

Bethany Lutheran Church
PO Box 459
380 W. 3rd Ave
Woodhull, IL 61490

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage Paid
Woodhull, IL 61490
Permit #7
Return Service Request

JANUARY 2026



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Happy New Year!	2	3
4 9am Worship Choir @ 10:45	5 AlWood Food Pantry by reservation	6 9-12 Quilting AlWood Food Pantry Open 9:30-11 AM	7 MOW/United	8	9	10
11 9am Worship *Noisy Offering* Bells @ 10:45	12	13 9-12 Quilting	14 MOW/ BETHANY	15 Newsletter Deadline Hope Unit meet at 9:30 @ Clover Library. Peg Nordquist to host	16	17
18 9am Worship Choir @ 10:45 **Council Meeting at 11:30 Annual Meeting Booklets Available T4T @ 5:00 (Bethany)	19	20	21 MOW/United New Member Class at 6:00pm	22	23	24
25 9am Worship *Noisy Offering* *Annual Meeting	26	27	28 MOW/ BETHANY	29	30	31

Educational Opportunities

Preaching Among Friends

Preaching Among Friends is a class presented by Backstory Preaching. This class is only offered once a year and is a 6-week online course from January 18 – March 5, 2026. Preaching Among Friends equips lay preachers with the confidence, tools, and theological grounding needed to preach effectively in their congregations or to preach in neighboring congregations. For more information, contact Pastor Jen Beamsley at jbeamsley@nisynod.org or Pastor Laurie.

2026 CRE EVENT

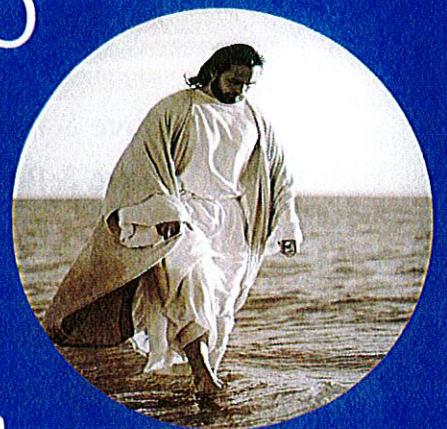
March 7, 2026, at Sauk Valley Community College in Dixon, IL

Save the date and join us for the 2026 Congregational Resourcing Event on March 7, 2026, at Sauk Valley Community College. More information will be released in January of 2026.

Diakonia Classes

Diakonia Classes are wonderful 5-week classes that engage in learning theological concepts, Biblical knowledge, and discipleship. Each course is \$65.00, and registration is through the Northern Illinois Synod. Please contact Pastor Laurie or Dave Crippen for more information.

Via de Cristo (WAY OF CHRIST)



JOIN US FOR THE NEXT VIA DE CRISTO

SPIRITUAL RETREAT WEEKEND #68

March 19th – March 22nd - Camp Meno Haven

WE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST.... CHRIST IS COUNTING ON US TO WALK IN THE WAY OF CHRIST; TO BE A DISCIPLE FOR CHRIST IN TODAY'S WORLD.

Via de Cristo gives those attending a new awareness of living in God's grace. Participants will enjoy music and singing, food and fellowship, a time for laughter and for prayer and reflection. Join us for an incredible weekend of spiritual renewal and FUN!

**Applications are available on the Fellowship Hall table
or ask Pastor Laurie (618)-980-9804.**



2025 Poinsettias

Jason, Megan, Kiersten, & Zack Hancock	In memory of loved ones
Jeana Fors	In memory of James Hecht, Sr.
Bonnie Campbell, Sherri Bozsali & Family	In memory of Audrey & Jerry Lindsey and Bob & Sandy Snyder
Dave & Cindy Lindsey Family	
Colin & Cecily Anderson	In memory of Grandpa Eric
Teri Bumphrey & Todd Beck	In memory of George & Marna Beck
Teri Bumphrey & Janet Anderson	In memory of Jeff & Julie Bell
Gene & Barb Colburn	In memory of loved ones
Kim Engstrom	In loving memory of Jeff Newman
Kim Engstrom	In loving memory of John Engstrom, Polly Engstrom, and Todd Engstrom
Dave & Patsy Crippen	In memory of loved ones
Dave & Patsy Crippen	In memory of loved ones
WELCA	To the Glory of God
WELCA	To the Glory of God
Hilary & Matt Fairbrother	In memory of Rene Bramlett
The Borkgren Family	In memory of Rick & Martha Borkgren
Charla & Marion Calmer	In memory of Jeff Newman
Charla & Marion Calmer	In memory of Lisa Hollowell
Charla & Marion Calmer	In memory of Martin Calmer
Charla & Marion Calmer	In memory of Betty Usry



2025 Poinsettias

Barbara Fors	In memory of Inez Fors
Barbara Fors	In memory of Cecil Fors
Ruth Laabs-Wilcox	In memory of parents and grandparents
Greg & Rhonda Miller	In memory of loved ones
George & Patrice Wirt	In memory of loved ones
John & Jerri Page	In memory of loved ones
Rich & Janice Maher	In memory of loved ones
Harriet Peterson	In memory of Leland Peterson
Ellen Dalton	In memory of my parents & sister
Gary Johnson	In memory of loved ones
Doug & Nancy Swanson	In memory of our parents
David, Christena and Axel Anderson	In memory of loved ones
Jim & Kelly Luallen	In memory of Bud Peterson & Dolly Anderson
Bo & Barb Elliott	In honor of loved ones
Carol Eiker	In memory of loved ones
Allen & Peg Nordquist	To the Glory of God
Allen & Peg Nordquist	To the Glory of God
Pastor Laurie Hensley	In memory of Bob, Patsy, Tedd, & David
Kathy Shemwell	In memory of Sarah Shemwell
Bob & Pam Eiker	In memory of loved ones
Dean & Chris Peterson & Cameron	In memory of loved ones

BETHANY BELLS and CHOIR 2026

The adult and bell choirs will begin rehearsing after church and coffee hour from January until Easter. The rehearsal time will be Sundays from 10:45 until 11:30. We will alternate weeks, with adult choir for one week and bells the next. This schedule begins January 4 with adult choir meeting at 10:45 AM. Bells first practice will be January 11th, at 10:45. There will not be any rehearsals on January 25th, due to the annual meeting. If you have always wanted to be in adult choir or bell choir, but couldn't make it to weeknight rehearsals, here's your chance to join us! We would love to have some new faces in both choirs!

Needed:

We are looking for folks to serve as the voting delegates for Bethany at the Annual Northern Illinois Synod Assembly (June 12 & 13). We are allowed 3 adult voting delegates and 1 youth voting delegate. Please give this prayerful consideration, as we will need to approve the congregational delegates at our annual meeting on January 25th.

Bethany Academic Scholarships

Bethany is committed to helping our youth in their academic endeavors after high school. All confirmed youth are eligible for an academic scholarship of up to \$1,500.00 per year for college or trade schools. The application deadline is April 30th, 2026, and the application requires 12 service activities to be completed prior to application. Helping with our worship services, Sunday School, or special events are excellent ways to earn service hours. Please contact Pastor Laurie for additional information.



Bethany Lutheran Church has been granted \$1,000.00 to participate in the ELCA Congregations Lead Initiative Program. This program has already made a substantial impact on participating congregations, fostering cultural shifts, enhancing community engagement, and inspiring innovative practices within congregational life. Bethany is looking for three to six people to form a committee to find new and innovative ways to interact within our communities. If you would like to sign up, please contact Pastor Laurie. More information can be found at <https://www.elca.org/our-work/congregations-and-synods/congregations-lead-initiative>.

Bethany Youth Sponsorship

Sponsorships in the amount up to \$300 per calendar year are available to Bethany baptized children ages birth to 18 years. Sponsorship applications are accepted for any learning activity, camp, or class available to Bethany children and approved by the sponsorship committee.

Terms of payment: The sponsorship will pay half of the class, activity, or camp at the time of approval and registration, with parent and/or guardian paying the other half. Upon completion of the requirements, the parent/guardian will be reimbursed for the portion paid by them up to 100% of the cost of the learning activity, not to exceed \$300.00.

T4T

**Time 4 Teens will be going bowling
on January 18th. We will meet at
Bethany at 5:00pm. Please feel free
to bring your friends!**

Thank You!

Thank you to everyone that helped with the Youth Evening Advent Service and Supper! We appreciate everyone who helped make this very special service possible including our youth, choirs, volunteers, and the Witness & Service committee.

Advent blessings to you! Thank you for your support of Lutheran World Relief. Because of you, hope reaches near and far.

Rev. Cathy Daharsh

We would like to 'Thank You' for your generous donation to Alpha Mobile Meals. It is greatly appreciated. We strive to provide nutritious meals for those in need – this will help greatly! Again, thank you.

Alpha Mobile Meal Committee

Dear Bethany:

On behalf of the Woodhull Meals on Wheels Board, I would like to thank you so much for the generous donation of \$1,000.00 for our ministry of the Woodhull Meals on Wheels Program.

With the cost of groceries/supplies constantly increasing, all donations to our program are deeply appreciated. We currently have 24 recipients here in town. We try to keep our meal charge to a minimum – it has been \$2.50/meal for a long time.

We have so many wonderful volunteers, mainly from the United Church of Woodhull and Bethany Lutheran Church for which we are eternally grateful. They voluntarily prepare the meals, salads, and desserts, as well as delivering to our thankful adults. We receive so many positive comments on our program from the community. It is such a great service we are all proud of for our small, but blessed community!

Again, thank you so much, Bethany, for this donation. It will definitely be put to good use for our community here in Woodhull.

Sincerely,

Woodhull Meals on Wheels Board Members
Pam Picard, Pam Eiker, Rhonda Taylor, Barb Elliott, and Nancy Swanson

My Dear Bethany Family,

My heartfelt thanks for all the cards, texts, phone calls, and meals I've received these past six months. Your love and support make such a journey much easier. And above all, thank you for the many prayers. We have such a gracious, loving God who is always listening. His blessings are abundant.

May 2026 be a healthy, happy New Year for all!!

Love and Blessings,
Carol

I want to thank the choirs of Bethany for entertaining me with Christmas carols and for the cup of goodies! It was wonderful.

Thank you,
Marcia Colton

Advent Blessing Tree

Through Advent, you donated items under our Advent Blessing Tree. These items were distributed on December 21st to Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. There were 72 packages of adult incontinence supplies, 136 children's books for the Prison Ministry Program, 36 gift cards in varying amounts for LSSI emergency use, 97 containers of diapers, pull-ups, and baby wipes for babies in foster care, 263 men's and women's hygiene items for disadvantaged people, 67 quilts made by our Quilting Queens, 3 handmade stocking caps, 8 handmade scarves, and 5 handmade blankets. In addition, we are very happy to share that 20 coats & snow pants were donated to the Galesburg Rescue Mission. 57 baking items, along with 68 cans of soup were donated to the AlWood Food Pantry. In total you donated 832 items to local charities. Thank you!!

Thank you to Nancy Swanson for coordinating all the Advent donations!



IN OUR PRAYERS



For all those who serve our nation in this time of peril, for our President and our national leaders, and those who serve in the Armed Forces.

Those with continuing health concerns:

Lucy Newman	Gary Nelson	Rosalie Roman
Betty Swanson	Barb McNeil	Bob Eiker
Elizabeth Ostrander	Dave Crippen	Seth Malcolm
Joanne Carlson	Donna Carlson	Wendy Johnson
Patsy Crippen	Lois Peterson	Marty Stachniw
Dick Larson	Reva Stachniw	Carol Eiker
Ruth Laabs-Wilcox	Jami Maher	

WELCA Meeting

WELCA will meet in January to plan the new year. The meeting will be held during a coffee hour. All ladies are welcome to join us. We will be also deciding officers.

New Member Class

The New Member Class will be held on Wednesday, January 21st, at 6:00pm

Annual Congregational Meeting

The 158th Annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled for January 25th after worship, with a snow date of February 1st. All confirmed members are encouraged to attend to support our ministry in 2026. Please be sure to attend!

Annual booklets will be available on January 18th, so that you can review the materials before the meeting



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Britta Watters,	1-Jan
Janet Dahlstrom	4-Jan
Kim Engstrom	4-Jan
Jodie McNally	4-Jan
Lisa Nelson	4-Jan
Kelli Swanson	5-Jan
Ann Larson	5-Jan
Greg Bloomberg	6-Jan
Carol Eiker	7-Jan
Trevor Carlson	8-Jan
Lucy Newman	11-Jan
Don Henriksen	12-Jan
Carson Taylor	15-Jan
Collin Watters	16-Jan
Scott Swanson	17-Jan
Joshua Bainbridge	18-Jan
Doug Swanson	18-Jan
Stephanie Johnson	20-Jan
Beau Peterson	20-Jan
Seth Molburg	21-Jan
Natalie Gasper	21-Jan
Lily Fairbrother	21-Jan
Patty Colburn	24-Jan
Kim Bowers	26-Jan
Dain Luallen	27-Jan
Lori Nimrick	27-Jan
Scott McNeil	29-Jan
Alex Borkgren	30-Jan
Ann Olson	31-Jan



JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

1-01	Jim & Carol Brown
1-05	Gary and Lisa Nelson
1-24	George & Patrice Wirt



Meals on Wheels is a not-for-profit organization. Listed below are the **Bethany Meals on Wheels menus** for upcoming weeks. If you can help with any of the slots, please sign up in the church fellowship hall or contact Barb Elliott, Pam Eiker, or Nancy Swanson!

January 14- Bethany

Meal: Pork Chops, Dressing/Gravy, Vegetable, Roll
Salad: Ambrosia Salad or 5 Cup Salad or Choice

Dessert: Pie

Cooks: Nancy Swanson

Salad: St John's

Dessert: Becky Campbell

Delivery #1: Dale Sundberg & Gary Johnson

Delivery #2: George & Patrice Wirt

January 28, 2026- Bethany

Meal: Ham & Bean Soup, Pickles, Cornbread

Salad: Apple Salad

Dessert: Pudding

Cooks: Chris Peterson

Salad: St John's

Dessert: Chris Peterson

Delivery #1: Dale Sundberg & Gary Johnson

Delivery #2: George & Patrice Wirt

NOISY OFFERING!!!!

The Noisy Offering will take place on January 11th & 25th during the 9am service.

TIME & TALENT FORMS

We ARE the church! And it takes a lot of people power to do God's ministry as the church. If you have not yet completed a Time & Talent form for yourself or your family.... **PLEASE** complete one.



ALWOOD FOOD PANTRY

The AlWood Food Pantry will be open January 6th, from 9:30-11:00am.

On the evening of January 5th, there will be a distribution available by appointment only. Please contact Claudia Sage at 309-236-3650.

The Food Pantry is in the Oxford Township Hall in Alpha next to the Oxford Township Fire Department. Bethany contacts are:

Jim Luallen 309-629-8103

Rosalie Roman 309-629-4808

Hope Unit

Hope Unit will meet at the Clover Library on January 15th, at 9am.

ALTAR FLOWERS

The price of Altar Flowers is

\$60 for 2 vases. Checks will now need to be made out to Bethany Lutheran Church. We do receive free delivery.

Thank you so much for adding beautiful flowers to our Sunday morning worship and supporting a small, local business.

Altar Guild Schedule

<u>Jan.</u>	Connie Sundberg & Janice Maher
<u>Feb.</u>	Connie Sundberg & Janice Maher
<u>Mar.</u>	Marty Johnson & Donita Creek
<u>Apr.</u>	Lisa Nelson, Patrice Wirt, & Rhonda Miller
<u>May</u>	Patty Colburn & Chris Peterson

Funeral Committee

Kelly Luallen	629-8103
Rhonda Miller	629-9535
Peggy Nordquist	334-2264

BETHANY BLESSINGS January 26

Church Phone: 309-334-2144

Email: bethanylc@divcominc.net

Pastor Laurie Cell: 618-980-9804

Pastor Laurie Email:

pastorbethanywoodhull@gmail.com OR

Vicarbethanylutheran@gmail.com

Christena's Office Hours

Friday: 9:00-12:00PM

Other Office hours as needed.

Pastor Laurie's Office Hours

Tuesday: 11:00-2:00PM

Friday: 9:00-12:00PM

Please feel free to call or text me anytime at

(618) 980-9804

Please note – If you would like an announcement in the Sunday bulletin Pastor Laurie and/or the Communication & Outreach Coordinator must know by **Tuesday**, and you may contact them by phone or email. Due to new office hours and video work for each worship service we are printing the bulletin earlier than in the past. Thanks for your help as we are making these necessary changes. Newsletter additions must be into the Communication & Outreach Coordinator **by the 15th of each month**.

Tithe.ly – An Easy way for God's Offering

Bethany has partnered with Tithe.ly as an electronic giving platform. Gifts can be made from your bank account, debit card, or even Apple/Android pay. Please use the following links to set up your electronic giving profile:

Tithe.ly – www.tithe.ly/give and look up Bethany Lutheran Church, Woodhull or enter <https://tithe.ly/give?c=4352752>

Or Scan the QR code:



JANUARY PEOPLE POWER

1-4-26	9am Service
Greeters	Gene & Barb Colburn
Lector/Prayers	Choir
Ushers	Logan Stiers & Chever Harkey
Acolyte	Emersyn Wirt
Coffee Hour	Needed

1-11-26	9am Service (communion)
Greeters	Ruth Laabs-Wilcox & Ellen Dalton
Lector/Prayers	Mary Stiers
Ushers	Ryan & Easton Colburn
Acolyte	Colin Anderson
Communion Assistant	Needed
Confirmation Assistant	Needed
Sunday School	Needed
Coffee Hour	Needed

1-18-26	9am Service (communion)
Greeters	Dot Creek & Harriet Peterson
Lector/Prayers	Christena & Axel Anderson
Ushers	Marty Stachniw & Rich Maher
Acolyte	Axel Anderson
Communion Assistant	David Anderson
Confirmation Assistant	Needed
Sunday School	Needed
Coffee Hour	Needed

1-25-26	9am Service (communion)
Greeters	Leigh & Logan Brinson
Lector/Prayers	Makenna Walker
Ushers	Dennis Colburn & Gene Colburn
Acolyte	Remi Page
Communion Assistant	Needed
Confirmation Assistant	Needed
Sunday School	Needed
Coffee Hour	Needed

2-1-26	9am Service (communion)
Greeters	Ryan, Alissa, Easton & Emmett
Lector/Prayers	Mary Stiers
Ushers	Gary Johnson & Dale Sundberg
Acolyte	Cameron Renwick
Communion Assistant	Christena Anderson
Confirmation Assistant	Needed
Sunday School	Needed
Coffee Hour	Needed

Bethany Church Council Minutes for December 28, 2025

The Bethany Council meeting was called to order at 10:19 AM by Carol Eiker.

Members present: Lisa Nelson, David Anderson, Pastor Laurie Hensley, Patty Colburn, Carol Eiker, Pam Eiker, Christena Anderson, Denise Eiker, Dave Crippen, Mary Stiers

Members absent: Marion Calmer, Rosalie Roman, Jillian Rodseth, Keegan Taylor

Devotion: Mary Stiers gave the devotion

Adoption of Agenda: A motion to adopt the agenda was made by Dave Crippen and seconded by Patty Colburn. Motion carried.

Minutes: A motion to accept the minutes, as presented, was made by Mary Stier and seconded by Lisa Nelson. Motion carried.

Financial Secretary/Treasurer Report: The reports were reviewed. The motion to accept the reports was made by Christena Anderson and seconded by Denise Eiker. Motion carried.

Special Fund Report: Dave Crippen gave the report.

PASTOR'S Report: The report was presented by Pastor Laurie Hensley. The report included 21 visits and 3 community/school activities. She participated in a Via de Cristo meeting, she conducted the Thanksgiving Eve Service, as well as the Congregational Advent Project. She visited Lutheran Social Services in Sterling, IL. She caroled with the choir. She conducted the Youth Advent Service, as well as the Christmas Eve Service at Bethany and United. Her official acts included the funeral for Betty Henrikson. She will be conducting a New Member class, attending First Call Theological Education and attending Via de Cristo training in the upcoming month.

COMMITTEES:

WORSHIP & MUSIC: Gave a recap of the Advent Services. They will be meeting this week to discuss choir and bells. They are planning to meet with the entire Committee quarterly. There was a discussion of the Choir and Bells upcoming new schedule.

WITNESS AND SERVICE: There was a recap of the Advent Blessing Tree donations and that LSSI is very thankful for them. The committee is planning an appetizer luncheon for the Annual Meeting, which is scheduled for January 25th.

STEWARDSHIP: A report was given on the 2026 campaign. We still need Time & Talent/Commitment forms be returned. The committee will be contacting some of last year's volunteers in order to verify their participation.

Finance and Budget: The Committee presented the new budget. There was a motion made by Dave Crippen to approve the budget. The motion was seconded by Lisa Nelson and the motion carried. Funeral Livestreaming was discussed and a decision was made to offer the service once the availability of a tech attendant has been verified.

YOUTH/LEARNING: The committee will be discussing Sunday School materials. Sunday School begins again on January 11th.

PROPERTY: The replacement windows for the basement have been ordered. The trim has been replaced in the Southeast corner of the basement. David is continuing with bids for waterproofing the back entryway/area.

MEMORIALS: A report was not given.

Mutual Ministry: A report was not given.

The motion was made by Denise Eiker and seconded by Lisa Nelson to accept the Committee reports. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS: The Annual Meeting will be held January 25th. The deadline for Committee reports has passed. There are still a few reports needed. There was a discussion that the Learning Committee report needs to be separated into three different reports, 3D, T4T, and Sunday School. This year's Council Nominating Committee will be suggesting nominations. Members of the Nominating Committee are Denise Eiker, Doug Swanson, Dennis Colburn, Chris Peterson.

NEW BUSINESS: A discussion regarding a grant that is part of the Congregational Lead Initiative was held. Bethany needs 3-6 volunteers for this grant. The protocol for Service Cancellations was discussed. Pastor Laurie and Vice Chair Carol Eiker will discuss the weather when needed. Ryan Colburn will be consulted regarding road conditions. Once a decision has been made, Kristi VerHeecke and Christena Anderson will be contacted to make the necessary communications. There was a discussion regarding a new volunteer being needed to lead the Budgeting Committee. There was a discussion regarding the Synod Assembly. Attendees will need to be decided soon. The Prayer Chain communication is getting a new update. More information to be coming soon. There was a discussion regarding the opportunity for committees to meet on Sundays before council during the time of 10:15 until 10:45.

COMMUNICATIONS: Several Thank Yous are going to be going out.

The motion to adjourn was from Denise Eiker and was seconded by Lisa Nelson. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 11:20 AM. The meeting was closed with The Lord's Prayer. The next meeting is scheduled for January 18th at 11:30 am. Dave Crippen will lead the devotion.

Respectfully submitted, Christena Anderson, Council Secretary

A note from Pastor Laurie...

On Sunday, after our final worship service of 2025, when the sanctuary had grown quiet and the last candle flame had been extinguished, I walked around the sanctuary. The pews were empty. The music had faded. And there before me stood the manger, the Christmas tree, and the blooms of the beautiful poinsettias....all reminding me of life.

In that quiet space, I was reminded that Christmas does not end when the decorations come down or when the calendar turns to January. The manger continues to speak. It always does.

The manger tells the story of a God who chose humility over power, presence over distance, and love over comfort. It reminds us that God's greatest gift to the world did not come wrapped in pretty paper...or certainty, but in vulnerability and grace. And because God gives so freely to us, the manger gently calls us to do the same...to offer what we have, who we are, and the gifts God has placed in our hands for the sake of others. As the choir and youth sang so beautifully... *What can I give Him....I give Him my heart.*

That call was answered in powerful and tangible ways this Christmas season by the people of Bethany. From the manger, we were sent out...to give, to share, and to care. Because of your generosity, 703 gifts were gathered and shared with Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, 20 coats/snowpants were shared with the Galesburg Rescue Mission, and over 120 food items were shared with the Alwood Food Pantry - **WOW!** Each of these items help support families, children, and individuals who are navigating difficult seasons of life. Each item given, each donation made, and each prayer offered became a quiet proclamation of the gospel: *God is with you. You are not forgotten.*

This is the **Joy of Giving**...not the fleeting joy of checking something off a list, but the deeper joy that comes from loving our neighbors as Christ first loved us. It is the joy that springs from compassion, generosity, and faith put into action.

Bethany, this is who you are! 

Time and again, you respond to the call that comes from the manger. You show up with open hearts and willing hands. You give not because you must, but because love compels you. Whether through quilts and kits, food and funds, time and talent, or simple acts of kindness, you embody what it means to be the church...sent from the manger into the world. Thank you so much!

As we begin this new year, may we carry the light of Christmas with us beyond the season. May the image of the manger continue to guide us, reminding us that even the smallest gifts, when offered in love, can make a lasting difference. And may the joy of giving shape our days ahead, as we continue to live out Christ's love together...for our community, our neighbors, and for the sake of the world God so dearly loves.

Grace and peace to you in this new year.

We are family...we are the Bethany Family!

Pastor Laurie