



APRIL 2026

HOLY WEEK AT BETHANY



Easter Sunday is our traditional lunch after worship. Ham, rolls, and desserts will be provided. Everyone is asked to bring a side dish—vegetables, salad, casserole, etc. We look forward to this time of worship and fellowship!



HOLY WEEK WORSHIP

PALM SUNDAY 3/29 AT 11

MAUNDY THURSDAY 4/2 AT 7

GOOD FRIDAY 4/3 AT 7

EASTER 4/5 AT 11 POTLUCK LUNCH TO FOLLOW

BETHANY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Please bring fresh flowers to adorn the cross on Easter morning.



In worship on Maundy Thursday, we will celebrate Jesus' Last Supper with His disciples, wash each other's hands, and end the service with the stripping of the altar. In worship on Good Friday, we will remember the final hours of Jesus' life as light is extinguished, and we are left in darkness and silence.



A RECONCILING AND LIGHTHOUSE CONGREGATION





MONEY MATTERS—MARCH

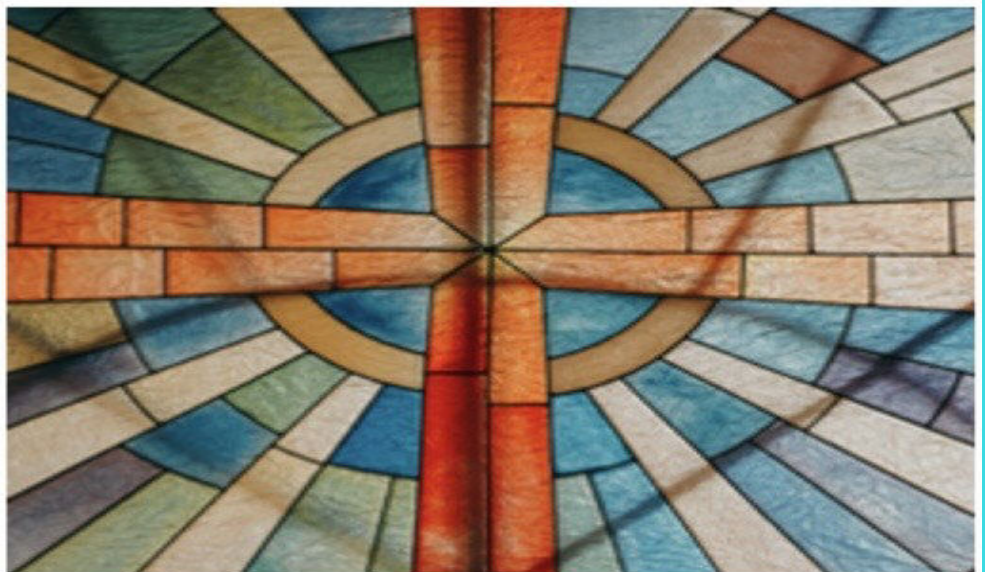
Received for General Fund	\$15,890.00
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Designated gifts to other funds

Building Fund	\$1,550.00
Camp Ministries	\$885.00
CROP Walk	\$575.65.
Miracle Sunday	\$45.00
UMCOR	\$75.00
Urban Ministries	\$650.00

MIRACLE SUNDAY

Over the next 6 weeks, you will hear a lot about Miracle Sunday on May 17. It is a special offering to support theological education in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines with the hope of funding 500 annual scholarships.



April 2026

Dear Bethany Church Family,

“It’s Friday but Sunday’s coming.” This phrase was popularized by Rev. Dr. Tony Campolo who was a prolific Baptist minister, author, and public speaker after he heard the phrase in another pastor’s sermon. He shared this phrase in a sermon that he preached on how God as parent supports and sees us as God’s own amazing child, how Jesus truly loves (agape) us sacrificially even at our worst, and how God calls us to serve a world in need with the love that God shows for us. His goal of the message was to emphasize how true Sacrificial, loving service to those in need will sometimes feel difficult but God will provide for us in that time of need. It may feel like Friday in this moment of self sacrifice, but Sunday will come. Keep pressing on and you will see resurrection.



It’s a beautiful message that embodies the call to action of the Gospel. That we are not just people of belief but people of action. Both are important parts of the journey of faith. If we have no belief then we have no basis for our actions. If we have no actions then we do not really believe in anything worthwhile. Dr. Campolo was charismatic in his preaching and was able to weave stories together to keep people’s attention for over an hour. This length of preaching is not a common practice in the United Methodist Church, but I do find the substance of his long message is important for us today.

I have found throughout history and to this day, that there are constant fights between different sects of Christianity on what is most important: faith or works. So many Christians have split off from each other because of their beliefs on this matter. Growing up I remember wrestling with different parts of the Bible like James 2:24, “you see that a person is considered *righteous* by *what they do* and *not by faith alone*.” And then I hold that with other verses like Ephesians 2:8-9, “For it is by grace you have been *saved, through faith*—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—*not by works*, so that no one can boast.” So it seems from these verses that righteousness comes from our actions and salvation (Paul’s letter to Rome would say justification) comes by faith.

We see through the diversity of sects in Christianity that their traditions emphasize the importance of faith and works differently. Some churches emphasize that the most important thing that you can do in your life is to evangelize in order to help save a soul (faith/belief/salvation).

Other churches emphasize that the most important thing that you can do in your life is serve God and neighbor (works/righteousness).

I think this phrase, “it’s Friday but Sunday’s coming,” strikes a balance between these two seemingly contrasting ideas. *Faith* in resurrection is central to our belief that God can bring life out of death. That faith propels us forward to *working* toward that new life in the world. Holy week shows us how important both are. We as Methodists can hold a conjunctive theology which means we can hold two contrasting ideas together and strive towards both without choosing one or the other. We can sit in the paradox. We can see how two opposite ideas can both be helpful in our walk, and we get to take those helpful things with us while leaving the harmful things behind. We take both faith and works together and find the fullness of both so that we might bring about resurrection in the midst of death. That we would walk with someone from Friday to Sunday. That we would be able to hold both together. That is one of the beautiful things that I love about our tradition as Methodists.

It’s Friday but Sunday’s coming,

Pastor Cole





Food and Community

Recently, Bethany fed 180+ people at Urban Ministries (middle pic). Using the same menu, hospitality treated 30 of us to a fellowship dinner (top right pic).

Next on the food scene was 100+ pounds of barbecue. All of it was sold and the monies will help with the UMM scholarship Fund.

About 20 folks were served a pancake-breakfast along with an opportunity for a shower and clean clothes.

Another 18 folks in Families Moving Forward were served a hot meal.

Thirty young people received food bags to nourish them over a weekend.

Last but not least, don't forget the Little Free Pantry.

Bethany cooks, serves, and feeds!



@piccollage



Sharon and Kim spent the morning recently volunteering at the NC Diaper Bank. Nice work, ladies!

April 19 is a day United Methodists are called to recognize and honor the gifts and contributions made by Native Americans to our society and church.



PANCAKES AND SHOWERS

On the 3rd Saturday of each month, Bethany's fellowship center is a hub of activity. The pancake gang is busy making pancakes and frying sausage for ALL!

In addition to the pancake breakfast, the Showers of Blessings team offers the opportunity for any of our unhoused neighbors to get a shower and clean clothes.

Thanks to all for your help with these important ministries. The next date will be 4/18.



Following the death of Cheryl Klein's dad, Kim Wiles presented her with a Prayer shawl from her Bethany family. During this time of sadness, may Cheryl feel the love from her church and be comforted with peace and strength. Blessings, Cheryl!



GOOD TO KNOW

Nancy Kneepkens is on the advisory committee for Aging Well Durham. Aging Well and the Durham County Library are offering open sessions for people to come and receive technology help. The first session was in February and continues every 3rd Tuesday. Next one is April 21.

Technology Help Drop-in Hours

Aging Well Durham
1209 N Elizabeth Street
Durham, NC 27701



Get individual help
with:

- Basic computer skills
- Connecting to online resources
- Using your smart phone or tablet
- Improving your online security
- More!

Every third Tuesday
2pm-3:30pm
(starting Feb 17)

For more information
and parking details
contact Sam:

sam@agingwelldurham.org
919-884-7741 x802





United
Women
in Faith



Tuesday Morning Circle

The Tuesday Morning Circle will meet April 14 at 10:30 am.. If you'd like to join a UWF group and don't like to drive at night, this one is for you. Contact Bobbi Wheeler for more information.

Tuesday Evening Circle

The Tuesday Evening circle will meet on April 14 at 6 pm in the Fellowship Center to clean the kitchen.

All women are invited and Becky House is a contact for this group.

United Methodist Men

The UMM will meet on April 14 at 7:00 pm in the fellowship center conference room. All men of the church are invited to attend . See John Long for additional information.

Vital Conversations

Vital Conversations will meet on April 9, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom to complete their current study. Then they will take a pause and decide what to do next. Heather Fisher is the contact for this group.





Worship Team

For April

Communion Stewards: Jimmy Truckner & Lynne Sprague

Acolyte

Apr. 5	April Stone-Mills
Apr. 12	Heather Fisher
Apr. 19	James/Joshua Stone
Apr. 26	Sharon Stone

Liturgist

Apr. 5	Elaine Truckner
Apr. 12	Sharon Stone
Apr. 19	Dan Portaro
Apr. 26	Heather Fisher

Open & Close Church

Apr. 5	John Long
Apr. 12	John Roberts
Apr. 19	Jimmy Truckner
Apr. 26	Dan Portaro

Ushers

Apr. 5	Gary & Lisa Kearns
Apr. 12	Earl Kirby & Marian Williams
Apr. 19	Donald House & James Sprague
Apr. 26	Marcia Painter & Pam Hall

If you are unable to do assigned worship activity, please arrange to switch with someone or find a willing volunteer.

Please let the office know if it involves a liturgist or an acolyte, as those names are always listed in the bulletin.

Greeters

Apr. 5	Marian Williams
Apr. 12	Donald House
Apr. 19	Lynne Sprague
Apr. 26	Cathy Portaro

Bethany UMC Council Meeting

March 19, 2026

Present: April Stone-Mills, Pastor Cole Breit, John Long, Lynne Sprague, Dan Portaro, Cathy Portaro, Gerhard Mels, Kate Hankins, Becky House, Sharon Stone

Absent: Connie Kirby

Visitors: Kim Wiles, John Roberts, Jimmy Truckner, Barbara Long

Minutes Taker: Kate Hankins

Opening Prayer

April opened the meeting with a word of prayer.

Minutes

The February meeting minutes were approved via email.

Spiritual and Leadership Formation- led by Pastor Cole

Revelations 13: 1-4

John is likely describing the Roman Empire, an enormous, oppressive force against the people.

Things sometimes seem too big for us to handle in our lives.

We are called to stand against the evil in the world and be a light.

Review of New People

A few new people have been in worship.

Leadership Council Packet (Sent via email)

Miracle Sunday—presented by Pastor Cole Breit

Miracle Sunday Feedback: Miracle Sunday is scheduled for May 17th and is a denomination-wide (worldwide) movement to raise funds for the divinity education of clergy in conferences outside the United States (Africa, Europe, and the Philippines). Fewer than 5% of pastors outside the U.S. hold a master's degree in theology, compared to more than 71% within the U.S. The goal is to endow 500 scholarships in perpetuity, ensuring that courageous, well-prepared leaders can serve in some of the most challenging missional communities around the world.

We will be joining 30,000 churches across the world in building up this fund. We will need a lay member at Bethany UMC to lead the coordination of this effort for Miracle Sunday. There is a step by step guide for this coordinator attached called "Congregation+Coordinator+Manual+-+English-1". There are scripts for all six Sundays and pre-made videos that will be shared with the congregation leading up to Miracle Sunday. I, Pastor Cole, would appreciate your help in identifying an individual (or even a couple individuals) who may like to help lead this special opportunity in our world-wide denomination.

Cole asked for feedback about who might be a good person to serve as the Lay member who reads the scripts and gives info about this ministry to the congregation.

Dan volunteered to help lead this ministry.

Omaha Street Sale Distribution –presented by Pastor Cole Breit

Pastor Cole and John Long move that we create a team to help determine where all the funds collected from the sale of the 2616 Omaha Street property will be allocated after sale. Whatever proposal is created by this team will have to be approved by the Leadership Council before monies can be distributed. We recommend that this team be made up of:

Rev. Cole Breit

John Long

Cathy Portaro

Maureen Bateman

Jimmy Truckner

We want to ask the congregation for input on how they want to see this money spent, and then this team can make a decision and present their motion to the council.

Most (or all) can go toward paying off mortgage on the Fellowship Center.

There are restrictions on how it is spent that should be kept in mind.

A motion was made by Cole to create a sale distribution team comprised of the above people.

Dan amended the motion to include that the team will be responsible for polling the congregation about the use of the money; Cole seconded this amendment.

Lynne seconded.

Vote passed with none opposed.

Mission- presented by Sharon Stone

Crop walk is March 29. Donations can be made by checks or cash in the offering plates.

We plan to have a bench for the diaper bank, in the form of a box by the trophy case.

Backpack buddies needs more Bethany people!

2026 Goals –presented by Kate Hankins**Our Community**

Partnering with Durham community organizations to host a larger scale outreach opportunity on our campus.

Explore methods to connect with younger adults.

Our Campus

Find ways to improve the security at Bethany.

Continue to seek ways to maximize the use of our assets including:

The Fellowship Center

2616 and 2626 Omaha Street Property

Deepening our relationship with Roca Eterna through conversation and seeking opportunities to partner together.

Seek out more opportunities to open our community to serving our unhoused neighbors.

Share the gifts of music with our congregation and community.

Experiment with 5th Sunday gatherings. The Sanctuary and Education Building

Our Communication

Create the best streaming experience for worship.

Explore improved strategies for advertising events and opportunities at Bethany.

Create a long-term process for connecting with visitors (a discipleship pathway).

Kate motioned that we accept these as our goals for 2026.

Gerhard seconded.

Vote passed with none opposed.

Internet Service—presented by John Long

James Sprague's review of our internet services at sanctuary/ educational building and office: We are currently with Spectrum. Our monthly cost for their service is over \$300 a month. I have contacted Frontier to give us a price on fiber internet service. I have received an answer from them; they can provide one gig speed of internet service plus phone lines to our sanctuary/ educational building and our church office. Frontiers' cost for this service is \$180 Plus tax. This includes all necessary equipment and any additional extenders as needed. Installation for this service has not yet been determined as of this report.

John Long motioned that we change our service to Frontier, which is cheaper and faster/stronger than what we have. Frontier is fiber internet.

Kate seconded

We will look into potential discounts for paperless billing and bundling phone/ internet.

How long is premium guaranteed?

There shouldn't be a cost increase after the first year but we need to check.

Vote passed with none opposed.

Signature Resolution on Omah St. Property—presented by Lynne Sprague

Lynne made a motion to approve this letter (see copy below in Additional Reports); Dan seconded.

Vote passed with none opposed

Goal and Visioning Work

Selling the Omah Street property to Open Table ministries increases our abilities to serve our unhoused neighbors and involves changing how we use our property. We hope to do more work with Open Table in the future.

Showers of Blessings have become popular and several folks have been calling to ask about breakfast, showers, and laundry.

Would it be possible to allow folks to do laundry at the FC during Showers of Blessings?

We can discuss that possibility with those leading that ministry.

We should start planning a larger-scale event if we want to have one (i.e. Fall Festival/ Revival).

Open Table is thinking of more permanent housing rather than winter shelters. We could host a fundraiser for them and this project.

Cole will follow-up with New Chapter Ventures to see how/ if we can partner with them and what that could look like in terms of thinking through how we can better utilize our property.

Actions Items and Communications

Cole will talk to New Chapter Ventures

April will share with the congregation on Sunday

Our 2026 goals

That we have received and accepted an offer / closing date for 2616 Omah St property from Open Table Ministries (and what OTM is/does).

That there will be a committee that will create a proposal for fund dispersal from the property sale and that will be seeking feedback from congregation.

Closing Prayer

Cole ended the meeting with prayer.

Scheduled Next Meeting: April 16, 2026; 7 pm

Leadership Council Packet (Additional Reports; Sent via email)**Treasurer's Report—submitted by Cathy Portaro**

Cash in Truist Checking Account as of March 13, 2026- \$84,239.15

Cash in Truist Money Market Account as of March 13, 2026- \$25,890.24.

In near future \$20,000 will be moved to a 12-month CD at Truist Bank. Lynne Sprague, Finance Chair, will have more information on that in her report. Building Fund Balance as of March 13, 2026, \$7,023.13. That is enough to cover our March loan payment of \$4,525.05 leaving us \$2,026.97 short of having enough to pay our April obligation. It may be necessary at our April meeting to request assistance using Stew Proceeds money or the Memorial Fund.

Finance— submitted by Lynne Sprague

Per the council approval in February, I did visit Truist for the purpose of investing monies from our money market account into a Certificate of Deposit.

The CD is for \$20,000 with an interest rate of 3.20%. To keep our money market account open, we need to maintain a \$5000.00 balance. Knowing that we would be depositing a large sum of money from the sale of Omah Street property, the money market account remains active, with a new interest rate of 1%.

(COPY OF RESOLUTION LETTER SUBMITTED BY LYNNE SPRAGUE)



Bethany United Methodist Church

2903 Guess Road, Durham, NC 27705

Website: www.bethanyumcdurham.org

Email: bethanyumc1@gmail.com

Bethany United Methodist Church
2903 Guess Rd.
Durham, NC 27705

March 19, 2026

All Members
Ministers

To whom it may concern:

Cole Breit
Pastor

Bethany United Methodist Church is the owner of real property located at 2616 Omah Street, Durham, NC, 27705.

Jeff Hood
Minister of
Music

A full investigation of the future missional needs of the community has been conducted by Pastor Cole Breit, District Superintendent Claire Clyburn, and the District Board of Church Location and Building pursuant to ¶2540.3/ ¶2541.3 of *The Book of Discipline*.

The Charge Conference held on October 30, 2025, authorized the sale of the property, and a Church Conference on November 2, 2025, approved. The Leadership Council approved the sale price of \$155,000.00, and the sale will be conducted as outlined in *The Book of Discipline*.

John Raymond Long, Jr. and Lynne Johnson Sprague are authorized to act on behalf of Bethany United Methodist Church to execute and deliver the deed, contract, and all necessary written instruments.

In accordance with ¶2543, the proceeds of this sale should not be used for the current budget or operating expenses of Bethany United Methodist Church but should be used for capital improvements or other purposes permitted by the Discipline .

ADOPTED this 19th day of March, 2026, by a majority vote of the Bethany United Methodist Church Leadership Council.

CERTIFIED BY: _____ Kate Hankins _____
Recording Secretary

United Women in Faith– submitted by Becky House

Several members of the United Women of Faith participated in a workday at the Diaper Bank on Saturday.

Methodist Men– submitted by John Long

The Methodist man installed all new wiring underneath the cook shed at the church. They still need to install a light fixture.

Building and Grounds– submitted by John Long

James Sprague has been looking into the Internet service at the church.

I have received a couple of reports that there are some small problems with some of the playground equipment. John Roberts, James Sprague and I are checking it out and we will fill y'all in on what we feel needs to be done.

Lynn Sprague and I are working on the application for the Board of Missions. Cathy Potaro has helped with some of the information, and we hope to have it ready soon.

I have been working with Nicole Baxter who is the real estate agent for Open Table's ministry. We are providing her with information so she can complete the paperwork. It sounds like the closing date will be April 20 but that depends on the survey. If they can conduct a survey earlier, then we will move the closing up.

SPRC–submitted by Gerhard Mels**Board of Ordained Ministry**

We drafted responses to the sixteen questions of the North Carolina Annual Conference Candidate Place of Ministry Interview Form.

We met with Reverend Edgar and Tricia from the Board of Ordained Ministry of the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church at 5:15 PM on Sunday March 8, 2026, to share our responses with them.

BUILDING SECURITY AND KEY POLICIES

The building security and key policies are designed to ensure the safety and security of Bethany's buildings, equipment, furnishings, and most importantly our staff, church members and guests.

PROCEDURES

Whether for short term or long term use, a Key Request form should be completed and returned to the office.

Keys checked out for a short term use, such as a Fellowship Center rental should be returned to the office after the event. (Note: Security deposit is not returned until the key is returned.)

Keys checked out for long term use should be returned when there is no longer a need, such as rotating off a ministry position or ending employment.

Lost keys should be reported to the office as soon as possible.

There should be an annual audit of key holders.

BETHANY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**Sanctuary Address: 2809 Guess Road****Mailing Address: 2903 Guess Road****Phone: 919-477-6659****Email: bethanyumc1@gmail.com****Calendar (LINK): <https://tinyurl.com/54jvdxv4>****Website (LINK): <https://bethanyumcdurham.org/>**

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|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 4 Bea Elliott | 16 Becky House |
| 6 Eli Walter | 25 April Stone-Mills |
| 7 Tanielu Apisai | 26 Maureen Bateman |
| 7 Elaine Truckner | 30 Mark Crispell |
| 15 Susan Huggett | |



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|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 11 Gary & Pat Crispell | 12 James & Lynne Sprague |
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