

Bethany
Presbyterian
Church

Sharing, Caring,
Believing, Doing

The Church Mouse



Bethany Presbyterian Church

CHRISTMAS HANDBELL CONCERT: Please join us for an evening of food and music! The Celebration Ringers will play Christmas music for listening and singing along, from Jingle Bells to Silver Bells and beyond. The concert will begin about 6:45pm, after our Community Dinner, on Wednesday, December 17th. See you there!

MERRY MUSICAL TIDINGS – JOYFUL NOISE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION: Will be presented on December 21st by the Joyful Noise Singers. The Christmas Story will come alive through scripture, congregational carols, special anthems, hand chime ringing and thematic art work. This service is guaranteed to lift your Christmas Spirits!

ADVENT HOLIDAY POTLUCK: Sunday, December 21st. Sign-up in the narthex. After church come and enjoy fellowship before Christmas. Just bring a dish to share and we will do the rest! Sponsored by Christian Ed and Spiritual Growth.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING: The Christmas Joy Offering has been an important Presbyterian commitment since the 1930s. This Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Christmas Joy Offering honors the faithfulness of current and retired Presbyterian church workers and their families. Thanks in part to support from this offering, church workers can receive critical financial assistance to support them through life's challenging circumstances, including income supplements, housing supplements, and emergency grants. For nearly 140 years, the PC(USA) has promoted education and leadership development through its support of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges. This year, the Offering supports the Menaul High School of Albuquerque, New Mexico, Presbyterian Pan American School in Kingsville, Texas, and Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Your contribution to the Christmas Joy Offering helps to advance the mission of service and restoration in the spirit of Jesus Christ. We will be collecting the Christmas Joy offering on Sunday, December 21st.

**December 24th Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service**
(One service Christmas Eve)
9:00 PM Service: Communion,
Candlelight Service,
Bethany Choir and Handbell Choir



**December
2025 &
January
2026**

Volume 28, Issue 12
Volume 29, Issue 1

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Pastor's Page

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**Special points of
interest:**

- Stephen Ministry
- Church Calendar
- Shipmates
- Jennifer's Closet
- Bethany Women

Bethany Mission Statement
Bethany is where God's love nurtures friendship, hope, and peace.

**Deadline for the
February
Newsletter is on
January 16, 2026**

Pastor's Page:

Dear Friends,

Christmas trees are a big business in this country. This year, about 24.5 million real trees will be sold during the Christmas season and about 10 million artificial trees. Over 100,000 people work full time in the Christmas tree industry. More than 1 million acres of land in this country are dedicated just to planting Christmas trees. Roughly 21% of United States households will have a real tree in their home this year versus 48% that will have an artificial one.

Legend has it, that the tradition of decorating Christmas trees began with Martin Luther about 500 years ago as he was walking through the woods, late one evening. It was getting dark, and as he looked at the trees in the forest, he noticed behind him a beautiful backdrop of stars. He came up with the idea of trying to reproduce the effect of having stars on trees. In 1535, he brought a small tree inside his home and decorated the tree with candles to show his children how the stars twinkle through the night.

In the bustle of preparing for Christmas, the Christmas tree can just be another thing we have to do. Or it can be a reminder that Christmas is the celebration of the One who came to give us life. Evergreens stay green all year long. Their needles don't turn brown and fall off during the winter. They survive the bitter cold of winter and the scorching heat of summer.

Yet when we cut down a Christmas tree, bring it inside our homes and decorate it, it begins to die. Even set in water, the Christmas tree will only last a few weeks because it has been cut off from its source of life, the roots. When we eliminate Christ from Christmas, we cut ourselves off from the true meaning of this holy day and we dry up.

If we haven't taken time to prepare our hearts to receive Christ anew, Christmas will become lifeless. If we don't stay connected to the source of life, Jesus Christ, Christmas will be an empty celebration. My prayer is that our Christmas tree will be a reminder that Jesus came to give us eternal, abundant life.

Wishing you a blessed Christmas,

Dr. Bob Spratt

With Our People

With sympathy

Christian love and sympathy is extended to Kathie Firkins, at the passing of Al Firkins.



OPEN
Tuesday's - 12:30PM—3:00PM
Thursday's - 9:30AM—Noon
Saturday—3rd of the month

Fiscal Focus

2025	October	Year to Date	% Budget
Income	\$26,952.99	\$299,321.75	61.61%
Expense	\$27,985.53	\$359,714.87	74.04%
Surplus/ (Deficit)	\$159,188.41	\$228,481.44	

Christmas Handbell Concert & Community Dinner Wednesday, December 17

6:00 PM – Pizza Dinner

Enjoy pizza, tossed salad with assorted dressings, and home-made desserts.

Cost: \$5 per person (pay online or at the door).

Please sign up so we know you're coming!

6:45 PM – Handbell Concert

Featuring **Benjamin and Jean** along with **The Celebration Ringers**.

Come listen—and sing along!—to Christmas favorites from *Jingle Bells* to *Silver Bells* and more.

2026 – Per Capita

Please note that the per capita for 2026, the amount Bethany pays the Presbytery per member each year, is \$40.00. We continue to appreciate each member assisting toward this annual amount. The total can be paid in one lump sum, either by check or on-line. It can also be paid incrementally on the on-line donation option. If paying by check, please indicate it's for per capita in the memo line. The on-line option has a pull-down menu to select "per capita". We thank you in advance.



STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN UPDATE:

As of Thursday, December 4th, we have 87 pledges totaling \$272,887.

If you have not yet filled out your estimate of giving card please do so. If you did not

receive an estimate of giving card, please call the church office at 663-3000.

EMERGENCY CONTACT: At times, families or individuals may find they need pastoral support for various reasons ranging from a long-term matter or an emergency. In the event of a pastoral emergency, this can be sought by calling the church office (585) 663-3000 during normal business hours or after hours at (585) 496-4699. In addition, there are several members of the congregation that can be called on for support called Stephen Ministers. Stephen Ministers are congregation members trained by Stephen Leaders to offer high-quality, one-to-one Christian care to people going through tough times. To receive support from a Stephen Minister contact Kim Bolinger at (585) 227-2540 or Wendy Watt (585) 415-2351.



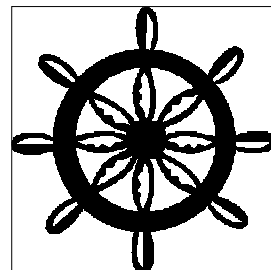
Stephen Ministry

The final month of the year is here. Are we ready? Probably not. It means a lot of decision making, cookie baking, present wrapping, line waiting, and rewriting lists of things to be done. Whew! Our lives get all turned around and the time sneaks away from us. I think some of us have decided to put things back into perspective.

Some families have changed their ideas of gifts. Trying not to break their bank and stepping back to rethink the reason for this season has become both a need and a reality check. Many family members have moved to different areas of the country. Changes need to be accepted. Flexibility has become a necessity. We have to understand that we cannot always maintain the holiday gatherings that we had in the past and we need to not make anyone feel guilty that they cannot make it for whatever reason. We have gained friends that are like family and we should include them in our celebration. Maybe that person is the one who needed to move due to employment or school. Maybe there is someone who has lost a family member that they always spent their holidays with. They are the ones who need to share your holidays with your family. The elderly people near you could use a visit and a card. A small gesture, but an amazing show of love. Bring someone with you when you come to Bethany for the Christmas services. We can be very impressive here!

Showing the love of our Lord Jesus is what Bethany presents to our community. Sharing the love of our Lord Jesus is also what the Stephen Ministers here at Bethany want to do for you. A reminder of his ever present love can be the time you spend visiting with a Stephen Minister. The number of visits is your decision. Your confidentiality is our promise. If you would like to speak with a Stephen Minister, please contact Pastor Bob or Wendy Watt.

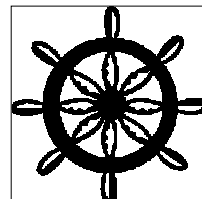
Warm and peaceful holidays to you from the Stephen Ministers,
Kim Bolinger, Bob Spratt, Wendy Watt, Jim Hetzler and April Honan



SHIPMATES CHRISTMAS AT BETHANY: Saturday, December 13, 2025 at 11:30 AM in the large hall. Lunch will be served at noon, catered by Salvatore's. Cost is only \$18 p/person. Menu: baked pasta with mozzarella, tossed salad with Italian dressing, baked chicken, Italian sausage with peppers & onions, bbq style sliced beef, Italian greens & beans, fresh rolls & butter. Sign-up in the narthex or send your check to: Sue Kretovic, 119 Marwood Road, Rochester, New York 14616. Make check payable to Bethany Presbyterian Church, insert "Shipmates" in the memo section of the check.

Shipmates,

Next month's program will feature a talk by **Dan Caster**, a retired CIA officer with 22 years of intelligence service. Drawing on more than 30 years of combined military and CIA experience. Although he now lives in Greece, he will share insights from a career that took him to over 25 countries. More information will be shared in the coming weeks.

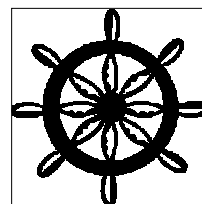


SHIPMATES MATINEE THEATRE

Saturday, February 14th

Gather at Noon—Movie begins at 1PM

"I Can Only Imagine"



The movie is based on the true story behind MercyMe's popular Christian song of the same name. It focuses on Bart Millard's challenging life, the band's lead singer, and the difficult relationship with his abusive father, Arthur.

Free Admission—Sign-up is required

You may bring your own movie snacks and lawn chairs
(if you would be more comfortable)

Popcorn and candy will be available.
(please bring your own beverage)

BETHANY WOMEN

BPWC believes that an environment grounded in Christian beliefs promotes the full growth and expression of the individual. Such an environment renews, strengthens, and empowers the individual to participate in the life and work of the church, the servant community of Jesus Christ in the world.



Bethany Women's Meetings: All women are welcome to share in fellowship. Please feel free to bring a friend. Women meet on the second Tuesday of the following months: September- June except for December and May which meet on Saturday. We have speakers who present on a variety of topics. We also coordinate service projects, Christmas Luncheon, Women's Tea, and fellowship opportunities.

Meeting/Program November 11, 2025: During our November Service Project meeting we assembled twenty-four boxes of cleaning supplies for the Greece Ecumenical Food Shelf. We collected 373 cleaning supply items. We will bring the cleaning supplies to the GEFS at a time to be determined. Many thanks to the women and men who helped organize and pack the supplies.



Women's Christmas Luncheon: Saturday, December 6, 2025 @ Noon (Bella Pasta Restaurant):

There will be a sign-up for the Christmas Luncheon in the Narthex on Sundays, November 23rd, and November 30th before and after the worship service. The cost of the lunch is \$27.00. Karen Bolinger will receive payment in cash or check. (Please make the check out to Karen Bolinger.)

January Meeting: Life often looks so very different than we hoped or expected. Some events may simply catch us off guard for a moment, but others shatter us completely. We feel disappointed and disillusioned, and we quietly start to wonder about the reality of God's goodness. At our meeting Dr. Spratt will explore New York Times bestselling author Lysa TerKeurst's book "It's Not Supposed to Be This Way: Finding Unexpected Strength When Disappointments Leave You Shattered." Come and learn how to turn disappointments into the divine appointments our souls need to radically encounter God.

Budget: In October we received income of \$95 (\$20 pledged and \$75 for Betty Langswanger memorial service). There were no expenses in the month of October leaving your YTD Income at \$8,459.72

Upcoming Activities: Save the Date! Christmas Luncheon- December 6, 2025 @ 10:00 am

Blanket Sunday, February 1, 2026 Trip to Lamberton Conservatory, March 10, 2026 @ 10:00 am (We will car-pool from the church parking lot) Women's Tea- May 2, 2026 @ 11:00 am

Women's Brunch: We will be sharing "Brunch and Fellowship" at *Bill's Long Pond Diner* on the last Saturday of every month at 10:00 am. Our next Brunch is Saturday, December 27, 2025, and January 31, 2026.

Display Case: Please take a minute to see exciting programs and activities for women in the Parlor Display Case for the 2025-2026 year.

Building Caring Relationships: Any woman currently active or inactive with BPWC who would like to be included in the *Bethany Presbyterian Women Communication Distribution List* please contact Karen Bolinger- 585-227-2540 or kbolinger@rochester.rr.com. May we always remember to love one another unconditionally, no matter what life brings. We know things can make a women feel beautiful, and that is her love for others.

December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<i>1</i> 9:30-Staff meeting 7-Stephen Ministers	<i>2</i> 9:45-Belles & Beaux 12:30-Jennifer's closet	<i>3</i> 6-Worship & Music 7:30-Celebration Ringers	<i>4</i> 9:30-Jennifer's closet 7:15-Bethany Choir	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i> 9-Men's breakfast 12-Women's Christmas luncheon @ Bella Pasta
<i>7</i> Music Sunday 10-Worship, Childcare 9-Present Word 10:15-Youth Studies	<i>8</i> 9:30-Staff meeting 7-Life Group	<i>9</i> 9:45-Belles & Beaux 12:30-Jennifer's closet	<i>10</i> 6-Christan Ed 6-Spiritual Growth 7:30-Celebration Ringers	<i>11</i> 9:30-Jennifer's closet 7:15-Bethany Choir	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i> 11:30-Shipmates
<i>14</i> 10-Worship, Childcare 9-Present Word 10:15-Youth Studies	<i>15</i> 9:30-Staff meeting	<i>16</i> 9:45-Belles & Beaux 10-Personnel Comm. 12:30-Jennifer's closet	<i>17</i> 6-Community Supper 6:45-Bell Concert 7:30-Celebration Ringers	<i>18</i> 9:30-Jennifer's closet 6-Jennifer's Closet mtg 7:15-Bethany Choir	<i>19</i> 11-Budget & Finance	<i>20</i> BYF-Red Kettle Cam- paign 10-Jennifer's Closet
<i>21</i> 10-Worship, Childcare Joyful Noise Christmas Celebration 11-Pot Luck Lunch 9-Present Word 10:15-Youth Studies	<i>22</i> 9:30-Staff meeting	<i>23</i> 9:45-Belles & Beaux 12:30-Jennifer's closet	<i>24</i> 9-Christmas eve Candlelight service Communion	<i>25</i> Christmas Day Merry Christmas!	<i>26</i> Church building closed	<i>27</i> 10-Women's brunch @Bill's Diner
<i>28</i> 10-Worship, Childcare 9-Present Word 10:15-Youth Studies	<i>29</i> Church building closed	<i>30</i> Church building closed	<i>31</i> Church building closed			

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<i>1</i> New Year's Day Happy New Year!	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i> 9-Men's breakfast
<i>4</i> 10-Worship, Childcare 9-Present Word 10:15-Youth Studies	<i>5</i> 9:30-Staff meeting 11-The Chosen 7-Stephen Ministers	<i>6</i> 9:45-Belles & Beaux 12:30-Jennifer's closet	<i>7</i> 6-Worship & Music 7:30-Celebration Ringers	<i>8</i> 9:30-Jennifer's closet 7:15-Bethany Choir	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i> 1:30-Shipmates
<i>11</i> 10-Worship, Childcare 9-Present Word 10:15-Youth Studies	<i>12</i> 9:30-Staff meeting 11-The Chosen 7-Life Group	<i>13</i> 9:45-Belles & Beaux 10-Presbyterian Women 12:30-Jennifer's closet	<i>14</i> 6-Spiritual Growth 7:30-Celebration Ringers	<i>15</i> 9:30-Jennifer's closet 7:15-Bethany Choir	<i>16</i> 11-Budget & Finance	<i>17</i> 10-Jennifer's Closet
<i>18</i> 10-Worship, Childcare 9-Present Word 10:15-Youth Studies	<i>19</i> 9:30-Staff meeting 11-The Chosen	<i>20</i> 9:45-Belles & Beaux 10-Personnel Comm. 12:30-Jennifer's closet	<i>21</i> 6-Community Supper 7:30-Celebration Ringers	<i>22</i> 9:30-Jennifer's closet 7:15-Bethany Choir	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>25</i> 10-Worship, Childcare 9-Present Word 10:15-Youth Studies 12-Session	<i>26</i> 9:30-Staff meeting 11-The Chosen 7-Life Group	<i>27</i> 9:45-Belles & Beaux 12:30-Jennifer's closet	<i>28</i> 7:30-Celebration Ringers	<i>29</i> 9:30-Jennifer's closet 12:30-Lunch & Learn 7:15-Bethany Choir	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i> 10-Women's brunch (Bill's Long Pond Diner)

Bethany Presbyterian Church

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Rochester, NY 14616

Phone: 585-663-3000

www.bethanyrochester.org

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Mailed December 4, 2025

**We're on the
Web!**

Ministries Team

Head of Staff / Sr. Pastor

Dr. Bob Spratt

Music Ministry

Benjamin Kjell - Music Director

Jean Coniber - Bell Choir Director

Bookkeeper

Tom Olney

Treasurer

Patric Donaghue

Administrative Assistant & Mouse Editor

Eileen Sengillo

Custodian

Jim Cruppe

Cornelius Yawn

Nursery Child Care Worker

Jennifer Watt

Youth & Children's Ministry Leader

Andrew Ferreira

The Session

Kim Bolinger, Budget & Finance

Wendy Watt, Christian Education

Cindy Hetzler, Community & Global Miss.

Michael DePew, Generosity

Bev Murray, Nominating

Jim Hetzler, Personnel

Rick Clement, Property

Heather Kruspe, Spiritual Growth

Karen McIver, Worship & Music

Dr. Bob Spratt, Moderator

Michael DePew, Clerk of Session

