



Life@Benevola

*"Together we are called to worship
and witness, grow and give, love and
live for the glory of God."*



DECEMBER 2023

Sunday Worship: 9am Sunday School 10:00am 301-791-3576

FROM THE PASTOR DESK ---Pastor Suzanne Jones

Dear Benevola Family,

What a year it has been at Benevola UMC! I thought I would highlight some of the amazing ministry that we have accomplished together in 2023. I organized this overview in the areas that are essential for developing our faith and growing as disciples of Christ. You'll be hearing more about these areas throughout 2024, but first let's celebrate...

WORSHIP

Each month, Benevola's laity work to make every Sunday worship experience an engaging one. We offer a variety of worship and musical selections each week. We have seen an uptick in our children participating in children's worship and Sunday school, and we have increased attendance on Sunday mornings. Our online viewership and engagement continue to hold strong as our services are shared on both Facebook and YouTube.

DISCIPLESHIP

We confirmed 6 teens who joined Benevola UMC in the spring. We also offered New Members Classes in the spring and fall. In total, we received 6 new members, 3 transfers of memberships, and one affiliation membership. We also celebrated 3 baptisms (2 youth and 1 adult). In the summer months, we offered a Vacation Bible School which reached between 30-35 children in our community. Christian Education leaders have been holding Sunday School for all ages in-person and we have offered a wide variety of activities for all age ranges. This year the nursery reopened with volunteers, and the SPRC is working to fill the position with paid personnel. We are hopeful God will provide. Our two Adult Sunday School classes have been participating in engaging studies. In the fall, I began a seasonal midweek Pastor's Bible study which is offered at both Benevola and Salem UMC. Our Women's Ministry hosted a women's spiritual retreat in March at Deep Creek Lake. It was filled with fellowship, Bible study, and activities. The Men's Breakfast continues to meet the first of every month at Bonnie's at the Red Byrd in Keedysville, where they read scripture, pray together, and have meaningful fellowship.

SERVING

Our Mission and Outreach team continues to serve our community and collect donations for Benevola's food pantry, Katie's Cupboard. Volunteers assist clients who come inside the facility and pick out their items from our pantry. There is a wide selection of dry goods, personal hygiene items, as well as fresh meat, produce, and dairy. This year, we have partnered with the Community Action Council in Washington County who brings a mobile unit to our facility to provide services and needed resources once a month. Aside from our pantry, we also participate and donate to other outreach opportunities. Our quilting ministry provided quilts for local nursing homes and Sleep in Heavenly Peace, and we created cards for hospital medical workers, shut-in and those serving in the military. We had several

people participate in the annual Salvation Army Bell Ringing program during December, and support the CROP Walk for Hunger, and packed shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child.

GIVING

As for finances, Benevola members continue to be generous with their giving. Each week, we encourage faithful tithing because we know that God will bless our giving and do great things with it. Giving has remained steady and we can support the needs of our growing church ministries while remaining faithful in giving and support of other community efforts through the South Washington County Ministerium and Hagerstown area, local schools, and missional work through the UMC. Our apportionments to the Baltimore Washington Conference are up-to-date for 2023, and we have no outstanding bills. Much like the world around us, we are expecting some financial increases in 2024 (bills, rates, building projects which may need to be sought out, etc.), but we trust God will aid us in our discernment and how we steward our finances.

SHARING OUR FAITH

Benevola is out in the community participating in local events. Boonesborough Days is a major town festival where Benevola not only hosted a huge indoor yard sale but made and sold our famous apple dumplings. This year, we participated in Boonsboro's 4th of July town celebration and Boonsboro's National Night Out. At both events were held at a local park, and we provided fun kids crafts, balloons, and facepainting along with literature about VBS and Katie's Cupboard. We also participated in multiple ecumenical worship services offered through the South Washington County Ministerium. Through the ministerium we hosted communal events like the Community Maundy Thursday Service and offered a meal before the service. Our facility is frequently being used by public and private groups, and we provide meeting space non-church programs like Scouting, Body & Soul Aerobics, men's basketball practice, etc. We have hosted several dinners for community and school clubs. We held a multitude of community events like Trunk or Treat, fellowship meals, and banquets celebrating important milestones.

MILESTONES

A major accomplishment for Benevola was completing the Readiness 360 Survey from the Baltimore Washington Conference. This survey helps measure the vitality of a church by looking at our spiritual intensity, missional alignment, relationships and cultural openness. Our Church Council reviewed the results and identified some areas for growth (ex: evangelism, renewed discipleship opportunities, communication). A report to the church will be coming in 2024. Knowing these results, Benevola applied for the BWC's Catalyst Initiative. This initiative, which will be guided through our local church leaders, will help us determine if there is an area where we as a church can get creative and expand our ministries to better serve the needs of our surrounding community.

Another milestone in ministry was celebrating Benevola's 165th anniversary in ministry in September. A designated group spent months planning the event. A new carillon was donated and dedicated, and we produced a new church pictorial directory. During the planning process we discovered a need to clean up the neglected membership records and develop new processes to keep the rolls current. The Nominations Committee crafted a new Member Care Team which will oversee member care (like sending cards, phone calls, providing meals, etc) and oversee membership rolls. The church is already fulfilling these needs, but having this team will help with efficiency.

As you can see, God is on the move at Benevola! This season as we prepare for Christ to come, I hope you will invite your friends, neighbors and co-workers to celebrate the season with you. Why not introduce someone to Benevola UMC? In addition to Sunday worship, we have many special opportunities and events happening in December that you can share with others. **Together we are called to worship and witness, grow and give, love and live for the glory of God.**

With hope,
Pastor Suzanne



December



	Acolyte	Pew Acolyte	Lay Reader	Head Usher
12/3	Porter Stipanovic	June Stipanovic	Ruth Ridenour	Bill Flook
12/10	Cole Hess	Will Fox	Klaus Hein	Kevin Fox
12/17	Liam Boyd	Porter Stipanovic	Sally Barnhart	Nelson Baker
12/24			Becky Hein	Joe Reed
12/31			Gale Barnes	Brenda Embly

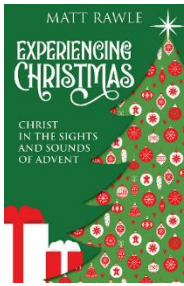
Mammon Minute

Mammon Minute December 2023

Amidst the hustle and bustle and commercialism that has become the “Holiday Season”, I’d like to share something that I’ve shared with my employees along with their Christmas bonus of appreciation from me every year for the past many years.

“May you experience peace this holiday season, whatever the season may mean to you. May that peace be the same peace and promise that was revealed by a baby, born to a frightened adoptive father and an obedient, recently wed servant girl, born in a barn and placed in a feed trough and purposely announced first to the humble and poor over 2,000 years ago. May that peace be born of the assurance that God loves ALL of us more that we realize or accept. May that peace be a very real peace for you that surpasses all understanding.”

Merry Christmas,
Bruce
Finance Committee Chairperson



Advent Bible Study

Experiencing Christmas: Christ in the Sights and Sounds of Advent

Things just look, smell, and taste differently during the Advent and Christmas season, and these differences are a sign to us that God is about to do something radical and different. Join Pastor Suzanne for a weekly Bible study called *Experiencing Christmas: Christ in the Sights and Sounds of Advent* by Matt Rawle. This 4-week study will help us discover the signs we can see during the Advent and Christmas season that point us to the divine. Participant books may be purchased online or see Pastor Suzanne.

Times offered: Starting on Nov. 30 At BUMC

Wednesdays – 6:30pm at Salem UMC, Keedysville

Thursdays – 10am at Benevola UMC



The turkey dinners were delivered!!

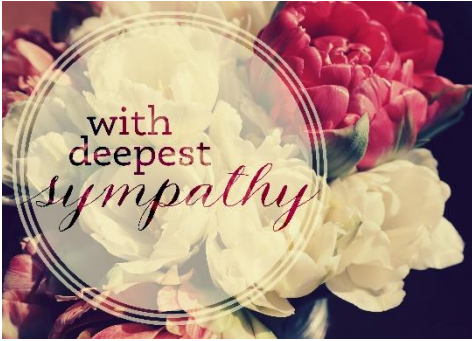
Many thanks to everyone who helped to either prep, roast or pick 23 turkeys . Also, thanks to Benevola Trustees for providing the necessary space in the kitchen and SLC to prepare them.

As a result of our part in the outreach, coordinated by Julie Williams of Trinity Lutheran Church, 97 families in the South County enjoyed a full Thanksgiving Dinner complete with mashed potatoes, green beans, stuffing, sauerkraut, cranberry sauce, gravy, dinner rolls, homemade cookies, a gallon of milk, and a pumpkin pie.

As of this writing I can report that 1,000 pounds of Turkey was roasted and 400 pounds of potatoes were peeled and mashed.

Every family that received this dinner was hand selected by the counselors at the following schools: Sharpsburg, Pleasant Valley, Fountain Rock, Greenbriar, and Boonsboro Elementary schools, and Boonsboro Middle and High School.

Again, thanks for your willingness to participate in this South County Outreach. You've made some families very happy this Thanksgiving!! Cindy Reeder



Our sympathy is expressed to Dennis & Brenda Embly, Cindy Stevens and Tom & Kathy, Leonard & Michelle and families on the death of their mother, Irene Embly on November 20.

Decorate the Church



NEW DATE

Come join us with hanging off the greens on Saturday, December 2 at 9am. This is when we get together and decorate our church for the advent season. Any questions contact Brenda Embly 301-331-7176 or JoAnn Duffey 301-432-6462.

Memorial Meals

The Fellowship and Ministries Committee would like to update a list of those who would be willing to donate desserts, salads, or side dishes for our Memorial Meals. Also, those who can help with setting up and taking down tables and chairs. Memorial Meals can happen at anytime it would be great to know we have a list of those who are willing to be contacted with not much notice. To sign up see Brenda Embly or JoAnn Duffey.



Mark your calendars for this year's Christmas Banquet on Sunday, December 10th. After our church service we will gather in the Spiritual Life Center for a special children's presentation starting at 10:30 with banquet to follow. The church will provide chicken, pulled pork, macaroni and cheese, bake beans, and drinks. We ask if you could please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Any questions please contact Brenda Embly 301-331-7176 or Gena Norwood 301-462-9194. Come and join us for some great fellowship.

Angel Breakfast/Santa Shop
December 16th 8:30 am - 11:30am

Feel free to invite a friend or relative to come out for this event as well, but we ask that you kindly RSVP by December 10th so we can have a good idea how many to plan for.

Kids will be served a special breakfast and play games, do some crafts and have the chance to "shop" (for free!) for their loved ones at our "Santa Shop". Children and youth of all ages are welcome to attend any/all of the event!

We will need helpers to work in the kitchen, as well as serving, doing crafts, games, and helping set up and run the "Santa Shop" and assisting the kids to pick out and wrap gifts to take home.

We will also need donations of items to fill our "Santa Shop" with. Things the kids can gift to their Moms, Dads, Grandparents, siblings, pets, etc. New or gently used, re-gifted, homemade - anything that is in good condition and would make a good gift for a child to give a loved one is perfect! Also gift wrap, bows, etc. All items can be placed on the table in the church office.

Angel Tree

This year we will have about 50 children in need on our Angel Tree. Their ages range from infants to high school siblings. Gifts are due back by Sunday, December 10. Please do not wrap the gifts. Place them in a large gift bag with some tissue and wrapping paper. Attach your angel number to the bag. Thank you in advance for continuing to help our south county families. Contact Sue Barnes at 301-465-0596.

We need your gifts and talents for the new year!

Benevola UMC will be kicking off the new year by hosting a Showcase of Talent on Sunday December 31, 2023 during the 9am worship hour. Whether you can sing, play a musical instrument, perform a monologue, read poetry, or have the gift of dancing, storytelling, painting, telling jokes... WE NEED YOUR TALENT! Please sign up by contacting Ruann George at 301-739-3930 or zrngeorge@gmail.com



Children's Christmas Program
Sunday December 10th
Time - just before the start of the Church Christmas Banquet.

ALL children and youth are invited to share their gifts and talents with us as we kick off the annual church Christmas banquet. Anyone wishing to sing, dance, play an instrument, read a poem or story, participate in a skit, juggle, or any other skill they'd like to showcase, either solo or as a duo or small group, see Ms Niki ASAP!!

There will also be the opportunity to speak a few lines for those who want to and some "behind the scenes" jobs too!

We will rehearse during Sunday school and at least once or twice before the big day - dates and times TBD. Watch the bulletins, blast and Facebook for updates.

We will need some adult helpers as well, and it would be great if these helpers could be folks who AREN'T the parents of the kids in the show, so that parents can enjoy watching their children perform.

I'm sure everyone will be delighted with what our youngsters prepare for us all to enjoy!

PS - the kids will also be making a special "guest appearance" during the worship service at 9 am that morning as they lend a hand to the Chancel Choir during one of their songs! They've been practicing "Away In A Manger" in Children's Church, and I'll be posting a link on our BUMC Family page to a Facebook video of the actual choir song being performed for them to practice with at home as well.

Benevola UMC 2023-2024 Scholarships Now Available

Grants are available to active members of Benevola UMC who are full-time students in an accredited 2-year or 4-year college working toward a college degree. The grants are made possible by the Benevola Scholarship Fund. Grants will not be given for graduate study.

Eligible applicants may receive a grant for one year. Application forms are available from the church web site or the church office and must be completed and returned to the church office or emailed to benevolachurch@myactv.net by Sunday, December 10, 2023.

In addition, the Lana Chaney Long Scholarship is available to a church member who is a full-time college student majoring in music or preparing for the ministry. To apply for this scholarship, please prepare a letter outlining your studies, and your plans for the future, and submit to the church office or email to benevolachurch@myactv.net by Sunday, December 10, 2023.

Christmas with Body & Soul Fitness!

Keep moving this season with **Christmas music**, from traditional to jazz and hip hop, starting **Nov. 27**. On Mondays and Wednesdays there are 2 different Co-Ed Body & Soul Fitness programs at Benevola Church. Choose the one that suits you and come try it for free! See bodyandsoul.org for more info about this international ministry.

Programs:

Longevity Fit 360 is designed for seniors ages 62+ and those needing a low impact program. We stretch, use light hand weights, stand, walk, march, and sit in chairs—NO jogging, jumping, or lying on the floor. The primary functional fitness components are cardio, strength, coordination, balance and flexibility. Come at 4:10 PM to get set; from 4:15 to 5 PM we'll exercise and have a devotion and prayer moment.

Cardio Strength begins at 5:30 PM. This class includes high or low impact movements, weights, and strength/flexibility work on floor mats. It is designed to keep your heart rate up by interspersing the weight training within the cardio sets. It is a full hour workout and also includes devotion and prayer at the end.

Flower Chart

The 2024 Flower Chart is posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway. Many thanks to those who purchased flowers this past year. If you would like to purchase flowers for the altar vases please sign your name next to the date and take one of the cards for Gibneys Florist. If you have any questions about ordering flowers please contact Brenda Embly 301-331-7176 or JoAnn Duffey 301-432-6462.

Katie's Cupboard

Volunteers have been working hard preparing the annual Thanksgiving Boxes for Katie's Cupboard Food Pantry. Clients will receive a turkey and a box full of delicious food and other items to help make this Thanksgiving a meaningful one. Thank you to all who have contributed to our food pantry ministry! It is just one of the ways we can be the hands of Jesus and serve our community.





DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

3	Caleb Wescott
4	Lisa Schilling, Tina Stotelmyer
5	Glenda Kendle,
6	Jeff Royce, Brett Sharpless
7	Robert Kendle, Jr, Lynnette Potter
8	Cinnamon Rowland
9	Bill Eccard
12	Alex Leadingham
14	Daniel Poffenberger
15	Alexei Chesnutwood
16	Klaus Hein
18	Ruann George
20	Jeb Shank
21	Bradley Stotelmyer
27	Bella & Bailey Gordon
28	Alexandra Jane Wolfensberger, Sylvia Harris, Hannah Stevens, Nolan Cantler
31	Kim Higman
18	Chris & Pam Ion
28	Debbie & Greg Moser

December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 <i>Bell Ringing</i>	2 8:00 Men's Breakfast 9 Hanging of Greens <i>Bell Ringing</i>
3	4 4:15 B&S Longevity Fit 5:30 B & S Fitness	5 9:00 Quilting	6 12 Lunch Bunch @Fratelli's Middletown 4:15 B&S Longevity Fit 5:30 B & S Fitness 7:30 Men's BB	7 5:30 SLC private event 6:30 choir practice	8 Set up for banquet	9 Set up for Banquet
10 12:00 Church Christmas Banquet	11 4:15 B&S Longevity Fit 5:30 B & S Fitness	12 9:00 Quilting 1:00 Katie's Cupboard	13 4:15 B&S Longevity Fit 5:30 B & S Fitness 7:30 Men's BB	14 5:30 SLC private event	15 12:00 Book Club	16 8:30 Angel Breakfast
17	18 4:15 B&S Longevity Fit 5:30 B & S Fitness	19 9:00 Quilting 5:30 SLC private event	20 12:00 Moving On Group @ Bistro 1:00 Katie's Cupboard 4:15 B&S Longevity Fit 5:30 B & S Fitness 7:30 Men's BB	21 7 Blue Christmas 6 SLC scouts	22	23
24 10:30 Worship service @ Salem UMC 7pm Candlelight Service 10pm Barn Service	25 Merry Christmas	26 9:00 Quilting	27 5:30 NO B & S Fitness	28	29	30
31						

BENEVOLA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
19925 Benevola Church Road
Boonsboro, Maryland 21713
301-791-3576

Change Service Requested

