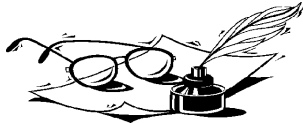




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From Pastor Paul's Desk.....

A-B NEWSLETTER

• ALBRIGHT-BETHUNE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH •

Rev. Paul R. McReynolds, Pastor

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Blannie Bowen, Editor; Volume 29, Number 12, December 2022

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, the Healer of the Soul, and our Everlasting Redeemer. I am so excited about what the Lord has in store for us at Albright-Bethune. We have an amazing opportunity to be a bridge in the community by mending their souls with the word. Engaging their hearts in stewardship and prayer. All of this is done by a Beloved Community engaging in planting the seeds of Jesus Christ, our Hope. Building Bridges of connections throughout the community. (Matthew 25:34-36, Luke 4:18-19).

Family, I pray all is well with each of you!! As we have entered the Advent season of Christ being born, keep our church family in your prayers. We have many new faces and families, and this is the season of giving and loving. We are looking for participants for our new online cooking show entitled *Albright-Bethune Cooks*. The first episode has been released on Facebook. We are excited for you to join us for wonderful cooking experiences! Our second episode will premiere this weekend with Mr. Blannie's Pecan Pie. You, too, can make it this holiday season. If you want to participate, please let me know. We will send the instructions and answer any questions you have.

Let us be in continued prayer for the Peagler family as well as for Ms. Cheraine Stanford and her family. Let us be in prayer for Mother Ireen Jones and her brother. Also, keep Momma Jo Ferrell in our prayers.

On December 11, we will have a Christmas Cantata and will worship through music and the scriptures. On December 18, we will have our annual Christmas Pageant. No rehearsal is needed so just come for our 11 a.m. worship and look for Mrs. JoDee Dyreson and Mrs. Carla Roser-Jones. Then on December 19 at 6:30 p.m., our congregation will have our next Pathway to Discipleship session with Pastor Kevin Witt. Our leadership and laity are asked to be a part of our conversation about what and why we do what we do as a church (Zoom will be also available). I hope to see you there! On December 22, we need volunteers to ring the bell at Meyer Dairy for the wishing well. This partnership with Interfaith Human Services is a way of giving back to our community members in need. Please contact Mrs. Roser-Jones for more details (carla.roserrjones@gmail.com). Finally, please put January 23 at 6:30 p.m. on your calendar for our next clarity day session with Kim Shockley.

Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness. Send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas. We who have so much to do and seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day. We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us. Amen. **Pastor Paul McReynolds**

- **BELL RINGERS NEEDED** – Our church is scheduled to ring bells for the Interfaith Human Services (IHS) Wishing Well at Meyer Dairy on Thursday, December 22. Anyone who is interested in participating should contact **Carla Roser-Jones** or you can sign-up on the sheet located in the social area of our church. If you have questions, please contact Carla at (814) 880-9302. The Interfaith Human Services is a local housing and family support organization that our congregation supports. If you have needs or want to make referrals to IHS, please call (814) 234-7731.
- **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE** - Our Albright-Bethune Christmas Eve service will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 24. Join us for a beautiful and joyful tradition of a candlelight Christmas Eve of lessons and carols to hear the wondrous good news of great joy in word and song. Experience the warm fellowship either in-person or on Facebook Live. Come as you are! All are welcome! Also, we will have our regular worship service on Sunday, December 25. Please plan to participate in both services to celebrate the birth of Jesus.
- **EVC MEETING** - On November 14, several of our members and worshippers held an important congregational meeting with Kim Shockley, our Equipping Vital Congregations (EVC) advisor. During this meeting, we discussed where we have come from and where we want to go as a church. We clarified that our church's mission and vision is to create a space where others experience God's love through our actions as we equip individuals to walk with God! We also clarified some of our church's core values and some of our aspirational values or behaviors and attitudes that we should develop to live out our mission. Our church is completing the second year of the EVC program and our congregation is receiving monetary and other support to strengthen and expand our programming. Our next congregational meeting with Rev. Shockley will be held on January 23 at 6:30 p.m. See Pastor Paul or Jackie Peagler if you have any questions about the EVC program and our church's involvement.
- **BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES** - Congratulations to these individuals who celebrate a special day this month: December 13 – **Rev. Dr. Pamela Ford's** Birthday; December 18 – **Shannon Holliday's** Birthday; December 19 – **Carl Ector's** Birthday; December 23 - **Carla Roser Jones' Birthday**; and December 24 – **Ebun Adewumi's** Birthday. Give Blannie your special dates (call/text 814-777-6550 or email blanniebowen@gmail.com) so we can honor you on your special day.
- **CHRISTMAS GIVING** – You should now start thinking about making Christ a bigger part of your Christmas celebration. The *Christian Financial Concepts* newsletter recommends that we do some soul searching. This newsletter suggests that you decide the amount you plan to spend on gifts and then contribute 10% to Christ-like causes. For example, use the 10% to support food banks, orphans, and missions that spread the gospel in other nations.
- **LEAVES** - Thanks to the Scouts of Troop 328 and their families and friends for raking the leaves around our church building last month. Their efforts to keep our grounds neat are much appreciated so the leaves are not covering the parking lot, flower beds, and grass.
- **CHURCH CONFERENCE** - The Albright-Bethune Annual Church Conference was held on November 13 at Mount Nittany UMC. Brenda Leigey, our State College district superintendent, conducted the conference with the leaders of our congregation and the leaders of both St. Pauls and Mount Nittany UMC. See Pastor McReynolds or Jackie Peagler if you have any questions about the conference or the business affairs of our church.

- **A**DVENT - How much do you know about Advent which celebrates Christ's birth 2,022 years ago? Advent is derived from the Latin word *Adventus* which means coming. It begins on Sunday, November 27, and ends at sunset on Christmas Eve. Advent always includes four Sundays. The 1st Sunday marks the start of the Christian year and the final victory. The 2nd and 3rd Sundays represent John the Baptist while the 4th represents events preceding Jesus' birth. Traditional colors include purple which means royalty and is linked to penitence and Mary, Jesus' mother. Blue represents hope and white and gold represent joy and festivity. Christmas Eve is not part of Advent, but is the beginning of Christmas.
- **U**MC SCHOLARSHIPS & LOANS - United Methodist Church high school seniors and those enrolled in college who are also active in their church and/or in the conference may apply for a Fall 2023 scholarship offered through the United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Students must apply online between **December 15–March 30** at <https://www.gbhem.org/loans-and-scholarships/scholarships>. Student loans are also available at low interest rates (with a credit worthy co-signer). Funds for these scholarships come from offerings taken on United Methodist Student Day, World Communion Sunday, and Native American Sunday. Please share this information with students who qualify for this support.
- **C**HRISTMAS SYMBOLS - How much do you know about Christmas symbols? Bells were used in ancient Asian cultures to announce happy and sad occasions. The winter plant mistletoe dates to Scandinavia and a myth wherein an evil spirit was forbidden from killing his enemy. Candles were used by Martin Luther who decorated the first Christmas tree. Candy canes are used in the US to symbolize God's solid rock promises. Christmas cards date to ancient Egypt and Rome when they were carved in wood. Poinsettias are native to Mexico and symbolize the Star of Bethlehem. The plant is named for Joel Poinsett, the first US Ambassador to Mexico. Holly and ivy are used to represent the crown Jesus wore when he was crucified. Please remember the history of these symbols as we celebrate the birth of Jesus (From *UM Interpreter Magazine*, November-December 2000, p. 14-15).
- **A**LBRIGHT-BETHUNE COOKS - Our congregation is expanding its Men Who Cook concept and is creating a virtual **Albright-Bethune Cooks**. The concept is patterned after what Dylan Dreyer uses on the *Today Show* to teach her son (Cal) how to cook. Pastor Paul will do the filming, editing, and posting -- and teach others how to do it. We are planning for our episodes to be 5-10 minutes. Jo Ferrell created our first episode about her famous sticky buns and it's posted on Facebook. Our second episode features Blannie Bowen baking his southern pecan pies. If you wish to share one of your dishes, please contact Pastor Paul or Blannie Bowen to discuss your idea.
- **P**ECAN PIE FUNDRAISER – Thanks to everyone who bought the genuine Southern pecan pies last month for this annual fund raiser. This year B. Evans Kitchen (aka Blannie) baked 44 pies in time for Thanksgiving. The pies and contributions generated over \$1,400 for our church.
- **P**ARKING SPACES FOR RENT - Our church allows individuals who work at Penn State and downtown to rent our parking spaces during the week. We now have a few spaces that are not rented. If you know individuals who might be interested in renting a space, please have them call our church office and leave a message at (814) 237-4404 or send an email to albrightbethuneumc206@gmail.com. The price to rent a space is \$60 per month. Cathy Bowen manages the parking spaces and you can contact her at cbowen2015@gmail.com or at (814) 574-8346 if you have questions or need more information.

- **RISE BOOK INITIATIVE** - A new program has been created to ensure that early childhood educators in Centre County's elementary schools have access to high quality diverse children's books. Reading IS Enlightening or RISE wishes to recognize all diverse experiences, including (but not limited to) race, culture (ethnicity, language and class), disability, gender, family structure and religion, as well as social justice issues. RISE is a 5-year initiative that will continue through the 2025-26 school year. You can make a contribution online at https://centrefoundation.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=1588 Also, you can send a check payable to Centre Foundation with Reading IS Enlightening (RISE) Fund in the memo line to: Centre Foundation, 1377 Ridge Master Drive, State College, 16803. If you have questions about RISE, you can send an email to RISEBookInitiative@gmail.com.
- **STRESS REDUCERS** - With the Christmas holidays approaching, now is a good time to reflect on an issue of *A Christian Perspective* newsletter that offered 7 ways to reduce stress and make your life more enjoyable. **(1)** Allow time everyday for privacy, quiet, and introspection. **(2)** When you face an unpleasant task, do it early in the day. **(3)** Delegate responsibility to capable individuals. **(4)** Take a lunch break to get away from your problems. **(5)** Count to 1,000 (not 10) before doing or saying something to make matters worse. **(6)** Have a forgiving view of events and people because we live in an imperfect world. **(7)** Have an optimistic outlook because most people do the best they can.
- **FINANCE CORNER** - Our November offerings and collections totaled \$4,211. See Cathy Bowen if you have questions about our church's finances. Also, if you make purchases using Amazon, please consider using this Albright-Bethune link (<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/25-1711251>). Our church has received almost \$50 this year because of purchases that have listed our church as a charity. Thanks to all who have used this link to support our church.
- **YOUR ITEMS** - Send, email to blanniebowen@gmail.com or give your items to **Blannie** by the **20th** of the month. Send your birthday, awards, church presentations, writings, etc.

Calendar

Nov 27-Dec 24	The Season of Advent
December 9	Penn State Classes End
December 13	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
December 17	Penn State Commencement
December 19	Pathway to Discipleship Session With Kevin Witt, 6:30 p.m.
December 24	Christmas Eve Service, 5:30 p.m.
December 25	Christmas Day
January 9	Penn State Classes Begin
January 10	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
January 15	Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday
January 23	EVC Clarity Session With Kim Shockley, 6:30 p.m.
February 14	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.
February 22	Ash Wednesday
March 3	World Day of Prayer
March 14	Albright-Bethune Administrative Council Meets, 7 p.m.