

Bethel United Methodist Church Chewsville

Bethel Tidings

June 2025

Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference 2025: A Spirit-Led Gathering of Hope, Justice, and Mission

The 241st Session of the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference convened with deep purpose, marked by reverent worship, spirited debate, meaningful legislation, and heartfelt recognition. Held under the leadership of Bishop LaTrelle Easterling, the conference embodied the theme of transformation—spiritually, structurally, and socially.

A Clergy Session Rooted in Reflection and Readiness

Prior to formal proceedings, clergy gathered in a sacred time of preparation. Participants were invited into silent or shared reflection to examine their emotional and spiritual readiness for ministry. Questions centered on peace, gentleness, and change that encouraged clergy to enter the session with humility and intention.

Once business commenced, the clergy session affirmed candidates for ordination and membership with overwhelming support. Provisional members, elders, deacons, and transfers were welcomed with joy, and retiring clergy were honored for over 600 years of combined service. The tone remained reverent and affirming throughout.

The Board of Ordained Ministry introduced the transition to a new two-year RIM (Residence in Ministry) program and promoted wellness resources such as the Clergy Renewal Grant and Living Well programs. New family-friendly accommodations, including lactation stations and child policies, were highlighted, underscoring a growing commitment to inclusive support.

Celebrating Justice, Equity, and the Call to Mission

A major theme throughout the conference was the pursuit of justice and equity in ministry. A dedicated task force led by Rev. Dr. Joy Jones and Rev. Dr. Rodney Smothers addressed mentoring gaps and cultural humility, while constitutional amendments—ratified with strong support—advanced protections based on gender, ability, and race. The “Worldwide Regionalization” amendment, which seeks to decentralize U.S. dominance and empower contextualized ministry globally, generated robust conversation and wide approval.

The conference launched an ambitious mission project—a “coopertition” to create 10,000 health kits for disaster relief and local ministry by Thanksgiving. This effort reflects the connectional power of United Methodists working together in compassion and service.

Financial Stewardship and the Future of Clergy Support

Conference financial discussions focused on clergy compensation, budget clarity, and benefit reforms. Following emotional testimony and policy debate, a new standard was approved: clergy reimbursement will now equal 10% of base cash salary, replacing the former \$4,100 flat rate. While the decision aims to reflect changing costs and economic realities, voices from small and part-time churches expressed concern—highlighting the ongoing tension between equity and sustainability.

The Council on Finance and Administration presented a balanced \$18.2 million budget for 2026, celebrating the repayment of conference debt and robust camp and retreat ministries. The session also outlined the 2026 rollout of the COMPASS retirement plan, moving clergy toward defined contribution structures with optional student loan support and new employer matching.

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Legal Integrity and a Vision for Ministry Continuity

Conference Chancellor Thomas Starnes reported on legal matters, including lawsuits surrounding disaffiliating churches and the successful defense of denominational property clauses. The BSA settlement was affirmed, and the conference's pastoral care approach was praised.

Despite challenges, the message was clear: the Baltimore-Washington Conference is committed to being a faithful, equitable, and compassionate presence in every community it serves.

Honoring Service, Embracing the Future

Closing moments of the conference celebrated long-serving staff and clergy with warmth and gratitude. New appointments across all districts—including our own Canal District—were received with prayer and promise. The conference adjourned following instructions for the ordination service and a closing motion of thanks and hope.

As we look ahead to the 242nd Annual Conference in May 2026, we carry with us a renewed sense of calling. We are reminded that transformation begins in prayer, takes root in community, and grows through faithful service. In the words of Bishop Easterling, we are “called to be a people of radical love, prophetic justice, and unwavering grace.”

Let us walk forward together.

– Pastor Jim Johnson

Bethel United Methodist Church

Canal District – Baltimore-Washington Conference

Continued Events:

Women at the Well

The Women at the Well will continue "The Chosen" in Sept. Currently we will study Max Lucado "How Happiness Happens" finding lasting joy in a world of comparison, disappointment, and unmet expectations. On Wednesday at 10:00 on June 4 will be the last meeting until September. Lunch is Wednesday, June 18 at 11:00 am at Café Roma on Pennsylvania Ave in Hagerstown. Additional lunches are for July 16 at Western Sizzlin Steakhouse and August 20 in the Bethel Pavilion.

All are welcome to join us.

This study is open to all (men and women). Please contact Beverly Miller (shanda@myactv.net) or Valerie Kaufmann (kaufmval@gmail.com) if you are interested in joining us.



Altar flowers:

Bethel continues to be blessed by the talents of the Altar Committee. Please consider signing up on the calendar by the offering plate. The cost is \$45.00 for both flower arrangements (not the vase) that you may take with you after the service. Be sure to let the office know a week in advance what you would like written in the bulletin. Thank you!

OUR DEEPEST FEAR ^{IS NOT}
THAT WE ARE INADEQUATE • OUR DEEPEST FEAR
^{IS THAT} WE ARE POWERFUL
BEYOND MEASURE • ^{IT IS OUR} LIGHT ^{NOT OUR DARKNESS,}
THAT MOST FRIGHTENS US.

WE ASK OURSELVES,
WHO AM I TO BE BRILLIANT, GORGEOUS,
TALENTED, FABULOUS? ACTUALLY, WHO ARE
YOU NOT TO BE?

YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD

YOUR PLAYING SMALL
DOESN'T SERVE
THE WORLD.
THERE'S NOTHING
ENLIGHTENED ABOUT
SHRINKING SO THAT
OTHER PEOPLE
WON'T FEEL INSECURE
AROUND YOU.

WE ARE ALL
MEANT
TO SHINE
^{AS CHILDREN DO.}

WE WERE BORN TO
MAKE MANIFEST THE GLORY OF GOD
THAT IS WITHIN US • IT'S NOT JUST IN
SOME OF US, IT'S IN EVERYONE.

AND LET OUR OWN
AS WE LIGHT SHINE

WE UNCONSCIOUSLY GIVE OTHER PEOPLE PERMISSION TO DO
THE SAME • AS WE'RE LIBERATED FROM OUR OWN FEAR,
OUR PRESENCE AUTOMATICALLY
LIBERATES OTHERS.

MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

© Sherrie Linder '18

Micah's Backpack

Healthy Meals for Healthy Families



Thank you so much for supporting this important program again this year. A grandmother shared with me the other day how she appreciates the help since she is raising her grandchildren. We are close to the finish and have done pretty well with planning with the Food Bank supplies but are in need of a few things. If you could please help with oatmeal, cold cereal or breakfast bars, and applesauce that would be very appreciated.

Thanks!

Linda

Readers:

If you would like to volunteer to read the scripture, contact Elaine Snyder at 301-991-9759.

Ushers:

Please let the office know if you can take a turn. Currently we have available openings in July, August, October, November and December. Thank you.



Supporting our Homebound Bethel Caring Connection

This group is looking for a new leader.

Speak up!

Please contact the office if you could help with this.

Homebound birthdays...

July 28 – Alvey Moser
30 Monica Blvd. Room 336
Lynchburg, VA 24502

July 31 – John Kalbflesh
P.O. Box 165
Chewsville, MD 21721

Food Pantry/Blessing Box Update

A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed. Proverbs 11:25



Attendance April 2025

Date	In person Church S.S./ Worship	Special Events
April 27	25/59	
May 4	19/62/22	WMC
May 11	21/52	Mother's Day
May 18	23/54	
May 25		

Leadership News:

To be the people of God on the move for Jesus to transform the world by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Leadership Board Updates:

Greeters and Ushers – have had a good response. See above for remaining Usher openings.

Spiritual Formation- The group is encouraged to reach out and make individual contact with others in kindness as Jesus did.

Trustee: Tim Smith is preparing to paint the outdoor trim of the church this summer. The Lions and Bethel reached out to Lowes who donated a hot water heater for the basement, which is now operational.

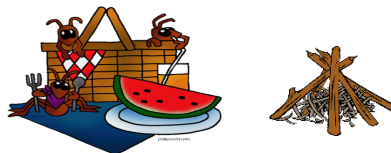
Summer plans- The office is looking for volunteers who would like to be a part of VBS this year. Make yourself known! We are planning a picnic and bonfire on Sat. May 24th.

The **next meeting** will be on Wed., June 18th, at 7 pm in the Office...Join us!

Upcoming Events:

May 24 Community Picnic and Bonfire

At 5pm on this Saturday we will be hosting a picnic in the Pavilion. With details still to be determined, we hope you will plan to attend and bring your favorite dishes and lawn chairs for around the fire pit.

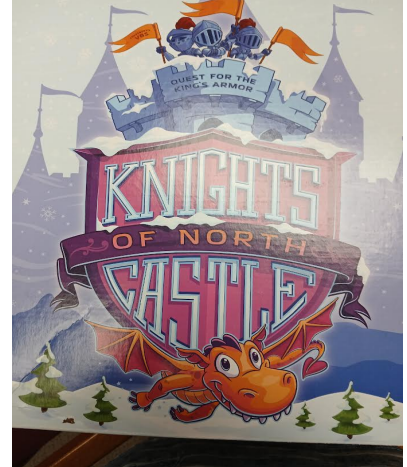


VBS **June 16-20.**

Program and Dinner on Sat June 21 @ 5pm.

The theme this year is “Knights of North Castle”. Deb Wagner and Tonya Freeman will co-chair the event. Contacts have started for filling the classrooms with teachers.

Meetings began on Wednesday, April 30th and continue weekly to prepare.



You will be able to help by praying for a success, donating food, or helping to serve by being a teacher or helper. Small things like helping in restrooms, providing security, helping in the kitchen or taking pictures makes everything flow smoother!

There will soon be signs:

Advertising the event...

Asking for needed volunteers...

Tabs on the doors for food...

Tabs for supplies...

Last year we welcomed 43 children and 26 volunteers. Chatter in the community was that this is a wonderful VBS program and that they were grateful for us feeding the children, which help the working parents. You know that there have been several children asking for months now when can that be done again!

Preregister:

Use this QR Code



June Birthdays:

2 – George Stone
3 – Elaine Semler
3 – Linda Barnhart
6 – Juliette Fulton
6 – Bernie Semler
13 – Scott McClure
19 – Bradley Rishell
24 – Carrie Johnson-McClure
26 – Mike Sokol
28 – Tammy Wagner
30- Linda Langley
30 – Teri Lutz



June Anniversaries:



June 1 – Ronnie & Peggy Snyder

June 7 – Denny & Valerie Kaufmann

June 7 – Randy & Diane Stevens

June 13 – Steve & Lori Shifflett

June 25 – Cokey & Char Robertson

June 27 – Scott & Carrie Johnson-McClure

Bethel Tidings

June 2025						
Sunday 1 Communion	Monday 2	Tuesday 3	Wednesday 4 10am W@W/ 1 st floor classroom	Thursday 5	Friday 6	Saturday 7
9:00 Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Sanctuary & Virtual Service Worship 2:00 pm Western MD Hospital		6:00 p.m. Lions Club/FLC	12:30-3:30 Band 6:30 Girl Scout Leaders/upstairs 7:00 VBS meet/Parlor	6:00 New Beginnings Bible Study/Parlor	12:30-3:30 New Horizon's Band	9am-6pm Haitian SDA Church
8 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Sanctuary & Virtual Service Worship	9	10 6:00 pm Lions/FLC	11 12:30-3:30 Band 7:00 VBS meet/Parlor	12 6:00 New Beginnings Bible Study/Parlor	13 12:30-3:30 New Horizon's Band	14 FLAG DAY 9am-6pm Haitian SDA Church
15 Father's Day 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Sanctuary & Virtual Service Worship	16 5:30 VBS WEEK Newsletter Deadline	17 VBS	18 VBS 11:00 W@W lunch 12:30-3:30 Band	19 VBS JUNETEENTH 6:00 New Beginnings Bible Study/Parlor	20 VBS 12:30-3:30 Band	21 5:00 VBS Program & Italian Meal 9am-4pm Haitian SDA Church
22 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Sanctuary & Virtual Service Worship	23	24 1:00 DAR sewing /FLC	25 12:30-3:30 Band 7:00 Leadership Council/Office	26 6:00 New Beginnings Bible Study/Parlor	27 12:30-3:30 Band	28 9am-6pm Haitian SDA Church
29 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Sanctuary & Virtual Service	30					

Bethel United Methodist Church Chewsville

Our Mission: To be the people of God on the move for Jesus and to transform the world by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our Vision: To be the Church of Jesus Christ to all God's children through discipleship grounded in God's Holy Word. We pledge to God and each other to accomplish our mission: Through prayer, worship and education, we will be seekers of God's will. Through witness, we will kindle the fire of spiritual and physical growth. Through Christian community we will love, nurture and support each other and those in need throughout the world.

Church Office:

Phone: 301-733-8387
Email: secretary@bethelumchurch.org

Pastor: Jim Johnson
Email: pastor@bethelumchurch.org

Administrative Assistant:

Deb Wagner
301-733-8387
Office hours: 9 am – 1 pm Mon.-Fri.
Email: secretary@bethelumchurch.org

Newsletter Editor:

Deb Wagner
Phone: 301-733-8387
Email: secretary@bethelumchurch.org

Bethel Connect:

Be connected; join our Google Group, search for Connect @ Bethel.

Sunday Service Times:

Traditional mixed with Contemporary
Worship @ 10:00 am
Sunday School 9:00 am
Online Sun 10:00 am @ www.bethelumchurch.org

Family Care Ministry:

Please let us know if you or a family member wish a pastoral visit during a time of grief or hospitalization, including the birth of a child. We will pray & minister to you.

Telephone Prayer Chain:

Beverly Miller
Phone: 301-739-6270
Email: shanda@myactv.net



Bethel Tidings



Pastor Jim Johnson
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Donate with Venmo.

