fellowship Hall.



\$435 Raised to Benefit the Church World Service!

Thank you to all who contributed to our annual appeal to support the blanket and kit ministry of Church World Service! These gifts will help fulfill their mission of "transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster."

February 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.

February Total Offerings*	\$5,752.00
February Weekly Average*	\$1,438.00
Year-To-Date Total Offerings	\$8,853.00
Year-To-Date Weekly Average	\$1,106.62

Thank you to all who helped us get back on track following two snowy weekends at the beginning of this year!

March Calendar

Sunday, Mar 1	9:30am – Faith Formation Lenten Series 10:30am – Worship with Holy Communion followed by Covered Dish Luncheon
Thursday, Mar 5	11:45am – Volunteer at Ashure (Chicken packing)
Sunday, Mar 8	9:30am – Faith Formation Lenten Series 10:30am – Worship
Monday, March 9	10:00am – Outreach Committee Meeting
Tuesday, Mar 10	10:00am to 12:00pm – Volunteer at Ashure Ministry
Sunday, Mar 15	9:30am – Faith Formation Lenten Series 10:30am – Worship
Monday, Mar 16	10:30am – Council Meeting
Sunday, Mar 22	9:30am – Faith Formation Lenten Series 10:30am – Worship 2:30pm – Installation Service of Rev. Josh Fitterling
Tuesday, Mar 24	1:00pm to 3:00pm – Volunteer at Ashure Ministry
Sunday, Mar 29	9:30am – Faith Formation Lenten Series 10:30am – Worship (Palm Sunday)

March Birthdays

March 20 – Gina Beard

March 23 – Aris DeJesus