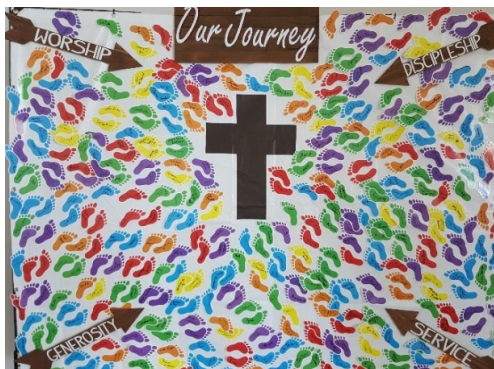


2020: Grow Towards a Deeper Relationship with Christ



So where do I start? The Fall sermon series, “Our Journey” introduced us to a pathway called **Worship + 3**. **Worship + 3** is rooted in the idea that **all Christians need a connection to a local church and to relationships with other believers where they can grow in their faith**. **Worship** is a vital part of connection to God and our church community, but it is not the only thing we do as Christians to grow. The “**plus 3**” refers to aspects of the Christian life that are also essential – **Discipleship, Service and Generosity**.

Every Christian needs a community of fellow disciples where openness and spiritual growth can take place - **Discipleship**. Every Christian is also called to play an active part in the ministries of the church both inside and beyond the church walls –**Service**. And our faith helps us to continue to be generous with our financial gifts to the church and out into the world – **Generosity**. Consider what might be the next step on your faith journey:

Worship

If you want to grow through **Worship**, plan to regularly attend one **worship service** on **Saturday or Sunday**. To add a new worship community to your journey, add attending the **Wednesday night chapel service**. Strive to attend worship each week unless you are sick or out of town. Go to www.bethany-umc.org/worship for more information.

Discipleship

If **Discipleship** is the place you want to grow, participate in a community that can help you experience God's transforming work in your life: a **Sunday School class**, a **Grow Group**, a **SpiritWalk Class**, or a **Men's or Women's group**. Contact Thomas Johnson for information about these and other Discipleship opportunities at thomas.johnson@bethany-umc.org.

Service

If you want to **Serve** –**Make a connection** with a ministry area staff member or volunteer contact **and start serving**. Or contact Cecilia Barrentine for information on service opportunities and ways to connect at cecilia.barrentine@bethany-umc.org

Generosity

Choose to give to the church in proportion to your income. **Generosity** takes trusting God with your money as you open your heart to give to our church, our church community and beyond the walls out into the world. Aim for the biblical standard of the tithe, or 10%.

What is your next step?

From the Pastor

Dear Bethany UMC Family,

After much prayer and discernment, I have decided that the time has come for me to leave my position at Bethany in June of this year.

This has not been an easy decision to make because I love Bethany. With the guidance of my spiritual director, I have been in a discernment process for three years focused on how God is calling me to serve and use my gifts in the world at this point in my life.

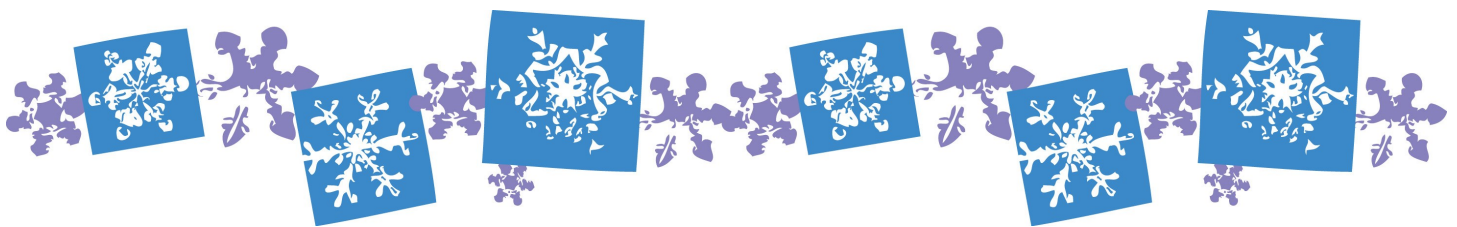
My calling, interests, and gifts have always led me to focus on discipleship across the entire lifespan, and more recently, on the faith formation that occurs when multiple generations seek to grow in faith together and in relationship with one another. Children's ministry is one small piece of this larger whole. When I came to Bethany in 2011, I knew that children's ministry was not my ultimate calling, but I felt called to this specific children's ministry at that specific point in time. I am grateful for the time I have spent at Bethany in this role, but as I have sought to be attentive to the Holy Spirit's leading in my life, it has become clear to me that it is time for me to continue my journey in another place.

I know many of you are wondering what's next for me. The short answer is: I don't know. If you know me well, you know that I am a planner. I don't just want to know a general outline for a plan; I want to figure out every detail. That said, I don't know what form the next phase of my ministry will take. Here's the thing: I am *completely okay* with that. Coming to a place of peace with "not knowing" what's next has been a significant confirmation from the Holy Spirit that I am moving in the right direction. God has not yet shown me whether the next phase of my ministry will be inside or outside the local church, full-time or part-time, paid or unpaid. I don't know when I will know, but I am continuing to diligently engage in spiritual practices as I seek the Holy Spirit's guidance. I trust that in time, I will know the next step on my path.

To ensure a smooth leadership transition in Children's Ministry, I will remain in my position through the end of June to provide ample time for the transition. When the sun sets on my time at Bethany, I will have served this congregation for 9 years as Pastor to Children and Families. I thank you for welcoming me as a fresh and eager seminary graduate. I came here with much to learn, and I have grown in many ways, both professionally and personally during my time serving Bethany. I am grateful for your companionship on the journey and your support of David and me as our family grew from two to four. Our girls have been loved beautifully by this congregation, and I know that Anna, especially, will miss it dearly. We appreciate your prayers and support as our family prepares to transition to whatever is next for us in the coming months.

Grace and Peace,

Jessica Petersen



Prayers



CELEBRATIONS:

BIRTH: Preston Laine Boaz — 1/10 to Anthony & Logan Boaz in Liberty Hill (*grandparents are Ted & Rev. Darlene Boaz; great-grandmother is Betty Boaz*)

BAPTISMS: Eric Baschnagel, Chris Kiteley, Grant Morelock, Camille Renee Sims, Hannah Sinn, Liam Sinn, Mariska Wagner

NEW MEMBERS: Eric Baschnagel; Sonia Howe

CONCERNS:

DEATHS: Tony Edwards (*Gail Buckley's brother*) - 1/11 Marble Falls; Ken James — 1/14; Carmen Sletmoe (*Cathy White's mother*) - 1/9; Janet Sims' Aunt Clara; Dale Van Horne (*Kim Dye's father*) - 1/7; Sylvia Campbell Newcomb (*founding member*) — 1/12

Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray all the time" and in Romans 12:12, "Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder." If I miss a meal, I feel hungry, not guilty. If I don't pray I should feel a spiritual hunger, not guilt. Guilt only produces inaction. (The Message paraphrase)



Your *Financial Estimate of Giving Card* is an important way to express your gratitude and faith.

The broad scope of church activities, ministries, and missions that we perform today is

enabled primarily upon these financial commitments. Your pledge helps us plan how much we will be able to accomplish in the coming year.

**2020 current Estimate of Giving commitments:
465 pledges for \$2,068,186**

We are grateful for this response! We are behind in responses and total amount pledged compared to last year, so if you haven't turned in your cards yet, please prayerfully consider your financial gift for 2020 and turn in your card soon. Make your commitment by email to Jane Herbst, by mail, or place them in the offering plate at worship.

Cards can be found in the office or on the Welcome Desk. For questions contact Jane Herbst, Finance Manager, at jane.herbst@bethany-umc.org or call the church office.

Upcoming Sermon Topics:

For the full series list and for audio recordings of past sermons, please visit the website at www.bethany-umc.org.



HEART Principles

- | | | |
|-------------|---|--|
| 1/18 & 1/19 | Hear and Understand Me | HEART Principles Sat: Wynn Sun: Tom |
| 1/25 & 1/26 | Even If You Disagree, Please Don't Make Me Wrong | Sat: Sheri Sun: Tom |
| 2/1 & 2/2 | Acknowledge the Greatness Within Me | |
| 2/8 & 2/9 | Remember to Look for My Loving Intentions | |
| 2/15 & 2/16 | Tell Me the Truth with Compassion | |
| 2/22 & 2/23 | Children's Sabbath | |

2020 Annual Church Conference Sunday, January 26, 5:00 p.m. In the Worship Center (4:30 p.m. Light Reception in the Gathering Area)



This is our annual Church Conference, where we look back at 2019 and celebrate our ministry activities and events, and then look forward into 2020. Our District Superintendent, Rev. Teresa Welborn, will be presiding. All are welcome and encouraged to attend!

Childcare provided in F105; contact lori.pierce@bethany-umc.org if you can provide food for the reception.



Wednesday Fellowship Meals!

5:15-6:30pm in Fellowship Hall

Let someone else do the cooking! Join us on Wednesday evenings for dinner and fellowship. Dinner is served continuously.

Dinner Prices: Adult \$7 Youth \$6 Seniors \$6
Children: 3 yr - 5th gr \$4 2 yr & under Free
Family Ticket (parents & children in high school or younger) \$23 Max

January 29

Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes with Gravy, Green Beans, Dinner Roll, Loaded Baked Potato Soup, Strawberry Jello Poke Cake
Kids Option: Grilled Cheese or PB&J or Smaller Portion of Adult Meal

February 5

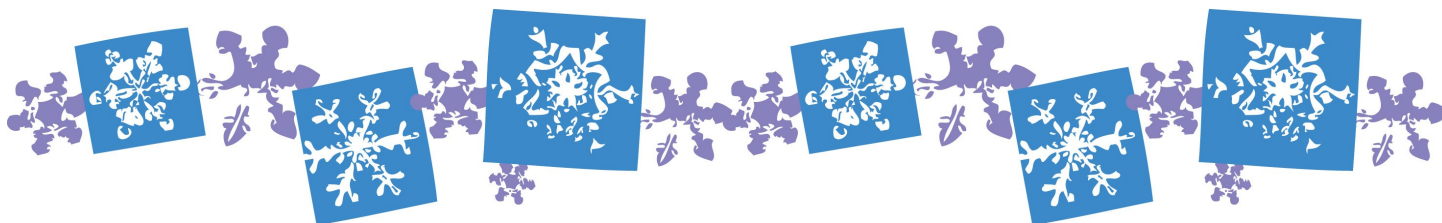
BBQ Pulled Pork, Creamed Corn, Grilled Zucchini, Squash & Onions, Garden Salad Bar with Coleslaw, Lemon Squares
Kids Option: Chicken Strips or PB&J or Smaller Portion of Adult Meal



Welcome to the Prayer Corner

To join our non-confidential Bethany E-Prayer Team, simply send an email to: bethany-e-prayer-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Add your name in the notes if your email address does not contain your name – we only approve Bethany members or frequent





How the UMC Works

How is the UMC Structured?

As part of our ongoing "How the UMC Works" series, today we discuss how the global UMC is structured.

How is the United Methodist Church structured and where does Bethany UMC fit within that structure?

The United Methodist Church is composed of many local churches, which are then organized into Districts, then into Annual Conferences, then into Jurisdictional Conferences, and finally into the General Conference of the United Methodist Church. As an analogy, consider that cities are grouped into counties, which are grouped into states, which are grouped into countries, which are grouped into continents.

In what district and conferences does Bethany UMC reside?

Bethany is in the Capital District of the Rio Texas Annual Conference. The Rio Texas Annual Conference is part of the South Central US Jurisdictional Conference, which is made up numerous Annual Conferences in eight states.

To learn more about the structure of the UMC and see a diagram of where Bethany UMC fits, visit bethany-umc.org/umcworks.



Bethany School enrollment starts Monday, 2/3 for church members who are not already enrolled in our school.

Enrollment forms will be on the file cabinet in front of the school office for pick up on Sunday, 2/2 and are due back by noon on Wednesday, 2/5. We would love to talk to you and answer any questions at 512-258-6965 or give you a tour between 9:30 and 11:30 Monday through Thursday!



2019 New Baby Ornaments Ready for Pick-Up!

A Christmas ornament was made for each baby born last year in our Bethany family. These ornaments decorated our Worship Center during Advent and Christmas.

They are now available for the families to take home as a gift from Moms On Mission and the Bethany Nursery. They

can be picked up in the church office, in a drawer labeled "New Baby Ornaments." Questions? Contact Elizabeth Nettles at elizabeth.nettles@bethany-umc.org

Bethany Staff Changes

We are very pleased to announce that Lori Pierce has become the Director of Inviting Ministries effective January 13. Many of you are very familiar with Lori as she and her family have been members at Bethany since 2014 and she has worked in the Children's Ministry as a Volunteer Coordinator for the last two and a half years. Lori's passion, energy, and ideas will be very useful as she works to connect with people in Northwest Austin that are searching for a church family. She will also build upon our Hospitality program to ensure that all people who participate in Bethany events feel welcome.

Please join all of us in welcoming and supporting Lori in this very important Bethany Ministry!



Art was pivotal in bringing the Bible to an illiterate world in medieval times. Today it still captures and focuses our attention on holy things through Christian music, book covers and illustrations, paintings hung throughout our campus buildings, and flowers carefully arranged to highlight their beauty.

Enjoy the display of Christian art in books for all ages now in the Bethany Library!



Upcoming Walks:

Men's—February 20-23

Women's—May 14-17

For more information, contact Harold Sundbeck at hsundbeck@americanrealty.com or stop by the table in the Connection Corner on January 26.



COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Feeling Misunderstood Affects Behavior

Feeling understood is a powerful driver of social behavior, as well as a critical component of positive social relationships. Feeling understood (or not) is an emotional process. The term "feeling understood" seems to emphasize the cognitive process recognizing that others have listened attentively and have accurately understood 'the facts' about a personal event.

Feeling understood is tracked in the neural regions of the brain associated with reward and social connection. In contrast, not feeling understood is tracked in regions related to negative affect and social pain. As such, behaviors paralleled the neural patterns: feeling more understood increases interpersonal closeness, while not feeling understood is associated with feeling socially distant from others.

Neurologically feeling understood makes individuals feel valued, respected, and validated, which leads to important changes in the automatic evaluation of an individual's relationship with others. The neural mechanisms identify a reward that reinforces and strengthens social relationships. The brain receives pleasure identifying with goals being met in the environment which enables a feeling of social connection.

Quite the opposite, the anticipated social pain of not feeling understood may cause individuals to avoid social interaction, much like individuals avoid physical pain and threats. When individuals feel misunderstood, the brain experiences social pain as well as physical pain. The experience of ostracism, loss, and interpersonal conflict share an underlying neural pathway with physical pain. The neurological patterns of feeling misunderstood activating the social pain receptors overlap the physical pain receptors causing an inflammatory distress response. In efforts to prevent the unpleasant physical experience, social avoidance and escape behaviors are utilized to put off further injury. When a 'socially painful' event has occurred, it may spur the individual to repair the social schism or to seek new sources of support. Although aversive or distressing social experiences may not constitute an equivalent experience to physical pain.

When we find ourselves in conversation possibly we shift our focus to actively listen. We all long to be heard and understood.

Lisa Blackwood MS MA LPC-S #19803
LCDC#4065 EMDR Certified

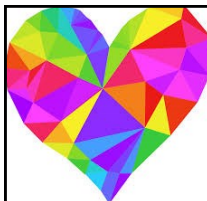


Reminder: We're here.

Life Recovery meets on Sundays
at 2:00 p.m. in Rm. D209-210.

Our group works through the "tough stuff" in our lives ~ addictions, dependencies, hurtful habits, etc. If something is holding you back in life and faith, join us!

*Contact: erin.temple@bethany-umc.org
or just come where/when we meet.



ReWYRE Kick Off

January 26th, 5:30 p.m. in Rm. S203-204

ReWYRE stands for Rebuilding When Your Relationship Ends. If you've lost a loved one due to divorce, death, or significant break up, please consider joining us for an 11-week class beginning January 26th.

*Details: www.bethany-umc.org/rewyre; email erin.temple@bethany-umc.org to ask questions and/or register.

Savvy Caregiver

Weds, Feb 5 – Mar 11 ~ 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

by Bethany facilitators @ St. Thomas More

Are you a caregiver for someone with dementia? Learn about dementia, the impact on your loved one, and the skills needed to manage daily caregiver responsibilities.

Registration required (limit 15). For info & registration,
Contact: Dave Lutz, 512-876-3054, Jennifer Bibbo 512-258-1161

Facilitators: Rev. Dave Lutz, Bethany Care Ministries Pastor
and Cheryl Goad, Stephen Minister



Grief Care: Life After Loss

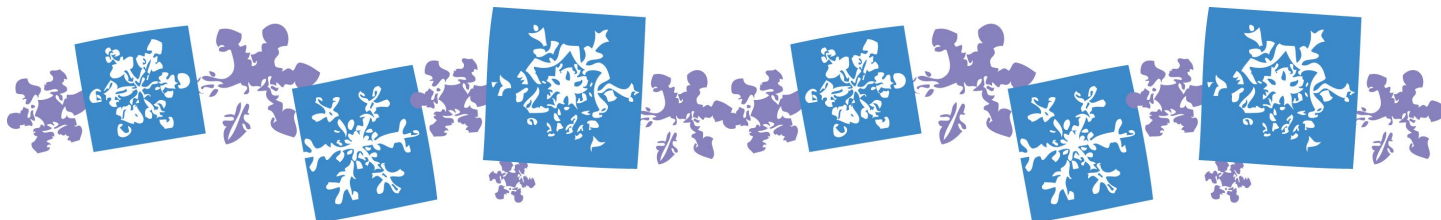
Grief support group for those
missing a loved one who died

Sundays, February 2-March 29

1:30 -3:30 p.m. in Room D200

Program includes a guidebook/journal, which costs \$5.

For information or to register, contact Pastor Wynn
512 - 258-6017 x275 or wynn.s@bethany-umc.org





**How will you grow in 2020?
Consider taking a *SpiritWalk* class
to help you grow deeper in your
walk with Christ!**

Do you want to take control of your finances? ... Take the [Financial Peace University](#) class.

Do you want to live more simply with less stuff and less stress? ... Take the [Freedom of Simplicity](#) class.

Do you want to look into why Christianity makes sense and what it is about? ... Take the [Mere Christianity](#) class.

Do you want a greater integration between your spiritual and emotional life? ... Take the [Emotionally Healthy Spirituality](#) class.

Do you need a spiritual community that can really help you grow deeper in your daily relationship with God? ... Take the [Intro to Grow Groups](#) class.

Do you want to take action to help those in poverty have access to economic development? ... Take the [Micro-Lending to the Poor](#) class.

Are you looking for something else? Check out the other classes coming up for 2020! [Click here](#) to see all of the SpiritWalk classes offered in the New Year.

May God bless you and grow you in this new year!
<https://bethany-umc.org/ministries/adult/spiritwalk/>

Friendship SS Class

January 19—April 5

9:30am in Ministry Center, D105

Join us for a new study by Adam Hamilton,
*The Walk – Five Essential Practices of the
Christian Life.*

All are invited to join us!

General Conference 2020

In May 2020, the UMC General Conference will continue discussions about how the global UMC can move forward in light of our longstanding disagreement about inclusiveness and interpretation of Scripture on the subject of same-gender weddings and LGBTQ ordination. Until then, Bethany is committed to providing ongoing information and valuable resources to help us all prepare for and navigate whatever comes from that Conference. Please see our newly created resource page for updates and helpful information: bethany-umc.org/GC2020. As we head through this time, it is important to remember that **ALL people have sacred worth**, and Bethany UMC is committed to loving all people, regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation. We give ourselves fully to be in ministry for, and with, all persons.



PRIMETIMERS UPCOMING EVENTS

2/2—Georgetown Palace Theatre

Playhouse: Sunday. See Neil Simon's wacky comedy *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*. \$35 includes supper in the Bethany

Café after. Reservations to Shirley at 512-219-5842 by Tuesday 1/28. Leave Bethany at 1:00 pm.

2/5—Chit, Chat & Chew: Men's Breakfast, Wednesday, 8am at Jim's on Spicewood Springs/183

2/7—Game Night: Friday, 6:30–9:30pm in the Ministry Center. No reservations needed.

2/9—Lunch in the Bethany Café: Sunday after 11 am worship, \$7 per person. Reservations to LaVon, 512-465-2125 by Tuesday 2/4.

2/19—Movie: *The Green Book* Based on a true story of an African American musician in the 60's. Wednesday, 10:30 a.m. Student Media Room D-101. BOX lunch, Ham or Turkey sandwich from Jason's Deli, \$7. Call Shirley at 512-219-5842 for reservations and choice of box lunch by Friday 2/14.

Domino Play: Wednesdays, 3-5 pm in the Ministry Center. Join us!

Please be sure you are free before making your reservation.

Feed My People

Tuesday, February 11

5:00 AM

First UMC, 13th & Lavaca



Bethany sponsors a breakfast each month to feed 300-400 downtown homeless. We purchase, prepare and serve a hot breakfast.

If your group would like to sponsor a month or for information about volunteer opportunities, please visit:

www.bethany-umc.org/feed-my-people or
contact Debbie Childers bdchilders@juno.com



Serving Under-Privileged Families in our Community

We will be preparing and delivering meals using the MLF food truck on these dates:

Mondays, February 3 & 17

Friday, February 28

Needed: New adult & children's socks

Drop-off bins are located around the church for donations.

For information about volunteer opportunities, please visit:

www.bethany-umc.org/mobile-loaves-fishes
or to volunteer, contact Gayle Kneupper, kneupper@yahoo.com

How to Have Hard Conversations

HEART PRINCIPLES:

LEAD FROM THE HEART



Hear and understand me
Even if you disagree, please don't make me wrong
Acknowledge the greatness within me
Remember to look for my loving intentions
Tell me the truth with compassion

"Leading from the heart means allowing the Holy Spirit to govern our behavior in relationship. As the apostle Paul affirmed in Romans 5:5 (RSV), 'God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.' Our task as Christian leaders is to allow that love to flow from our hearts to others in very specific behavior." (*Partners in Ministry Clergy and Laity**, pg 37)

Partners in Ministry Clergy and Laity. Roy W. Trueblood and Jackie B. Trueblood. Abingdon Press, Nashville. 1999

Having Successful Conversations Despite Differences

Having successful conversations with those whom you disagree starts with understanding that you are not there to change their mind. You are there to try to understand them and show Christ's love, despite your differences. Often, the success of these conversations comes more from listening than from talking. Finding common ground can go a long way toward easing tension. Below are tips to help keep your conversation in a productive place.

Body Language

Your body language says so much. Be friendly and avoid seeming hostile. This looks like:

- Face the person directly
- Make eye contact
- Maintain neutral facial expressions
- Nod your head when you agree
- Don't cross your arms
- Lean in but respect space

Choose Your Words Carefully

Use tentative, non-accusing, non-judgmental words and respectful tone. This sounds like:

Ask to Hear Their Story

- I'd like to hear your experience/opinion...
- Don't worry about hurting my feelings. I really want to hear your thoughts...

Tell Your Personal Story

- My experience is...
- What I feel like is important is...

Find Common Ground

- Something I think we agree on is...
- What might be some things we can agree on?

Express Disagreement Without Being Disagreeable

- I see things differently. Let me describe how...
- Let me describe where I'm coming from...

Checking for Clarity of Understanding

- Let me see if I understood you correctly...
- I'd like to ask a clarifying question...

Encourage Testing

- Let me try this idea...
- What's working well about this conversation? What's not?

Tactics for Diffusing Tense Moments

- I can see you're upset. Is there anything we can do?
- This seems painful for you. Shall we take a break?
- We are both getting tense. Shall we take a walk?



2020 Summer Trips

Save \$50 - Register by March 1st

Mission by the Sea (6th-12th grade) Palacios, TX Dates: May 31 - June 4, 2020

Cost: \$350; pay only \$300 for registration and non-refundable \$100 payment by March 1st.

PURE SOUND Choir Tour (6th-12th grade) Colorado Dates: June 18 - 25, 2020

Cost (approx.): \$450; pay only \$400 for registration and non-refundable \$100 payment by March 1st.

El Salvador (Must have completed 10th grade by trip dates) Dates: June 26 - July 3, 2020

Cost: \$1,375, pay only \$1300 for registration and \$200 non-refundable deposit by March 1st.

Mountain T.O.P. (Current 8th graders and High School) Dates: July 10-19, 2020

Cost: \$705; pay only \$655 for registration and non-refundable payment by March 1st.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MYSTERY TRIP (5th-8th grade) Dates: July 27 - 31, 2020

Cost: \$375; pay only \$325 for registration and non-refundable payment by March 1st.

Learn more at <http://www.bethany-umc.org>

HOMEWORK & HANGOUT

Wednesdays, 5:00-7:45

Students can purchase church dinner (youth cost \$6) or bring their own food. We will have junk food (nachos, brownies, popcorn, etc.) every week too!

Homework & Hangout - bring your homework at 5:00 and we can tackle it together. Certified teachers are available to tutor for free in most subjects

Bible Study - 6:15-7pm. Afterwards we'll play games or study until 7:45pm

MYF

Sundays, 5:45 - 8:00

Snack Supper (cost \$3)

Worship:

music, message, prayer, offering

Small Groups

Games

Bring your friends!



Spring 2020 Semester:

Sundays, February 2 - April 5 at 10:45 - 12:15 in the Cornerstone
Confirmation retreat February 15 @ 7:30am - February 16th @ Noon

Find Event and Fundraising info online: www.bethany-umc.org/ministries/student



Children's Sabbath February 22 & 23

**Join us at any of the worship services as
we celebrate the children of Bethany!**

Here are some details for parents:

Children should go to services and sit with you.

We are not having regular Sunday School classes - care is available in the Activity Ark for Kinder to 5th Grade and D126 for preschool.

Care is **ONLY** for children whose parents are attending Adult Sunday School classes.

Questions: Contact Jen Seibel at jen.seibel@bethany-umc.org

Like us on Facebook!

Share this page with everyone. We will be updating it regularly to let you know everything that is going on in the life of Bethany UMC Children's Ministry.

www.facebook.com/BUMCChildren



**Want to know more about what is
happening in Children's Ministry?**

Sign-up for our Kids News newsletter.

Go to website -

www.bethany-umc.org/childrens-newsletters

Buying a new Christmas Tree?

**Don't know what to do with your old tree? Give your
old tree to Children's Ministry for 2020 VBS!**

Contact Susan Hinderliter at

susan.hinderliter@bethany-umc.org

or 512-258-6017 ext 269



The Epistle

Weekly Church Newsletter

The Epistle is published bi-weekly by Bethany United Methodist Church, 10010 Anderson Mill Rd., Austin, TX 78750



Join Us For Worship

Saturday Worship 5:00 p.m.

Sunday Worship 8:15, 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.

Sunday Chapel Communion Service
9:30 a.m.

Sunday School 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.

Sunday Youth Worship 5:30 p.m.

Mid-Week Worship
Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.

More worship details inside on p.3



*Next Epistle deadline: January 28 for the
February 9 publication.*



10010 Anderson Mill Rd.

Austin, TX 78750

512-258-6017

Website: bethany-umc.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/
bethanyumc

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If you would like to subscribe to receive this bi-weekly newsletter by mail or email, contact the church office at 512-258-6017.



"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God."

~ 1 John 4:7

It's Valentine's Day (well, almost . . .), and love is in the air! Join us for Bethany's annual Special Needs Valentine's Dance where God's love is all around. We'll be decorating, dancing, and eating the yummiest snacks with friends. All adults with special needs ages 14+ are welcome!

Saturday, February 15th

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Fellowship Hall

*Questions? Want to volunteer? We'd love to have you! Email erin.temple@bethany-umc.org.