

THE CHALLENGE

Bethlehem Methodist Church

Volume 14 Issue 3 March 2026

Matthew 4: 1-11 KJV

¹Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. ²And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. ³And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. ⁴But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. ⁵Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, ⁶And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. ⁷Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. ⁸Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; ⁹And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. ¹⁰Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. ¹¹Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

As we journey into the season of Lent, we must begin with Jesus being driven into the wilderness by the Holy spirit. After 40 days, we then see Jesus being tempted of Satan, and His overcoming this temptation. Therefore, this season of Lent prepares us for the celebration of Easter. So, what is Lent, and what are the practices of Lent that we can observe?

Lent is a season of reflection, confession, and service, all leading toward Easter, that glorious day when God, once and for all, made it possible for sinful humanity to have full access to Him, through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Lent is marked on the liturgical calendar beginning on Ash Wednesday and culminating the Saturday before Easter. This equates to a total of forty days, not including Sundays.

Although Lenten practices vary depending on denomination and congregation, it generally includes three primary areas of focus:

- 1. Prayer:** Beginning with Ash Wednesday, Christians spend intentional time in prayer considering our desperate need for God's mercy and forgiveness. We are sinful, broken, separated from God, and completely unable to save ourselves. Our condition is terminal, our need great.
- 2. Fasting:** Traditionally, Lent involves fasting from all meat for forty days (fish is permitted). Others have modified the fasting observance to allow each individual to choose the item from which they will fast. For example, I will chose to fast coffee and bread through Lent, some of my favorite foods. Regardless of the details of the fast, the purpose is to allow the hunger pangs of personal sacrifice to stoke our memory of Jesus' sacrifice for us.
- 3. Giving:** After admitting our deep need for rescue and acknowledging Jesus' sacrifice to save us, we must respond to God's mercy and grace by offering the same to others. That is why many use the season of Lent to do acts of charity or serve those in need. Mercy received becomes mercy given.

Regardless of your Lenten experience or lack thereof, now is a time to deepen your own faith as well as the faith of those around. And the forty days of Lent is a beautiful time to do just that. You may choose to follow an orthodox practice or create your own practice. The "how" doesn't matter as much as the "why." Lent is a time to remember our dire human condition, our utter lostness and inability to save ourselves. And then to celebrate the One who gave it all to rescue us from it.

Hallelujah! He is risen. He is risen, indeed.



Bethlehem Methodist Church

Our Mission at Bethlehem Church is to share the love and spirit of Christ, be a welcoming fellowship for all, nurture followers of Jesus and send them, as servants, into the world in need of God's Grace.

Preacher

Rev. Bobby Lorton
540-320-3876

Church Office

Margot Horney
336-674-0155
bethlehem1825methodistchurch@gmail.com

Choir Director

Gloria Austin

Pianist

Laura Cranfill

Youth Director

Layne Downing

Childcare Director

Erica Shanahan
336-674-9879

Custodian

Ovido Sorbito

Webmaster

Kylie Russell



Join us on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/214541575234325/?ref=share>

Visit our Website at
bethlehemmethodist.org

STEWARDSHIP REPORT-January 2026

Budget – Revenues & Expenses

\$655,437.01 Total Budget's Fund Balance as of January 1, 2026
+ 13,573.89 Money Received in January
- 34,964.34 Money Spent in January
\$634,046.56 Budget's Fund Balance as of January 31, 2026

For the month of January, 2026, the Church Budget spent 21,390.45 more than it received. For the year, the Church Budget spent \$21,390.45 more than it received.

Designated Gifts

Major Maintenance & Repair Fund – this designated money will be used to pay for major maintenance or repair projects to the Church building, parsonage or parking lot. The Board of Trustees must recommend all expenditures from this fund to the Church Council, and the Church Council must approve all expenditures from this fund. This is a perpetual fund and a minimum balance of \$2,500.00 shall be maintained at all times. This fund was created by a vote of the church council on January 13, 2011, and was established with \$12,000.00.

\$84,170.71 MM&RF Money Available January 31, 2026

Other Designated Gifts – occurs when the Church receives money for a designated purpose and the Church shall only spend this money for the purpose that it was given.

Camp Tekoa	\$ 781.88	Arbor Fund	\$ 3,937.84
Food Pantry	\$ 1,279.68	Handbells	\$ 160.52
Discretionary Fund	\$ 2,370.40	Scholarship-Religion Ed	\$ 1,983.22
Records & History	\$ 581.56	Missions-Undesignated	\$ 11,841.63
Alpha & Omega Youth	\$22,016.96	Cemetery Fund-Maint.	\$ 37,930.43
Children & Family Ministries	\$ 4,079.47	Choir Fund	\$ 208.28
Helen Grady Endow.	\$ 512.84	Brunswick Stew	\$ 11,149.31
(\$512.84 History)		Misc In/Out (Sunshine Blinds	\$ {1,146.58}
		Flowers	\$ 310.00

Total Other Designated Gifts \$97,997.44

Total Designated Gifts Collective Fund Balance as of January 31, 2026 \$182,168.15

Trust Funds

\$101,800.00 Perpetual Care Cemetery Fund

In order to plan and provide the necessary funds for the care and upkeep of our cemetery, a Perpetual Care Cemetery Fund was created. This fund was a non-expendable trust fund in which the principle (donations) cannot be spent but the interest earned on the principle can be spent for the care and upkeep of the cemetery. The Perpetual Care Cemetery Fund was capped as of January 17, 2016 by the Church Council and is no longer taking donations.

\$71,116.34 Helen Grady Endowment Fund.

the money was donated to our church from the estate of Helen Grady in 2007 to be used for improvements to the church, community, or the development of an individual. The money is at the United Methodist Foundation of WNC, Inc. and the amount that can be spent annually is 5% of the last three (3) years average end-of-year balance.

Frank Willis, Stewardship Ministry Chair

FRIENDLY CLUB MEETING
 Tuesday, March 10, 11:00 am
 Fellowship Hall
 Speaker: Teresa Cooper, Community Liaison Authora Care/ Hospice



All are welcome to come!

Ms Cooper will give us information as well as the services it can provide to individuals and their families in need of hospice care.



Bring a covered dish to share.



Reminder!
 Chicken Stew
 Pick-up Friday 3/6
 4:00 - 6:00 pm or Saturday
 3/7 9:00-11:00 am.
 (These are pre-orders only.) Bakery goods will be on sale during pickup times.

Celebrating 35 Years of Childcare

The creation of our childcare program began with Chuck Rowland, our Pastor at the time, and others as they began to investigate the possibility of having our own childcare. The churches around us were opening centers, demonstrating the need that existed. On May 21st of 1990, Guilford County approved our church property be zoned 1-A which permits childcare facilities. A study committee comprised of Mary Kearns, Alice Price, John Riddle, John Waugh, and Chuck Rowland was formed in early 1990, and in September this committee made a report to the Administrative Council.

The Bethlehem Childcare Center opened on Monday, March 4th, 1991, with two classrooms and twelve children. Director Debbie Reitzel along with Suzie Branch and Laurie Cleary were the first teachers. Kim Garrett joined them by the second week. Jackie Smith soon became the Director and retired in the Fall of 2000 after almost 30 years of building up the program. Erica Shanahan is now the director of our childcare, which has grown from those two classrooms and a dozen children to encompass six classrooms and 57 children. The old pastor's office was converted to a new classroom this past August. They will open their 7th classroom this summer, which will add an additional 8 children to summer camp.

Congratulations for all the care and nurturing you provide, and all the little lives under God's care you have touched.



We invite you to provide Easter lilies to decorate our sanctuary for Easter Sunday, April 5. Please allow your flower(s) to adorn the sanctuary throughout Holy Week by waiting until after Easter Service to take the plant(s) home. Lilies can be ordered through the Church Office for \$17 each. Order forms are in the Narthex and in the lobby outside the Church Office.



Deadline for ordering is Monday, March 30.



Come Read to the Child Care Kids
Every Tuesday in the Parlor. Email Erica at
bethchild91@gmail.com to volunteer.
"Reading gives us some
place to go when
we have to stay where
we are."
Mason Cooley

An illustration of an open book lying on a wooden surface. The left page shows a palm tree and a person in a hat. The right page shows a large sailing ship. The background is a light blue sky with faint letters.

EASTER SUNDAY
APRIL 5

Sunrise Service: 7:00 am
Traditional Service: 10:00 am

An illustration of three wooden crosses of varying heights on a yellow hill. The background is a bright orange and yellow sunrise with rays of light.

HE IS RISEN!

DEADLINES:
April Newsletter:
March 16

Weekly Bulletin:
Noon each
Wednesday
Thanks!

WONDERFUL WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY
March 25
Bus leaves at 9:40 am.

Bethlehem
Methodist
Church

A stylized blue bus with yellow wheels. The destination sign on the front displays the text: "WONDERFUL WEDNESDAY", "WEDNESDAY", "March 25", and "Bus leaves at 9:40 am.". Below the sign, it says "Bethlehem Methodist Church".

Memorials & Honorariums

Since the last newsletter publication, the following gifts have been made in memory or honor as listed. Bethlehem Church gratefully acknowledges each gift received.

Memorials

In Memory of **Doug Curtis**

Patricia Hinshaw

Alice Jones

Patricia Curtis Wahab

Buddy and Judy Fields

Mary Smathers

Frank and Julia Willis

Jim and Patricia White

In Memory of **Bill and Bobby Waugh**

Helen Waugh

In Memory of **Jodi Weatherly (x4)**

Bob Weatherly

In Memory of **Clem Royal**

Margaret Royal

Honorariums

In Honor of **Kim Garrett**

Jane Williams

In Honor of **Dale Windsor
and Justin Windsor**

David and Laura Cranfill

In Honor of **Cindy Fields**

Darlene Coble

In Honor of **Jane Snead's Birthday**

Jerry and Karon Monnett



Servant's Heart Ministry ♥

Psalms 71:9 Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone.

Servant's Heart Ministry brings the hands and feet of Jesus to our senior care, sharing love and joy to those who are lonely, who long for caring friends, helping nursing home residents find peace in Jesus. Do you have a Servant's Heart? How do you want to serve Christ in 2026?

If you wish to serve, please contact Paula Lorton
540-616-9925

Happy Birthday

March

3/5 Amanda Cook
Alan Kirkman
3/6 Brooke Townsend
Erika Braddock
3/7 Pam Jones
3/8 Buddy Fields
3/9 Lois Bazhaw
Darlene Coble
David Robb II
3/10 Beverly Fields
Bob Norris
Lucy McClintock
Carlie Suggs
3/11 Suzie Branch
Kimberly Duncan
Teresa Stevens
3/12 Jay Bowman
Dale Young II
3/13 Heather Robb Adams
3/20 Barry Lineberry
3/21 Paula Lorton
3/24 Tony Bowman
Johnny Riddle
3/25 Jonathan Riddle
Henry Wilkinson
3/26 Caleb Hinshaw
Lindsey Wray
3/27 Wanda Woodford
3/28 Joey Bowman
Lorene Wells
3/29 Susan Coward
3/31 Carlton Johnson
John David (J.D.) Peele

April

4/1 Phyllis Alley
Jeff Neelley
4/2 Madigan Downing
Larry Shambley
4/3 Beth Walsh
Casey Welborn
4/4 Craig Massarelli
4/5 Ashley Neelley
4/7 Eddie Wilkinson
4/8 Doyle Ingold
4/9 Phyllis Garrett
Jane Williams
4/10 Wayne Dunham
Jim Jones
4/11 Louise Bowman
4/12 Frances Jean Fields
4/13 Christopher Bass
Sally Bell
Danny Dunham
Glenna Staley
4/17 April Wreath
4/18 Anna Parrish
4/19 Shirley Hackett
Matthew Young
4/20 Daniel Moser
Craig Smith
4/24 Erica Reed Sypole
4/25 Haley Parrish
Lexie Terry
Jane Reddick
4/27 Julie Spencer
4/29 Rachel Grace Hill
Sandra Southard
4/30 Ruby Kirkman
Parker Robb