

The Grapevine

JANUARY - MARCH NEWSLETTER

OF CHESTER BETHEL UMC - 2026



Dates to Remember

- | | | |
|----------|----|---|
| January | 14 | Admin. Council Mtg at 6 |
| | 19 | Martin Luther King, Jr. Day |
| February | 8 | SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY! |
| | 10 | Lenten Bible Study begins on Zoom at 7 |
| | 11 | Admin Council Meeting at 6 pm |
| | 18 | Ash Wednesday-Drive thru at CB 11:30-1 & worship at Mt. Lebanon at 5 PM |
| | 19 | Lenten Bible Study begins in person, Thursdays at 10 |
| March | 11 | Admin Council Mtg at 6 |
| | 29 | Palm Sunday |



Musical Updates

by Carmella Lynch



Angela Marie Rivers, Carmella's youngest piano student, graced the December 28th Sunday service with two Christmas special piano duets, plus she sang 3 verses of "Away in the Manger" as Pastor Kelly processed in. Carmella mentioned to her she could just sing one verse and her response was – "no, I want to sing all three verses!" Some of the parishioners invited her back. Carmella told them maybe same time next year and they responded – "no, we can't wait that long – how about sometime around her birthday?" She works hard and loves playing the piano, along with singing, at the ripe old age of 6! She received standing ovations!



Mission updates

by Nancy Storer

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ROBUST RESPONSE TO THE THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE--WE SURPASSED ALL EXPECTATIONS IN THE SHEER AMOUNT OF FOOD COLLECTED AND THE CASH DONATION FROM CHURCH MEMBERS WAS VERY GENEROUS! It was a joint effort between the preschool, the church, and the thrift shop volunteers and customers.



Way to go!!

Please remember to keep bringing food, socks, hats & gloves and hygiene products for the Claymont Community Center.



The three charities that Chester Bethel is supporting financially from Jan. thru June, 2026 will be:

Habitat for Humanity
The Salvation Army
Food Bank of Delaware

The money given will be divided three ways and sent to these charities at the end of the six month period. The Missions Committee thanks you for all of your support with our different projects!

Don't forget OUR OWN "Souper Bowl", coinciding with the football Super Bowl on Feb. 8th, 2026! Let's collect a lot of soup to give to the Claymont Community Center! As you enter the church there are wagons and boxes for your donations.



CHESTER BETHEL

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY!

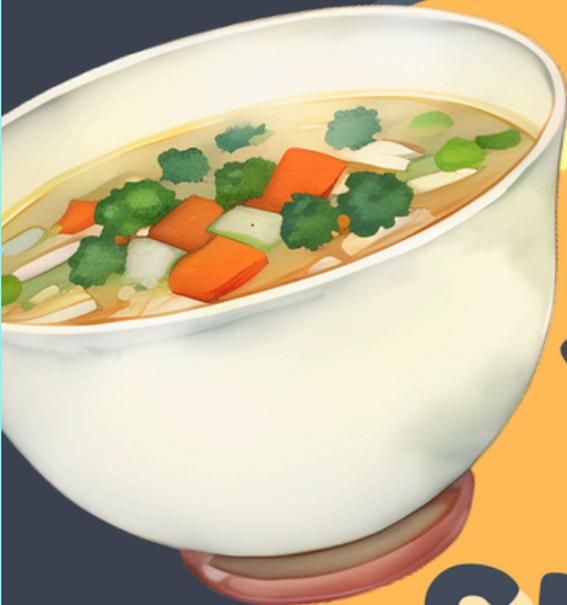
Canned food donations for Claymont food closet

Final day is:
Feb 8

Canned, boxed, or dry food stuffs are welcome-- collection boxes in lobby

secretarychesterbethel@gmail.com

For information call 302-475-3549



Thrift Shop News

by Dora Greer

Our Thrift Shop is located in The McCay Building, formerly the sanctuary for Chester Bethel before the present church was built in 1972. The McCay building was dedicated in 1874 and a lot of the original characteristics of this historic structure still remain. That's 150 years of continuous use!



Repairs and upgrades are needed for this vital part of Chester Bethel's larger mission to the community. Most recently the electric system was found to need upgrades from fuses to breakers & replacing the frayed service cable from the building's original electrification. One upside to this work will be our ability to run air conditioners on the sales floor where volunteers sort and label during the hot months.

We always need volunteers for sorting, pricing, stocking, and checking out, so consider joining us when you can. Last year we brought in \$106,000.00! *One Man's Junk is Another Man's Treasure!*

As we celebrate the 250th birthday of America's Declaration of Independence, we should all be aware that Chester Bethel Methodist Church has been on this spot since before the American Revolution! What a rich history and what a legacy for future generations!

Our wonderful staff donates their time and they have fun doing so—maybe you would like to join us? Please call 302-475-3022!

Please Pray for:

Lorraine MacMillan (H); David D. (H); Dom D.(H); Millie Burke (H); Janet Canavan (H); The Family of Enya Hoyer (L); Keith Saulsbury (H); Steve Schellberg (H); Brione (H); Donna (H); Joseph Glasgow (H); Bill Hazel (H); Linda Lyons (H); KFK (O); Jean Andrews (H); Andrew R.(O); Bill and Doreen Jones (H); Mary Ann Box (H); Ramona Harlow (LT); Holly Dorner (H); Donna McCormick (H); DeBrock Family (O); Allison (H); Kim Nally; Amy (H); Gail Kracyla (H); Dominic King (LT); Jill Brownback (LT); Nancy Walker (LT); MaryAnn Rumford (LT); Rick Browne (LT); all peoples impacted by war (LT)

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

TWO TIMES/TWO DAYS/TWO WAYS

ZOOM AT 7 ON TUESDAY

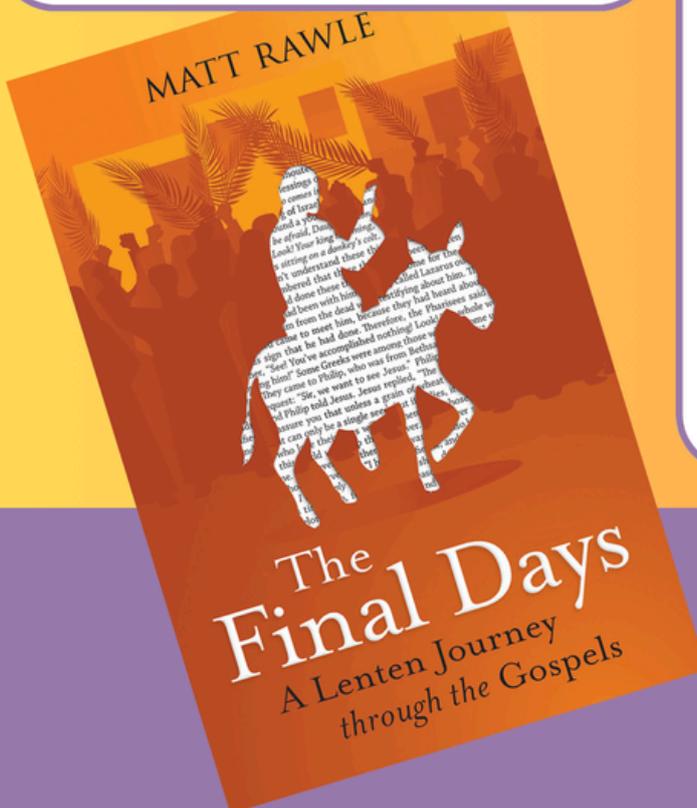
- Week 1 = 2-10 - Introduction and Chapter 1
- Week 2 = 2-17 - Chapter 2
- Week 3 = 3-3 - Chapter 3
- Week 4 = 3-10 - Chapter 4
- Week 5 = 3-17 - Chapter 5
- Week 6 = 3-24 - Chapter 6 and Conclusion

FOUR DIFFERENT LENSES TO SEE THE PASSION

is Jesus in control?
suffering?
offering hope?
or ridiculed?

FACE TO FACE AT 10 A.M. ON THURSDAYS

- Week 1 = 2-19 - Introduction and Chapter 1
- Week 2 = 2-26 - Chapter 2
- Week 3 = 3-5 - Chapter 3
- Week 4 = 3-12 - Chapter 4
- Week 5 = 3-19 - Chapter 5
- Week 6 = 3-26 - Chapter 6 and Conclusion



FIND THE BOOK ONLINE
(AMAZON OR COKESBURY)
OR ORDER THROUGH
THE OFFICE



Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ,

I write as one who, in my episcopal role, is called to guard the faith, shepherd the people, and work for unity. It is from this responsibility that I offer these words.

Today in Minneapolis, during a federal immigration enforcement operation, Renee Nicole Good was fatally shot. Investigations are underway. Accounts differ. Many details remain unclear. At the time of this writing, what we know, and must not move past too quickly, is this: a human life has been lost.

The work of the church begins here. Before we receive deep analysis or a full explanation of the events that led to the shooting, we enter into lament. We grieve a life ended too soon. We hold in prayer the family and loved ones who now carry an unimaginable loss. We acknowledge the fear and trauma this event has stirred, especially among immigrant and refugee neighbors for whom encounters with law enforcement already carry profound risk.

We also speak to the wider moment in which this tragedy occurred. Across our nation, we are witnessing a troubling willingness to normalize violence as a tool of order and to resist accountability as though it were a threat rather than a safeguard. The church must say clearly: power that is unexamined, unchecked, or unaccountable stands in tension with the way of Jesus Christ.

Scripture reminds us that authority is given for the sake of the common good. When power is exercised, its first obligation is to preserve life and protect the vulnerable. The measure of justice is not how quickly actions are justified, but how faithfully truth is sought and responsibility is held.

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This word is spoken not in condemnation, but in love. Love for communities living in fear. Love for institutions that must be called back to their highest purposes. Love for a nation whose soul is shaped, for better or worse, by the choices it makes in moments like these.

As your bishop, I call our congregations to be places of refuge and prayer in the days ahead. Be attentive to grief. Listen deeply to those who are afraid. Stay rooted in Christ, who chose the way of self-giving love over the way of force.

In moments of grief and uncertainty, most of us naturally lean toward news voices we already trust. In our vulnerability, we rush to make complex situations clear-cut. While that is human, it can also narrow our understanding. I encourage us to broaden our listening, seek out careful reporting from news sources representing multiple perspectives, and remain open to voices that may challenge our assumptions. Expanding how we listen is one way we practice humility and love in the pursuit of truth.

In this fragile space between tragedy and truth, may we be a people who lament honestly, seek justice humbly, and refuse the lie that violence has the final word. We hold fast to the resurrection promise that love endures and that life, not death, will have the final say.

May the God who binds up the brokenhearted draw near to all who mourn, and may the Spirit lead us in the way of justice, mercy, and peace.

Grace and peace,

Bishop Lanette Plambeck

Resident Bishop

Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church