

HELPING THE HOMELESS MINISTRIES is in urgent need of volunteers to help in the Thrift Store, located at 7028 George Washington Memorial Hwy in Gloucester. Volunteers will be trained to work the register, as well as process and price donations. If you can help, or if you have any questions, please call Helping the Homeless Ministries Thrift Store at 804-792-3599, or email Pastor Wendy Roundy using the Contact Form at helpingthehomelessministries.org. Helping the Homeless exists “to minister to the homeless and poor, disciple them, and nourish their bodies and souls with God’s Love and provide food, clothing, and shelter.” They need volunteers to carry out this mission. Please consider becoming a volunteer, pray for the ministry, and share this with anyone you know who might be able to help. Thank you!

NOTE ON MUSIC FOR LENT

“A musical Bible, unrivaled and inimitable” is how Samuel Wesley described the work of Johann Sebastian Bach. In 1808, when these words were penned by the son of Methodist hymn writer Charles Wesley, Bach’s compositions were performed and appreciated by only a small circle of connoisseurs. With his revival in 1829 of the *Saint Matthew Passion*, the greatest musical setting of the Crucifixion narrative, one century after its première, Felix Mendelssohn began to reveal the towering stature of Bach to a wider audience.

Today, anticipating the 338th anniversary of his birth on March 21st, we stand amazed in the presence of this mortal who created an entire musical universe dedicated *S.D.G. – soli Deo gloria* (“to the glory of God alone”) – as Bach initialed thousands of manuscripts. Is it mere coincidence that the birthday of God’s chief musician occurs at the beginning of Spring, this season of rebirth and renewal?

Our Lenten Meditation this morning is one of Bach’s most profoundly spiritual compositions, his magisterial setting of the *Agnus Dei*. Derived from *John* 1: 29 and added to the Catholic Mass in the 7th century for the rite of Holy Communion, the text consists of three acclamations:

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

(Lamb of God, who takes away the world’s sins, have mercy on us.
 Lamb of God, who takes away the world’s sins, grant us peace.)

Bach’s setting of the Agnus Dei is based on the melody of the Protestant chorale (or hymn) *O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig* (“O Lamb of God, Pure, Spotless,” 1542). Bach composed three variations corresponding to three stanzas of the hymn. The third variation features some powerfully graphic tone painting: for example, to portray the verse “Our sins Thou did bear for us,” Bach makes the printed notes outline the three crosses on Golgotha.



This type of symbolism, which cannot really be *heard*, is sometimes called “eye music”! Quite evident to the ear, however, is the dissonant harmony Bach employs to create a mood of intense anguish at the penultimate line, “Thy peace give to us, O Jesus!” But this painful impression is quickly dissolved by a burst of musical sunlight at the last line, “Thy peace grant to us, O Jesus!” Here, as Dr. Albert Schweitzer remarks, “*O Lamm Gottes* concludes with an ascending cadence as if the heavenly messengers — after bringing the prayed for peace — were returning to their own kingdom.” — Rudy Shackelford

NURSERY is available for infants to 3-year-olds during the Sunday school hour and 11:00 service.

The nursery is located in the main hallway between the office and fellowship hall.

Nursery volunteers are needed. WILL YOU HELP? Sign-up sheet is outside the nursery.

THIS WEEK AT BETHANY		
TODAY	8:30 & 11:00 a.m.	Worship (8:30 Informal, 11:00 Traditional)
	9:30 a.m.	Second Sunday Breakfast (WBFH)
	9:45 a.m.	Sunday school for all ages Confirmation Class 2023
Tuesday, March 14	7:00 p.m.	Finance Committee (WBFH)
Wednesday, March 15	10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.	AARP Tax-Aide (appt. only, Education Wing)
	6:30 p.m.	Chancel Choir & Cantata Rehearsal (Choir Room)
	7:00 p.m.	Community Forum on Drug Crisis (Sanctuary)
Thursday, March 16	10:30 a.m.	Naomi Circle (Mary Lotsey)
	5:00 p.m.	Media Upgrade Team (Mary Lotsey)
	6:30 p.m.	House of Prayer (Sanctuary)
	7:00 p.m.	Bethany Bible Study (BBS) (Lacey Martin)

CELEBRATIONS THIS WEEK

Join us in the fellowship hall at 9:30 as we celebrate this week’s birthdays/anniversaries!

Birthdays:

- 3/12 Kevin Thompson
- 3/13 Kyle Bunting; Katie Doggett
- 3/14 Randy Williams; Matthew Byrne
- 3/15 Angela Day Waliszewski
- 3/16 Lynne Barnes
- 3/17 Kevin Kiley

Anniversaries:

- 3/14 Linda & Wendell Fletcher (15)

**DEADLINE TO ORDER EASTER FLOWERS IS
 NEXT SUNDAY, MARCH 19.
 SEE ORDER FORM FOR DETAILS.**

TODAY at 9:30 a.m. – SECOND SUNDAY BREAKFAST

Join us in the fellowship hall for our Second Sunday Breakfast.

Find a friend and join us for Sunday school afterwards! You’ll be glad you came!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR THE APRIL ISSUE OF *BETHANY BANNER* IS MARCH 15.

Bulk-mailing of the newsletter has been discontinued. Beginning with the April issue, the newsletter will be available in electronic format on our website, linked in our email blasts, with printed copies available at church for those who wish to pick up a hard copy. Shut-ins who currently receive the Sunday bulletin by mail will receive a copy of the newsletter with their bulletin.

COMMUNITY FORUM ON DRUG CRISIS, Wednesday, March 15, 7 PM, Bethany UMC Sanctuary

You are encouraged to invite a friend and join us for this free community forum on the issues caused by the misuse of prescription and illicit drugs. Representatives from the American Addiction Treatment Center, LLC will give a short presentation and be available to answer questions and provide information on resources available to help those who are struggling with this issue. This is a great opportunity not only to show support for our community but also to get information that may help you or someone you know. For more information, contact Jeff Lane.

HOUSE OF PRAYER – Every Thursday at 6:30 p.m., in the sanctuary

The sanctuary is open on Thursday nights for all to come to pray. When you come, center yourself to God by having a moment of silence, reading scripture and meditation. Pray for God's will be done, for the peace of God on earth, for churches in the world, for the United Methodist Church and its General Conference next year, for Bethany Church, for the sick and the troubled, and pray for your own prayers.

BETHANY BIBLE STUDY, 2023 – Every Thursday at 7:00 p.m. in the Lacey Martin classroom.

Currently we are studying the book of Romans.

HOMEBOUND MINISTRIES will be cooking for our shut-ins on Thursday, March 23 at 9:30 a.m.

Come and enjoy the fellowship and share your love with others.

SIGN ON US 17 REFURBISHED

Many thanks to Stacie and Paul Martin for refurbishing the Bethany sign on US 17 at the intersection with route 1205.

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED to answer phones in the church office when Dee Dee takes vacation in late March. Shifts available are listed below. If you can help, please contact the church office.

Date	8:00-10:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.-noon	1:00-4:00 p.m.
3/28 (Tues.)	Pauline Reimold		Sandra Harvey
3/29 (Wed.)	Pauline Reimold		
3/30 (Thurs.)			
3/31 (Fri.)			Debbie Robins

Instructions will be provided; no computer skills required. Questions? Contact Dee Dee at 804-642-2110.

THANK YOU NOTES

Dear church family,

Thank you so much for your cards, phone calls, meals, and well wishes. What a giving church family we have. Again, thank you. Blessings to all -- *Nerine Hickman*

We would like to thank all of our Bethany family for all the visits, meals, cards, calls, messages and prayers for our family over the last four months. Dad's fall and lengthy hospital stay and Mom's unexpected death were very difficult on all of us but being surrounded by all the love and support helped us all so very much. We would also like to thank the Hospitality Committee for the beautiful reception and everyone that provided food. We are so very grateful for all of you. Thank you -- *Shannon, Jason, Jordan, Carter and Paul*

I wanted to thank the Methodist Men for hosting the Ladies Night Dinner. It was a nice night getting together enjoying good company, delicious food and wonderful entertainment. -- *Nina Whitmore*

I would like to pass along my heartfelt thank-you to the HUGS Ministry for my lap robe they so graciously made for me. I am so humbled by this act of kindness and it's a constant reminder how this church supports and loves those in need. I will be eternally grateful for this beautiful gift. — *Jon Kent*



UMCOR SUNDAY IS MARCH 19TH.

Your generous gifts to help those in need are greatly appreciated.

In 2022, almost \$2.2 million was given to provide hope and safety for communities and individuals whose lives have been upset by storms, wars, fires, displacement and climate change. The special offering on this Sunday underwrites UMCOR's "cost of doing business" making it possible for UMCOR to focus on responding to communities and individuals when they need immediate assistance. It allows UMCOR to preserve the promise that 100% of any donation to a specific UMCOR project or missionary will go towards that project and not administrative cost.

Donation cards are available at both sanctuary entrances. Please pick one up today.