

Pastor's Note

It's a new year! The beginning of the year is always a great opportunity for a new beginning in our individual and communal lives. We desperately need a new beginning— a spiritual reawakening, a deep change and a re-start so that we can effectively reach out to new and diverse people for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is why God is far more interested in our future than He is in our past. The prophet Isaiah says:

*"Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland."* (Isaiah 43:18-19 NIV)

This new year, I'm excited to begin my journey as a student of Doctor of Ministry at United Theological Seminary based in Dayton, Ohio. The three-year program is designed to enhance my leadership skills and practice of ministry while continually serving on a dual appointment at Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC. With God's grace, I will be part of the first-of-its kind cohort in the US led by leading practitioners where I can level up my capacity to lead faith communities in reaching new people for Christ through a dynamic journey of studying Fresh Expressions, innovative practices and adaptive leadership. I'm deeply grateful to the District Superintendent, and the people of Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC for your unceasing prayers and support.

This new year, I'm also starting a sermon series on the Book of Revelation. From January 11th until March 22nd, we will study the Book of Revelation—the last book in the Bible that is one of the most misunderstood and is often difficult to understand. And because of its complexities, some Christians avoid Revelation, “leaving the weightier matters of end-time prophecy for Biblical scholars and theologians”. However, I strongly believe that it's imperative and very timely than ever that we study Revelation and discover what God has to say to us today through this wonderful book in the Bible.

I must confess that this is the first time that I will preach a sermon series based on the Book of Revelation. I am no expert in this area. I'm also a student and an apprentice like y'all who are trying to learn and discern what God has to say through this book. And so, I need your prayers and will rely upon some biblical experts like Dr. David Jeremiah for his Biblical insights and commentaries. Dr. Jeremiah wrote a Bible study book entitled “Revelation: The Ultimate Hope in Christ”. I encourage everyone to purchase this book (from Amazon or any bookstore) ahead of time and utilize this as a study companion throughout my sermon series on Revelation.

Furthermore, I encourage y'all to read the first few chapters of the Revelation prior to January 11th. Dr. Jeremiah says, “Revelation's message is too important for us to miss.” Studying the Book of Revelation should lead us to worship Jesus Christ and persevere in faith as we eagerly anticipate His return. Therefore, please make sure that you attend worship every Sunday (both in-person and online) and let us journey together in deepening and learning about what God has to say to us through the Book of Revelation.

Finally, this new year, Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC will continue to champion its mission of reaching out to new and diverse people, making disciples and impacting the community through faith in action. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we will continue to grow and expand some of our fresh expressions such as Dinner Church, The Gathering and Journey. And we will also strengthen our outreach ministries such as Stronger Together, Senior Circle, Project Be A Blessing, partnership w/ Zeb-Vance Elementary School, among others.

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Indeed, God is birthing something new at Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC. This is exciting news! It may be scary, but it is also fresh and alive with possibilities. God is doing something incredible that we're just starting to see. It may not look the same as before, but this new beginning will be rich in the life of the Kingdom.

This new year, I invite and challenge every disciple member to renew your commitment to God and to His church. And please join with me in praying together: *“Lord, as a new year begins, we come to You and ask for Your blessing. We pray that You would give us joy to fill our days, peace to fill our hearts, and love to fill our lives. Thank you for Your mission and plans You have for us in this new year. We wait in anticipation to see all You will do!”*

SPECIAL APPRECIATION

We give our praise and glory to God for everyone who provided their servant leadership (big and small) during the Advent and Christmas season. Special appreciation to the following individuals and groups:

- Judy & Todd Wilson for Christmas tree, decorations and poinsettias
- Sally Coghill for providing wreaths for the doors and decorating the Fellowship Hall
- Scott Ritchey for sound, video & live streaming
- **Susan & Martha Sears for Advent set-up and technology during Awakenings**
- Pat Edwards for helping us with church maintenance
- Families who helped in the lighting of the Advent & Christ Candles
- Janet Bobbitt & Plank Chapel UMC Choir for their wonderful Christmas music during Advent season
- Beth Heaton, Debra Newman and the team for The Gathering
- United Women in Faith for the Angel Tree Project
- Pilgrimage Team for the Pilgrimage Christmas Fellowship
- Donald Rose McGhee, Pat Fuller & Team for the Senior Circle Christmas Fellowship
- Inward Formation Team for the church-wide Christmas Fellowship
- Ron & Nancy Gustafson and Journey Team for the December 14th Christmas Program
- All Carolers who volunteered this year's Christmas Caroling and distribution of Christmas gifts to Nursing Homes & Homebound

PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS TEAM ANNOUNCEMENT

As Chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Relations Team, I'm pleased to announce that Pastor Edgar has been admitted to the Doctor of Ministry Program (focusing on "Fresh Expressions & The Future of the Church") through the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. The program is designed to enhance his leadership skills and practice of ministry while continually serving on a dual appointment at Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC. Pastor Edgar will be part of the first-of-its kind cohort in the US led by leading practitioners where he can level up his capacity to lead faith communities in reaching new people for Christ through a dynamic journey of studying Fresh Expressions, innovative practices and adaptive leadership.

Furthermore, Pastor Edgar will build a scholar-practitioner toolkit centered on missional research, contextual intelligence, and innovative practices. Indeed, this is God's gift to the church and to Pastor Edgar! The District Superintendent and the Pastor-Parish Relations Team are fully committed to pray and support Pastor Edgar. Therefore, I invite y'all to please join me in praying for him and may the Holy Spirit continue to lead him on this new journey!

Wayne Young
Chairperson, Pastor-Parish Relations Team 2025





- **To love boldly,** - in communities that are hungry for compassion.
- **To serve joyfully,** - remembering that true greatness is found in self-giving love.
- **To lead courageously** - trusting the Spirit who goes ahead of us into places we cannot yet see.

My prayer is that these words will guide us not only into a new year but into a renewed imagination for what God can do among us.

As we light the candles of Advent and prepare to proclaim once again that “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it,” I give thanks for each of you. Thank you for your faithfulness in 2025. Thank you for the countless ways—seen and unseen—you shepherd God’s people. And thank you for walking this journey together.

May Christ’s peace be born anew in your life, your family, your congregation, and your ministry.

With gratitude for the year behind us and hope for the year to come,

Rev. David Joyner,

Heritage District Superintendent.

Plank Chapel Christmas Fellowship Luncheon





**HARVEST STEWARDSHIP
CAMPAIGN**

Plank Chapel UMC closed the year 2025 behind \$920.33 on budget. But since we didn't spend all that was allotted for some items, we ended the year "in the black". Praise the Lord! As of December 28th, the Year-to-Date Giving is \$123,195.87. Furthermore, as of today, 17 pledge cards have turned in so far with a total giving commitment of \$67,260.00 to support God's mission and ministries for 2026. You can still fill-up and submit your pledge card to Judy Wilson (Financial Secretary) between now until the first week of the year. We are grateful for your faithfulness and generosity in fulfilling our mission "to make disciples of Jesus Christ and impact the community through faith in action."

KOFFEE KORNER

"Koffee Korner"-- a women's group that meets every first Wednesday of the month. Our next gathering will be on January 7th, 10:00am in the Fellowship Hall. For more information, please contact Nancy Gustafson @ 203-232-1145.

**"STRONGER TOGETHER"
EXERCISE CLASS**

"Stronger Together" Exercise Class meets every Monday & Thursday @ 6:00-7:00pm. Open to everyone. For more information, please contact Debra Newman @ 252-915-7005.



On December 14, the children and youth of Journey presented a heartfelt Christmas program titled The Greatest Gift during the 11 a.m. worship service.

Following the program, Journey members Alex and Jathan Huerta delighted the congregation with a beautiful piano duet of "Silent Night."

The young participants then distributed holiday candy to church members as a small gesture of gratitude for the congregation's ongoing support throughout the year.

After the service, Journey hosted a festive Christmas party in Fellowship Hall, featuring prayer, a devotional time, a Silly Santa gift exchange, lunch, and joyful singing of Christmas carols.

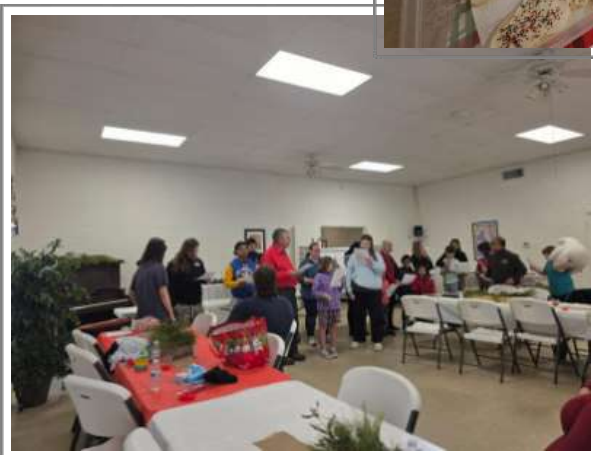
Later, Journey members joined Pastor Edgar for caroling visits to the homes of church shut-ins.

Journey will meet from 4 to 6 p.m. on the fourth Sunday of January.



Journey's Christmas Program and Party





PROJECT BE A BLESSING

"Project Be A Blessing" assembled and distributed 21 duffle bags from Plank Chapel UMC & Union Chapel UMC during Thanksgiving week in 2025. This project is a new outreach ministry of Plank Chapel UMC with the main goal of being the hands and feet of Christ to foster children in the community and church members who are in nursing homes and homebound. Currently, there are more than 10,000 children and teenagers in the foster care system in North Carolina. We are grateful for your generous response during the 2025 Christmas Eve Special Offering. To support this ministry, please make your check payable to Plank Chapel UMC and note: "Project Be A Blessing". For more info, please contact our Lay Leader, Peggy Hernandez at (252) 204-3045.

AWAKENINGS

Renew, refresh and revive your spirit as we worship our Awesome God at "Awakenings" every Sunday, 8:00am-9:00am (except third Sunday of the month). "Awakenings" offers contemporary music, come-as-you-are setting, relevant Bible-based conversation and a good cup of coffee! The "Awakenings" will meet on January 4th, 11th, & 25th



Christmas Caroling 2025



SENIOR CIRCLE DECEMBER 2025



After Faye Woodlief greeted everyone and asked for community concerns and blessings, Pastor Edgar gave a devotion revolving around the first Christmas. He reminded us that the first Christmas was not about tinsel, glitter and presents. He spoke of the hardships faced by the Holy Family such as the long, uncomfortable journey to Bethlehem to participate in the government census, the scarcity of shelter in the overcrowded town, and the birth of Christ in a stable.

Pastor Edgar concluded by saying as Christmas arrives, our lives and situations may not be perfect and added they may even be a little messy, but we can still welcome Christ into our hearts and homes. If we remain open to the spiritual message of Christmas we can still hear the angel's message to the humble shepherds, "Fear not for I bring you good tidings of great joy" as he announced the birth of Jesus Christ.



Following the devotion, Marife Acosta, Pastor Edgar's sister, presented a beautiful program filled with music and song. We also learned about how the people in the Philippines celebrate Christmas. Everyone joined in to sing Feliz Navidad.

And then it was time for Bingo where everyone was a winner several times over.



Players had fun choosing from a table overflowing with donated prizes.



Handcrafted ornaments donated by Mike Fuller were among the first prizes to disappear.



Janet Bobbitt enjoyed trying on her new, soft, fluffy socks.



We were happy to celebrate with new friends and old. Pictured are Elena Gaid, Sally Coghill, Marife Acosta, Pam Jefferson, Janet Bobbitt, and therapy dogs Max and Mia.



We also had the honor to celebrate Betty Stanton's 91st birthday.



Special thanks to Susan Sears and Don Rose McGhee for coordinating our Christmas meal. And thanks to Sally Coghill for the festive decorations.

We hope you had a Merry Christmas and that you have a Happy New Year.

With Love,

Your Friends at Senior Circle



**THANK YOU BETHEL
UMC & PLANK
CHAPEL UMC!**

Pastor Edgar and the family would like to express our deepest gratitude to Bethel UMC & Plank Chapel UMC Families for the Christmas cards, food, greetings and monetary gifts we received during the Christmas season. May the hope, peace, love and joy of our Christ Child fill your home and every day of your life.

**PLANK CHAPEL UMC
CHOIR**

The Choir is getting ready for Advent season! Choir Practice is every Wednesday, 7:00pm. If you are musically inclined and willing to offer your gifts and talents, we would love to have you join the choir! Please contact Janet Bobbitt if you are interested.

CHANGE BUCKET

Change Bucket for January 2026 has been designated for the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina (NC Conference Advance Specials #S-00025). Provides food to persons in 34 NC counties through community-based, emergency feeding programs such as food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, elderly nutrition programs and after-school programs. Please see weblink:

foodbankcenc.org.

The Christmas Gathering





**GIVING FLOWERS IN
HONOR OR IN MEMORY
OF LOVED ONES**

You are invited to generously give flowers on Sunday Worship Services for God's glory and in honor or in memory of your loved ones. Please contact Judy Wilson @ Judith9563@gmail.com or (252) 492-0624.

UNITED METHODIST MEN

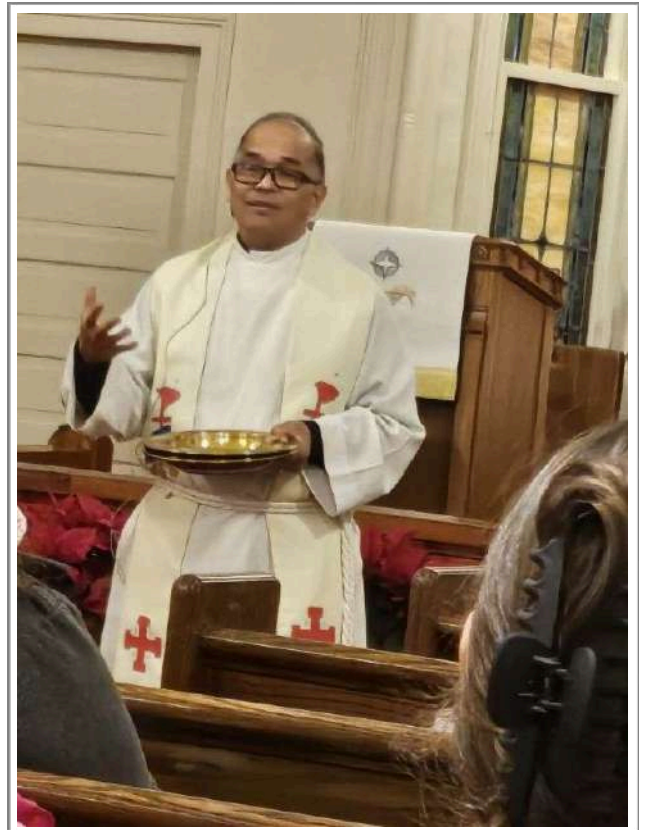
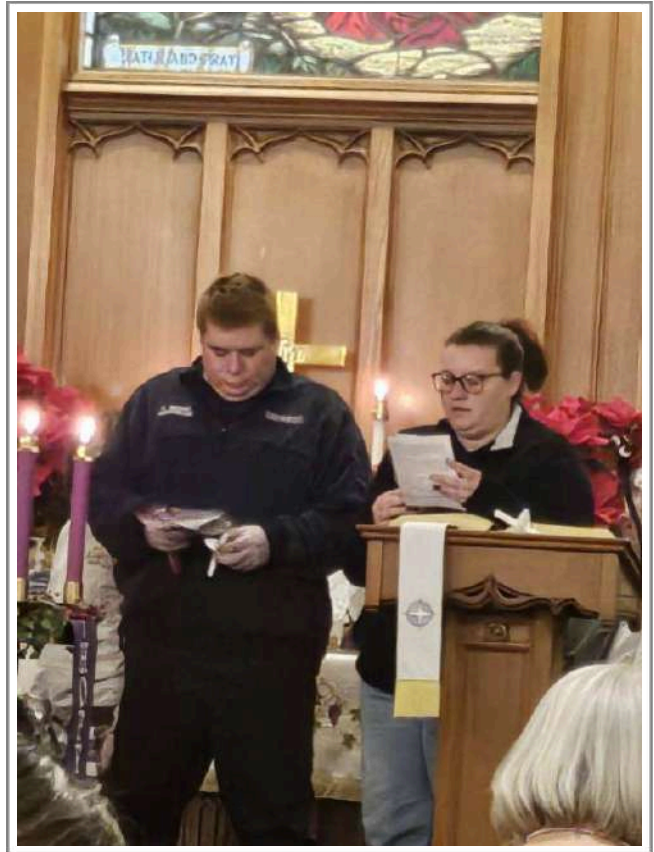
United Methodist Men extends its sincere gratitude to all who helped and supported the 2025 Annual BBQ Event. In appreciation, the UMM will host a Pancake Breakfast Appreciation Fellowship on Sunday, January 18th, 8:00am-9:00am. All are invited!

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

United Women in Faith are composed of women who are "powerful, fearless force" driven by God's love and united in sisterhood. With a focus on women, children and youth, we act for justice and transform communities. Our next regular meeting will be on Sunday, January 18th , 3:00pm. All women are invited!

**December 24th Christmas
Eve Communion &
Candlelight Service.**





SENIOR CIRCLE

Senior Circle is a wonderful way to meet new friends, build relationships and have fun among fellow Christians! We meet every third Wednesday of the month with a program and light lunch @ Plank Chapel UMC Fellowship Hall. Our Senior Circle Fellowship is January 21st, 10:00am. All are invited!

BLESSING BOX MINISTRY

Plank Chapel UMC saw a great need in the community for those vulnerable to have access to the food they cannot always afford. And so, we launched the Blessing Box Ministry in 2022 and encouraged church members as well as the community to help keep the box stocked with non-perishable food items for those in need. Also, please check your book shelves so that we can offer children and adult books as a lending library. We give thanks to God for your generous gifts and support for this outreach ministry.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Faye Moss, Bessie Newman, Fawn Westmoreland, Kerry Alexander, Freddie Oettinger, Debbie Fleming, James Satterwhite, Diane Del Conte, Karin & Dave Driver, Jay Fuller, Susie Beal, Angie Rowland, Family of Sonny White Jr., Skip Brown, Carol Sixberry, Family of Scarlett Ellis, Marvin Daniel, Donna McDaniel, Henry Finch, Arvelle Abbott, Family of Teresa Hock, Kittrell community, our nation, peace in the Middle East and the world. Shut-Ins: Sammy Burgess, Frances Beckham, Tim Smith, John Rogers, Martha Rowland, Kay Deans, Ben & Jackie Brown, Virgie Eaves, Freddie McGhee & Frances Roberts. (For prayer request, please call 919-418-0682 or email Pastor Edgar @ edejesus@nccumc.org.)



WEDNESDAY ONLINE PRAYER MEETING

Prayer Warriors are invited to join the Wednesday Online Prayer Meeting every week from 7:00pm-7:30pm. We will meet on January 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th.

Please **see the Zoom** link below.

Edgar Raymund A. DeJesus is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://zoom.us/j/96731072214?](https://zoom.us/j/96731072214?pwd=z6O3HHRhaCw13h03XmuULTm0Y9A4RJ.1)

[pwd=z6O3HHRhaCw13h03XmuULTm0Y9A4RJ.1](https://zoom.us/j/96731072214?pwd=z6O3HHRhaCw13h03XmuULTm0Y9A4RJ.1)

Meeting ID: 967 3107 2214

Passcode: 1RL4uP



Conference-Wide Leadership Training

The Center for Leadership Excellence is inviting you to the NC Conference's 2026 committee training sessions, designed to equip chairs and committee members for effective leadership and a deeper understanding of committee roles and responsibilities.

About the Sessions

Whether you are starting a new leadership role or have been serving in church leadership for years, these events will prepare you for your much-needed ministry. You may register for any (or all) of the six virtual workshops.

How It Works

We will host Zoom meetings, and registrants can choose the committee training that they need. If you cannot make it during the scheduled time, please register and we will send the recordings for *all* the sessions in early February.

Who Can Register?

Anyone! *We recommend that all committee members attend the training to receive the same information.* If you are interested in learning about the roles and responsibilities of other committees, feel free to sign up for additional sessions!

Click a session title to register. *Each session requires its own registration.*

- [Cultivating Leaders: A Year-Long Nominations Pathway](#) with Trish Archer – Sunday, January 25, 2–3pm
 - [Lay Leader](#) with John Hall – Sunday, January 25, 3:15–4:15pm
 - [Trustees](#) with Kim Lamb – Sunday, January 25, 4:30–5:30pm
 - [S/PPRC](#) with Jessie Larkins and Beth Hood – Tuesday, January 27, 12–1pm
 - [Church Council](#) with Donna Banks – Wednesday, January 28, 12–1pm
 - [Finance](#) with Christine Dodson – Thursday, January 29, 12–1pm
-

Heritage District United Women in Faith

All Local Officer Training Session (LOTS) and 2026 Kickoff Meeting

On January 24, 2026, we will gather in person at the Louisburg United Methodist Church from 10:00 a.m. to noon-ish for our annual training and new year kickoff session! We will be blessed to have Kristin Lassiter as our speaker for the worship portion of our morning together. She will bring us a message of

HOPE, our theme for 2026.

As is our joy, we will have registration and fellowship time at 9:30 a.m., time to get books and materials, and to re-connect one with another.

Following our worship, we will move to our training for 2026 in three classes. Please have someone from your unit present to pick up District Directories, to participate in sharing of ideas, to get the resources and handouts for your various coordinators and interest groups. We are better when we are able to think together and to see what other units are doing to Inspire, Influence, and Impact for our mission. We need each other more than ever, and we need to grow in God's grace together.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- Do I have to be a unit officer to attend? No, all are welcome!
- I've done this job for a long time. Should I still attend? Yes, you have experience and wisdom to share with others. Some are doing more than one thing in their units, and we can help each other.
- We don't have all the officers on our team. Is that bad? We are empowered by God to do the work we have been called to do. God can call people for a task or for a year. Just remember that what works for you locally is what works, and come!
- Do I have to bring anything? Bring the love of Jesus, love for our sisters, and a curious mind. Oh, and probably a way to take notes would be good. And cash or check for any books you want to get like a Program Book, a Prayer Guide, and Reading Program Books.
- Where is the church again? 402 N Main St, Louisburg, NC 27549.



Edgar,

The Center for Leadership Excellence presents a reflective workshop for those navigating change in life and ministry. This event explores how the wisdom of God's creation can offer insight, resilience, and hope in seasons of transition.

February 25, 2026
1pm – 2:30pm, ET
Zoom

About the Webinar:

Join Courtney Ellis, author of *Weathering Change: Seeking Peace Amid Life's Tough Transitions*, on a guided conversation about the difficulties of change and how we might learn to weather it well as individuals and congregations. With help from God's "book of nature," together we will explore preparation, curiosity, adaptation, and resilience.

Who Should Attend:

- Anyone in a season of personal or professional change
- Leaders of congregations in the midst of change
- Pastors anticipating a move

What You'll Gain:

- A deeper understanding of the role of change in your own life and church
- Practical approaches to navigating transitions with curiosity rather than fear
- Insight into the role of adaptation and resilience in weathering change

About the Presenter:

Rev. Courtney Ellis is a Presbyterian minister, speaker, and the author of six books, most recently *Weathering Change: Seeking Peace Amid Life's Tough Transitions*. She also hosts the podcast, "The Thing with Feathers," about birds and hope. Courtney and her husband Daryl pastor together in southern California where they are raising three sporty children and spend a lot of time watching youth basketball.

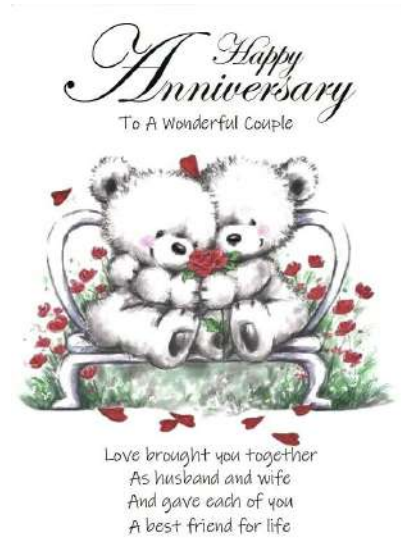
Happy Birthday!!

John Roger's - January 4th
Austyn Abbott - January 11th
Wayne Finch - January 11th
Bob Kemp - January 18th
Danielle Nugent - January 21st
Joyce Edward's - January 22nd
Jamie Abbott - January 24th
Freddie Oettinger - January 26th
Scott Beckham - January 26th
Freddie McGhee - January 27th
Tomas Hernandez - January 28th



Happy Anniversary

Kasey and DJ Pegram - January 13th
Mike and Darlene Ranes - January 20th



10:27PM Thu Jan 1



January ^

Today

Schedule

Day

Week

Month



- Jan
- Feb
- Mar
- Apr
- May
- Jun
- Jul
- Aug
- Sep
- Oct
- Nov
- Dec
- 2027
- Jan
- Feb
- Mar
- Apr
- May
- Jun
- Jul

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
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Sunday School	Stronger Together-Exerci		Prayer Group Zoom Meeti	Stronger Together-Exerci		The Gathering
3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		Prayer Group Zoom Meeti	Stronger Together-Exerci		The Gathering
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Sunday School	Stronger Together-Exerci		Coffee Corner	Stronger Together-Exerci		
3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Sunday School	Stronger Together-Exerci		Choir Rehearsal	Stronger Together-Exerci		
3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
UMM Breakfast Fellowshi	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Awakenings	Stronger Together-Exerci		Senior Circle	Stronger Together-Exerci		
7 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
Sunday School	Stronger Together-Exerci		Choir Rehearsal	Stronger Together-Exerci		
5 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Awakenings	Pastor Edgar's Day Off	Pastor Edgar@Bethel UMC		Pastor Edgar @ Plank Chapel UMC		
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Sunday School	Stronger Together-Exerci		Coffee Corner	Stronger Together-Exerci		The Gathering
3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		3 more	Stronger Together-Exerci		The Gathering

