

Bethel United Methodist Church

First Sunday of the New Year

Epiphany Sunday

January 7, 2024

Pastor: Ralph Wrightstone

Music Director: Travis Oaks

Lectionary Scriptures

This Week: Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-2; Mark 1:4-11

Next Week: 1 Sam 3:1-10(11-20); Ps 139:1-6,13-18; 1 Cor 6:12-20; John 1:43-51

Prelude: "*Sing Alleluia to the Lord*"

Welcome & Announcements, Birthdays, Anniversaries

***Hymn:** "*Everlasting God*" W&S 3021

***Responsive Call to Worship:***on opposite page*

***Affirmation of Faith (Apostle's Creed)**.....UMH 881

***Gloria Patri**.....UMH 71

Presentation of God's Tithes and Our Offerings

***Doxology**.....UMH 95

OT Reading: Psalm 29

Joys, Concerns, Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer

Message: The Guiding Star of Epiphany

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

Holy Communion

***Hymn:** "*Hallelujah*" W&S 3027

***Benediction and Closing Chorus:** "Bind Us Together"

**Please stand if able*

Call to Worship

Leader: I'm so glad we're here together! Today's the day we want to be wise and know just where to locate God.

People: This is Epiphany, the day when we are magi and bring our best gifts to God.

Leader: God quite clearly is here —

People: in each of us!

Leader: We have hopes that when the stars shine just right, we will find the baby who grows up to be our teacher and guide.

People: We will search like the ancient men and women until we find some tangible evidence of God being at home with us!

Leader: We know the astrologers and astronomers read into the movement of the stars the hopes of God being ruler and savior on this earth.

People: They followed the star until it stood over a certain place in Bethlehem. There they found a baby, named Jesus, with Mary, his mother. They gave their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Those scholars understood the baby to be their future king.

Leader: Let us be joyful wise people in this age, searching, singing, and sharing the goodness of God!

Prayer Of Thanksgiving In Unison.

God of yesterday and today — thank you for all of nature that makes your creativity visible to us. Thank you for stories that help us understand our search for you and your seeming absence.

We are grateful that every now and then, we have an epiphany — a clear experience of your presence and your activity with us. Let us be wise as we journey from now until eternity. The gift we give this hour is our undivided attention.

We anticipate being enthused by your Spirit with words, silence, and music. Amen.

Calendar of Events

Today: Epiphany Sunday, Communion Sunday

Next Week: 2nd Sunday of Epiphany; 2nd Sunday Lunch Fellowship

All Week: Keep Safe and Pray

Worship, Educational and Outreach Opportunities

Today: Interactive Online Service thru link on Bethel Web Site, Service page

Prayer Concerns

Bethel UMC, The UMC, Our Country, all of those affected by the storms, those in Military Service, Police, Fire, EMS first responders, Healthcare professionals and home caregivers, Teachers, Students; Pastor Ralph & Judy Wrightstone; Kathie & Al Adams; Cathy Allen; Lexie Allen; Family of Sara Carter; Paula Cooksey; Judy Goreau; Savannah Lantz; Nan Lindsey; Travis and Tina Oaks; the Oaks family; Darren Plate & parents; Tina Rucker; Jean Shields and family; Pat Singletary; Candy Trimble; Kathy Walker; Dave Watson, Family and Friends of Patsy White; Lawson Wooley; Lon & Lucy Wright; Wayne Wyatt; Howard & Ruth Zody; Clarke Campbell-Evans; Family and friends of Karen Alford;

Please use a prayer request form, in the narthex, to submit requests for adding to the Prayer Concerns in the worship bulletin



1940's



1960's



Today

The History of Bethel UMC

The earliest historical record of Bethel Methodist Church is that in August of 1834, a campmeeting was held on the banks of Bethel Pond. Church meetings were held in neighborhood homes following this. In good weather brush arbors provided meeting places for these early worshippers. Later, services were held in a small log schoolhouse about a mile north of the present church.

On March 17, 1847, Joseph and Thirza Hale deeded two acres of land to the Methodist Episcopal Church with the provision that Bethel Meeting House be built in the center of the two acres. A small frame church with wooden shutters was built where our Sunday School rooms are today.

In 1909 the congregation started building the present sanctuary. The church building was originally roofed with wooden shingles. The windows contain the original panes with the imperfections of early glass. The interior of the church was not completed until 1947. The narthex was added in 1970 and the steeple in 1972.

The furniture in the Church constitutes one of the most interesting parts of its history. The Pulpit was used by Bishop Joshua Soule on February 6, 1845 when he convened the first Florida Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in Trinity Methodist Church, Tallahassee, Florida. Trinity gave the pulpit to Bethel Church circa 1895. The chancel rail, communion table and two of the pulpit chairs were part of Trinity Church during the 1800's and were given to Bethel in 1946. The larger pulpit chair was a gift of John Sullivan, friend of our Church.

(history prepared for bulletin cover by Thelma Royce, church historian)



"Surely the Lord is in this place! This is none other than the house of God" Genesis 28:16

Bethel United Methodist Church



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"Seeking The Life In Grace As The Way of Life"
Welcome home!