

## Bethesda Evangelical Lutheran Church

### MARCH 2024 NEWSLETTER

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3084 Leechburg Road, Lower Burrell, PA 15068

[office@bethesdalutheran.comcastbiz.net](mailto:office@bethesdalutheran.comcastbiz.net)

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[www.bethesdaelc3084.org](http://www.bethesdaelc3084.org) / Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BELC3084>

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Office and Pastor's Hours by Appointment: 724-335-0559  
Reverend Dr. Scott Dennis, PhD, transitional interim minister  
Cell Phone: 412-651-5525  
Email: [sdennis@pts.edu](mailto:sdennis@pts.edu)

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**Sunday Worship Schedule at 9:00 am – First, Third, Fifth Sunday**  
**Saturday Worship Schedule at 3:00 pm – Second, Fourth Saturday –**  
**note time change for the winter months**

In-person worship and livestream services with Bethesda at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/BELC3084>

Bible Study in person at Bethesda: Every Thursday from 10:00 am – 11:00 am;  
Prayer Group from 11:00 am – 11:30 am

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#### WORSHIP SCHEDULE:

Sunday, March 3 – 9:00 am

Saturday, March 9 – 3:00 pm

Sunday, March 17 – 11:00 am – Combined Worship Service with Forks-Zion

Saturday, March 23 – 3:00 pm – Palm Sunday

Sunday, March 31 – 9:00 am – Easter Sunday

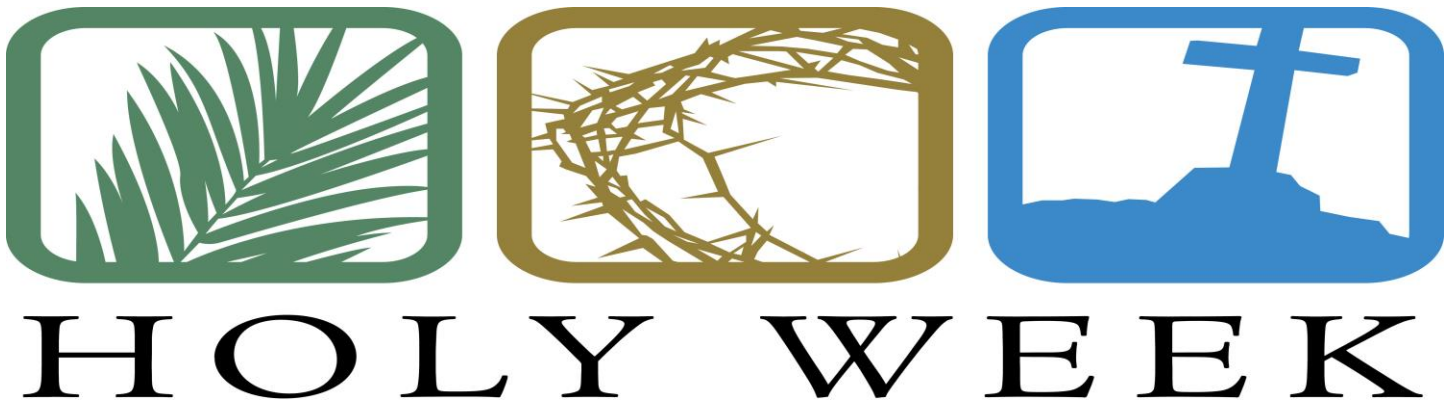
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**SPECIAL CONGREGATION MEETING - MARCH 9TH, IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING WORSHIP**

**Purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the excavation project  
and the creation of a Joint Ministry Council.**

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***Scheduled services:***

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**Palm Sunday – Saturday, March 23 at 3:00 pm**  
**Lenten Meditation – Wednesday, March 27 from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm**  
**Maundy Thursday – March 28 at 12:00 Noon**  
**Good Friday – March 29 at 7:00 pm, congregation led**  
**Easter Sunday – March 31 at 9:00 am**

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***Synod Assembly – June 14 – 15, 2024. Assembly may be attended in person or via Zoom and will be held at PennWest University, formerly California University. If you are interested in attending, please leave a message with the office, and you will be contacted with details.***

## The Pastor's Page

March 2024



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Well, it's the beginning of March, and we are well into our annual Lententide journeys. We have all begun afresh our annual, liturgical pilgrimage that shall conclude in our witnessing afresh the torment and betrayal of our Lord Jesus in a garden on the Mount of Olives on one night, followed by His torturous crucifixion, the very murder of God, upon a wooden cross on the skull-shaped hill, called *Golgotha*, the next day. It's all too easy to forget that Jesus' death on Good Friday is not the end of His story. But in order for us to get to Easter morning and relive the joy of our Lord Jesus walking freely and sovereignly out of His borrowed tomb, to leave it behind to remain empty forevermore, we must first journey with him through 40 days of sacrifice and temptation.

In my first call in the Church of Scotland Highland parish of Loch Broom and Ullapool, I had many parishioners who were hesitant to go through Lent's 40-day journey. For many, it was a practice they had never felt the need to observe. For some 'little old ladies', they wagged their fingers in my face and felt the need to tell me that I was trying to introduce alien practices that were "*Papist*", "*Roman*", and "*Episcopalian*." I remember one couple in particular who refused to attend Holy Week services because they wanted to go straight through from Palm Sunday to Easter. Yet, there were three little old ladies – Irene, Agnes, and Joan – who gave holy week a chance and attended "all the extra services". By Easter morning, these 3 came to me in floods of tears, saying that they never understood the connection from Palm Sunday to Easter morning, but because of Holy Week they now did, and they had an even deeper love for our Lord Jesus and His cross. Naturally, this warmed the cockles of my heart, yet also reminded me of the Apostle Paul's sentiment: *do all things decently and in good order* (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:40).

You see, brothers and sisters, the pilgrimage discipline of Lent is specifically designed to be one that spiritually transforms us into having a deeper appreciation for the Christian faith we'd rather forget. It's hard to get all the way through Lententide without feeling weary, emotionally drained, and running on empty. But we're not alone; our Lord Jesus knows all about being exhausted by the end of His 40-day journey through the wilderness. So, I guess this means that we're in good company, because our Lord Jesus understands our own weariness and He is able to help us during our time of temptation, exhaustion, and weariness. Perhaps, it's fitting that we take comfort from Scripture and remind ourselves that *discipline at the time seems unpleasant, but later on it produces a harvest of righteousness* (Hebrews 12:11). Have a blessed Lententide journey; may you finish strongly at the foot of the cross by keeping the home fires burning!

With every blessing and good wish for you and yours,  
The Rev'd Dr Scott Dennis, PhD (aka Pastor Dennis)

## **MARCH WORSHIP SERVANTS**

### **Sunday March 3, 2024**

Greeters/Ushers: Sharon Matty, Liz Baker  
Acolyte and Psalm: Jody Arnold  
Lector: Carole Bauer  
Assisting Minister: Gary Bauer  
AV Operator: Cheri McKee

### **Saturday March 9, 2024**

Greeters/Ushers: Ruth Sloan, Leonard McElroy  
Acolyte and Psalm: Rita Seben  
Lector: Sharon Saffer  
Assisting Minister: Carrie Banks  
AV Operator: Marty Banks

### **Sunday March 17, 2024**

Combined service at Forks=Zion

### **Saturday March 23, 2024**

Greeters/Ushers: Sharon Saffer, Ava Seben  
Acolyte and Psalm: Jack Bellinotti  
Lector: Cheri McKee  
Assisting Minister: Rita Seben  
AV Operator: Cheri McKee

### **Sunday March 31, 2024**

Greeters/Ushers: Ruth Sloan, Sharon Matty  
Acolyte and Psalm: Marty Banks, Carrie Banks, Ava Seben  
Lector: Sharon Saffer  
Assisting Minister: Gary Bauer  
AV Operator: Cheri McKee

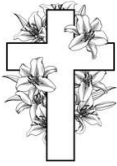
*Please contact Carrie Banks a month in advance with any requests of dates to be scheduled or not scheduled. Call or text at (724) 989-1515 or email [piratefancarrie@yahoo.com](mailto:piratefancarrie@yahoo.com). If you cannot serve, please contact Carrie or the office.*

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*Newsletter deadline for article submission is the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. If you have something you would like to include and it is after the deadline, please contact the office – 724-335-0559. Thank you!*

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## BETHESDA NEWS.....



Donna Sanner, a long-time member of Bethesda, passed away on February 20, 2024. Donna served in many capacities at the church, including Council. Please keep Donna's family and friends in your prayers. She will be greatly missed.

**Beginning April 13<sup>th</sup>, our Saturday worship service will begin at 4:00 pm. This will also be the date of our Spring Congregation Meeting.**



**Bible Study and Prayer Group** – All are welcome to join the Bible Study group on Thursday mornings from 10:00 – 11:00 am. The topic for March will be “Encountering Jesus”.

Please enter the church through the rear entrance and proceed to the first classroom on the right. If you have any questions or need transportation to and from the church, please contact Sharon Saffer at 724-224-4134.



The Church will be open from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm through March 27th for silent meditation and reflection during the six weeks of Lent. Lenten devotions will be available weekly and a member of the Worship Team and Council will be present during this time. Please plan to attend at least once during the Lenten season to help prepare yourself to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter.



Forks Zion Lutheran Church will be offering its Lenten suppers through March 20<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 pm, followed by a worship service at 7 pm. Please bring a dessert to share.



**Don't Forget to spring forward Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup>!**



## SAVE THE DATES

**March 17<sup>th</sup> – Combined Worship Service & Potato Bake** – Forks and Bethesda will have a combined worship service at Forks Zion at 11:00AM, March 17<sup>th</sup> with a Potato Bake to follow. A signup sheet will be posted in the Narthex in early March for attendance and appetizers or desserts you will be providing.

**July 21<sup>st</sup> - Combined Worship Service & Picnic** – Bethesda and Forks will have a combined worship service at Gilpin/Leechburg Park, Pavilion 5, on Sunday, July 21<sup>st</sup> at 11:00AM with a picnic to follow. A signup sheet will be posted in the Narthex in early July for attendance and covered dishes, appetizers, or desserts you will be providing.



After considerable discussion and prayer, your Council has made the decision to discontinue the Pet Pantry. Since its inception, the Pet Pantry has been very difficult to stock and when we are fortunate to receive donations to place in the cabinet, it is cleared out usually within an hour or two. We do have an inventory of food and treats and will continue to add these items through the end of March. If there is anything remaining, it will be donated to Animal Protectors of New Kensington. We will continue with the Food Pantry and ask that donations for this pantry continue.



The Clothesline Ministry is looking donations of good, used jewelry and for volunteers for all jobs: hanging and sorting clothing, moving racks of clothing from parish house to church, set-up, tear-down, removing tags from hangers, and helping customers. Please contact Liz Baker or Sharon Matty for additional information. Give it a try!

## COME SHOP WITH US:

### *Ministry of:*

Bethesda Evangelical Lutheran Church  
3084 Leechburg Road, Lower Burrell  
724-335-0559 / [www.bethesdaelc3084.org](http://www.bethesdaelc3084.org) / Like us on Facebook



**Saturday, March 9**  
**\$.25 per item or 5 for \$1**  
**9:00 am – 12:00 Noon**  
**Jewelry Room will be open**  
**PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN BAGS**

**Clothing, shoes & purses for children  
and adults - \$.25 per item**



**The Little Free Pantry is in need of travel size toothpaste, toiletries and toothbrushes you may have collected from recent vacations or trips to the dentist. If the Pantries are full, donations can also be left in the Pantry box outside the kitchen or in the Clothesline donation box outside.**

### **Little Free Pantry**

For the food pantry, you are asked to add small non-perishable, unexpired food items and toiletries to the box for those in the community that might have an immediate need.

**Most needed items: cereal, tuna, cans of fruit, cans of soup, canned pasta meals, soap & deodorant, individual rolls of toilet paper, easy mac & cheese, small peanut butter, travel size toothpaste, toiletries and toothbrushes.**



**March - Lutherlyn and Lutheran Church Extension Society**

**50/50**

**Lutherlyn** – This Outdoor Ministry owned and operated by the NW and SWPA Synods gives children and youth the opportunity to grow in faith, in grace and in a sense of their God-given worth, gifts and ability to make a difference. “Going to camp” is second only to “family” in developing strong Christian leaders for our future.

**Lutheran Church Extension Society** was organized in 1893 and aids congregations through non-interest-bearing loans for renovation. It is an independent agency cooperating with the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod and the Divisions for Outreach of the ELCA.

Make sure to check out our website at <https://www.bethesdaelc3084.org> for resources such as bulletins, newsletters and announcements. Please remember to contact the office with any changes in contact information such as emails, addresses, phone numbers, etc. If you would like to receive your bulletins and newsletters via land mail, please contact the office.

During these unusual times, we know that supporting Bethesda is important to you. There are three convenient ways to give regularly:

**In Person:**

Sunday service at 9am or Saturday service at 3pm

**By Mail:**

Bethesda Evangelical Lutheran Church  
3084 Leechburg Road  
Lower Burrell, PA 15068

**On-Line:**

Visit the Bethesda website at <http://www.bethesdaelc3084.org/giving>. You may contribute from your bank or use a credit card. Vanco is a secure site and does not use your information or any other purpose other than making your contribution to Bethesda. Giving helps to save on time counting and allows you the freedom to not use envelopes.



## Prayer List

### Special Prayers:

Victims of Worldwide Conflicts & Natural Disasters

### Members:

Alice Puhlman, Dana Lehman, Idella Steen, Eleanor Kakuk, Joyce Lyons, Jan Matthews, Camille Hyland, Cheryl Ferrier, Nancy Randolph, Jeff Durand, Gary Bauer, Pam Lehman, Shirley Ross

### Friends of Bethesda:

Nancy Z, Glenn, Santino, Cody, Linda Waitkus, Harry, Dave, Janet Runas, Melanie, John, Donna Nepsa, Bill, Ed Knight, Erica, Andrew Dennis, Heidi, Kayli, Mason Martin, Adam Sweetland, Jim Fazzini, Tom Zimmerman, Jennifer James, Joe Rotto, Wayne M., Virginia M., Andrea M., Theresa, JoAnn, Joyce, Judy, Ben

### The Grieving Family and Friends of:

Donna Lee Sanner

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### *Remember our Homebound*

*What a joy it is to lend helping hands to Bethesda members who are unable to attend church regularly because of age and disabilities. We encourage our church members to send a card, make a call or visit our homebound. What about offering them a ride to church? If you'd like a name or address to send a card, please call the church office.*

***“Gracious God, as my hearing fails may the ears of my heart be more attentive to the whisper of Your gentle voice. As my legs weaken and walking becomes more difficult may I walk more truly in Your paths, knowing all the while that I am held in the embrace of Your Love.”  
Amen”***

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### ***Outreach and Prayer Chain Ministry***

continues to make phone calls and send cards. If you know of anyone that needs prayers, please contact the office or Bonnie Almasy (724-882-6887), and we will make sure the names are added to the appropriate prayer list – printed and private. Prayer cards are also available in the pews and near the prayer boxes. We will keep this individual on the list for a period of one month after which time the name will be removed unless the office receives information to keep the name on the list for another month. This information will be communicated in the monthly newsletter and during Sunday worship.

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## Church Council and Ministry Teams

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<i>Council President</i>	<i>Rita Seben</i>
<i>Vice President</i>	<i>Carrie Banks</i>
<i>Recording Secretary</i>	<i>Cheryl McKee</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Ruth Sloan</i>
<i>Financial Secretary</i>	<i>Sharon Matty</i>

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<b>Church Council</b>	<b>Term Ends</b>
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Carrie Banks	2026
Cheryl McKee	2024
Rita Seben	2025
Cheryl Sell	2025
Ruth Sloan	2025

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### **Sharing Ministry**

Events Team  
Outreach and Prayer Chain  
Tech Team

### **Chairman**

Cheryl McKee  
Bonnie Almasy  
Bob Breide

### **Proclaiming Ministry**

Worship/Christian Education

Carole Bauer  
Carrie Banks

### **Giving Ministry**

Finance/Stewardship  
Property

Frank Baker  
Rita Seben

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## MARCH 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25 8pm AA	26 6:30pm Boy Scouts	27 1pm Senior Group	28 10:30am Stitches Group	29 10am Bible Study 11am Prayer Group 7pm AA	1 10am ClothesHangers	2 7pm AA
3 9am Worship Service 8pm AA	4 6:30pm Boy Scouts	5 1pm Senior Group	6 10:30am Stitches Group  <i>11am – 1pm – Lenten Silent Meditation and Reflection</i>  1pm 175 <sup>TH</sup> Anniversary Meeting	7 10am Bible Study 11am Prayer Group  7pm AA	8 The ClothesLine Set Up 10am ClothesHangers	9 9am The ClothesLine Distribution Event  3pm Worship Service Special Congregation Meeting  7pm AA
10  8pm AA	11 6pm Combined Worship Meeting at Forks-Zion  6:30pm Boy Scouts	12 1pm Senior Group  6pm Council Meeting	13 10:30am Stitches Group  <i>11am – 1pm – Lenten Silent Meditation and Reflection</i>	14 10am Bible Study 11am Prayer Group  7pm AA	15 10am ClothesHangers	16  7pm AA
17 11am Combined Worship Service at Forks Zion (no service at Bethesda)  8pm AA	18 6:30pm Boy Scouts	19 Newsletter Articles DUE  1pm Senior Group	20 10:30am Stitches Group  <i>11am – 1pm – Lenten Silent Meditation and Reflection</i>	21 10am Bible Study 11am Prayer Group  7pm AA	22 10am ClothesHangers	23 3pm PALM SUNDAY Worship Service  7pm AA
24 8pm AA	25 6:30pm Boy Scouts	26 1pm Senior Group	27 10:30am Stitches Group  <i>11am – 1pm – Lenten Silent Meditation and Reflection</i>	28 10am Bible Study 11am Prayer Group 12Noon Maundy Thursday Service  7pm AA Meeting	29 10am ClothesHangers  7pm Tenebrae Service	30 7pm AA
31 9am Easter Worship Service 8pm AA	1 6:30pm Boy Scouts	2 1pm Senior Group	3 10:30am Stitches Group	4 10am Bible Study 11am Prayer Group 7pm AA Meeting	5 10am ClothesHangers	6 7pm AA