

A Message from Pastor Sophy ~Dear BUMC Beloveds,

Welcome to this new year, 2026! As we enter into this new year, I'd like to invite all of us into a practice of resting, reflecting, and dreaming. Winter is a time when our bodies and spirits naturally seek rest. Rest is holy and important, and I've noticed that when I allow myself true periods of Sabbath rest, I am better able to reflect on the past and dream about the future. When I say "dream," I don't mean planning events or putting more items on an endless to-do list. I mean truly dream, and dream big, about what building the Kingdom of God could look like here in Bensalem, in our homes, in our relationships, our communities and country- a Kingdom where we demonstrate the wideness of God's mercy and act out God's Love through radical welcome, hospitality, and solidarity with those who are suffering. So, friends, take a deep breath and allow yourself some rest. And then I invite you to reflect on the lessons of this past year and consider how you are being called to live out your beliefs in this new year. What dreams of the Kingdom is the Spirit placing on your hearts?

I have had the joy of journeying with you all for six months now, and in that time I have witnessed God's Spirit moving through this community in so many ways. Together we've worked to get our parking lot repaved, update our website, complete numerous building repairs and maintenance projects, and joyfully welcome members of the broader community to the Cookie Walk, Christmas Open House, and Blue Christmas and Christmas Eve worship services. We've pledged over \$129,000 to our Capital Campaign, and counting. We've collected and given out dozens of grocery store gift cards that have helped people make it through SNAP delays and ever-tightening budgets. We've strengthened relationships with one another, explored our questions and doubts, and considered how our beliefs connect to our politics and our service in our communities.

Bensalem United Methodist Church

4300 Hulmeville Road
Bensalem PA 19020

Rev. Sophia Gamber
rev.sophygamber@gmail.com

Office Phone: 215-245-1215
bensaleumcoffice@gmail.com

Website: Bensalem-umc.org

Sunday Morning Services: **October - May**

Traditional: 8:30am - Chapel
Traditional: 8:30am - Facebook Live
Celebration: 10:00m - Sanctuary

Sunday Morning Services: **June - September**

Traditional: 8:30am - Chapel
Traditional: 8:30am - Facebook Live
Celebration: 10:00am - Chapel

Holy Communion:
1st Sunday of the month

Outdoor services: **June - September**

Celebration 10:00 services are scheduled to be outside the last Sunday of the month weather permitting.

Our Mission:

"To make new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

Our Vision:

"BUMC is a welcoming congregation centered in Christ. We commit to love and grow in connection to Christ, one another, and the world."

We've proclaimed the power of Love in a world that sometimes seems bent on cruelty, division, and unkindness, and we will continue to do so. I feel God's Spirit in the ways that BUMC has welcomed me, and each time I have the privilege of sitting with you one-on-one and hearing more of your stories. What a blessing these last six months with you has been.

In the year ahead, I dream of reaching out into our community, deepening relationships with our neighbors, and finding new, vital ways to stand on the side of justice, love, equality, and inclusivity. I dream of joyful fellowship opportunities that ground us in the goodness of creation and community. The words of a beloved song by contemporary hymnist, Mark Miller, come to mind: "I dream of a church where everyone is welcome, I dream of a place we all can call home. I dream of a world where justice is flowing, with hope and peace growing, where God's will is done." I can't wait to hear what your dreams for BUMC are.

With love in Christ,
Pastor Sophy

Scripture Keys to a Joyful New Year

Hold fast to your faith (Hebrews 4:14)

Assemble with the saints (Hebrews 10:25)

Pray earnestly every day (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18)

Pray for great blessings (Malachi 3:10)

Yield not to temptation (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

Neglect not your talents and opportunities (Galatians 6:10)

Examine yourself daily (2 Corinthians 13:5)

Work diligently for the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)

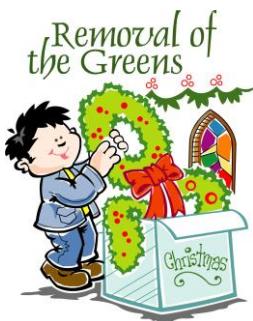
Yield your members to righteousness (Romans 6:11,16)

Exercise yourself in godliness (1 Timothy 4:7)

Aim at sinless perfection. (Hebrews 6:1)

Redeem the time. (Ephesians 5:15,16)

– Gus Nichols



Removal of the Greens: After 10 am service on January 4th, please stay to help undecorate the chapel and main sanctuary. A big thanks to all who helped to make the chapel and the main sanctuary so festive for Christmas.

Ministries

United Women in Faith
Bensalem Christian Day School
Christian Education
Fishing Club

Donations

General Offering
Missions
Food Pantry
PARX seasonal gift requests
Anniversary Fund
Capital Campaign

Online Donations



Webs thebuzz.bensalem-umc.org r submissions:
Vince Llydia and Dawn Lacerte
thebuzz@bensalem-umc.org

January Birthdays

1 - Pat Wingert

3 - Tonia Mitchell

5 - Kathy McDermott

6 - Nancy Oczkowski

6 - Callie Hadfield Curry

8 - Dawn Lacerte

10 - Paul Lacerte, Jr

19 - Cathy Roberts

23 - Lori Caporale

23 - Jim Stubenhofer

26 - Olivia Hennessey

27 - Charles Pitcher

28 - Jay Roberts

31 - Bob Miller



B3T Unity Week 2026

Building A Better Bensalem Together (B3T) has once again invited the BUMC community to participate in their annual Unity Week, running from **Monday January 19th to Wednesday January 21st**. This week is a beautiful and important opportunity to learn more about our neighbors and reinforce the strength of diversity and unity within our Bensalem community. The schedule of the week is as follows:

Monday 1/19:

MLK Day Breakfast at PARX, 8:00am - registration required
Linconia Tabernacle (2450 Paris Avenue, Trevose), 7:00pm

Tuesday 1/20:

Bensalem UMC, 9:00am
St. Gregorios Malankara Orthodox Church (4136 Hulmeville Rd, Bensalem) 7:00pm

Wednesday 1/21:

Love Fellowship Tabernacle (5918 Hulmeville Rd, Bensalem), 7:00pm

Please see Pastor Sophy to register for the MLK Day Breakfast at PARX or to get involved in our Tuesday morning BUMC presentation.

Fishing Club

In December, our Fishing Club moved its **meetings to just after the 10 o'clock worship service**. We enjoyed our first such meeting with new and old friends in attendance, "make your own sandwiches," a craft, and a lesson on the Advent candles taught by Betsy Pitcher.

Our friends participated in several other fun activities: the Christmas Open House, the Cookie Walk, and Christmas Caroling at Juniper Village.

Don't forget Ivan speaking in worship service about our ongoing Heifer Project. He did a great job and we were super proud of him! He stated we are collecting for families in need after services.

Stay after church most Sundays in January and have a quick lunch and some meaningful fun with us. Folks of all ages and friends are welcome. This coming Sunday, Jan. 4th after the "Unhanging of the Greens", join us for a quick lunch. and a reading of the Biblical meaning behind the "12 Days of Christmas". Many of us heard it for the first time last year, and found it to be very interesting!



Staff Christmas Offering Thank You



On behalf of Nancy Oczkowski and myself, I'd like to say a heartfelt *thank you so much* for the kind and generous staff Christmas gift that we received from the congregation this year. For me, these past months with you all have truly been the greatest gift. Your love (and patience!) has strengthened me on days when I feel like I don't know what I'm doing! Your faith has reminded me that God's Lovingkindness is already here and moving in the midst of us. Thank you for this Christmas gift, and thank you for the gift of being in Christian community with you all.

With gratitude & love-- Pastor Sophy

Bensalem Christian Day School

December was a very busy and fun-filled month. Discussions in school were centered around the holidays and the custom of giving as well as receiving gifts, and, most important, the birth of Jesus.

We had our annual Christmas Concert December 19th in the Sanctuary. Thank you, Connie, for playing for us. It was also, live streamed to our facebook page. Thank you Bob and Linda Evans!



The month ended with Santa visiting us and having Christmas Parties in the classrooms



During January the children will be having their vision checked by Bucks County Blind Association. Also, we will be having Parent/Teacher conferences, have Teddy Bear week at the end of January and Mrs. Mastil's class will be singing for Unity Day. Lastly, Registration for September 2026 will be starting at the end of the month. If you or someone you know would like more information or need a registration form, please email me at bensalemchristiands@gmail.com or call 215-245-1610.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for our school.

Lisa Woods
Day School Director

Mark your calendars! Spread the Word!
Day School Open House - February 23rd and 24th

GriefShare Support Group Begins Tuesday, January 27th

Our 16-week GriefShare Support Group will **begin Tuesday, January 27th, and will meet weekly from 6:30pm to 8:00pm**. This support group is intended for people who are grieving the loss of a loved one and looking for a compassionate community that honors the complex emotions of grief. There are no neat, orderly steps of grief, nor does grief have a tidy timeline- it can be unpredictable, messy, and lonely. Because of this, our GriefShare group will focus on providing education, sharing practical and faith-based coping strategies, and creating a safe environment to share our truths and experiences. This group is open to the public- please share this information with anyone you know who may benefit from this support.

Registration is required in advance, including a recommended donation of \$15 to help offset the cost of supplies and workbooks. Please contact Pastor Sophy (rev.sophygamber@gmail.com) or Betty Miles (bettymiles@gmail.com) by January 17th to register.



United Women in Faith **2026 Super "Souper" Bowl Sale** *Chili and Football Go Hand in Hand*



Super Bowl Sunday is a day of fun and festivities for football fans. BUMC United Women in Faith want to make your game day celebration day a winner by cooking up delicious homemade chili. This year we are offering 3 chili choices: Ground Beef Chili, Ground Turkey Chili, and Vegetarian 3 Bean Chili in quarts or pints. Our hearty chili will satisfy the whole family. Top with sour cream or shredded cheese, or serve with cornbread, tortilla chips, warm bread or "as is" for a great game day meal.

Order by Sunday, February 1, 2026

Pick-up Sunday, February 8, 2026 in Fellowship Hall from 9:15AM – 11:30AM

Cost: \$4.50 / pint or \$9.00 / quart

Buy Two, Get the Third for Half Price

3 quarts for \$22.50 (save \$4.50) / 3 pints for \$11.25 (save \$2.25)



If you need to make other arrangements for pick-up, wish to supply your own containers or don't want your chili frozen when you pick-up, please use the special instructions lines on the order form. Order forms are available in the Narthex or contact Connie Kurtiz at 215-639-6765 or Linda Evans at 215-322-7172 to place your order.

There's nothing quite like homemade chili. It's quick, tasty; and always hits the spot! And best of all, the proceeds of this "souper" sale support UWF mission programs throughout the year.

Friends of Bensalem Christian Day School (BCDS)

Our group has been working behind the scenes to support our beloved Day School students and faculty.

To this end, please note a couple of our upcoming plans. **We hope to offer a "Parents Night Out" on Friday, February 13th**, using volunteers from our congregation to help by providing child care for a few hours. Please see Anne Drybala if you might be interested. Of course, volunteers must have the

requisite child safety clearances (easily available online for free for volunteers) and experience working with little people preferred. This could include being a parent, aunt/uncle or grandparent. This will be a fundraiser for the school, and provide a safe place for the parents to have a relaxing evening out (without their children.)

PARENTS Night Out

Also, please save the date of **Saturday, February 28th for an indoor flea market in Fellowship Hall**. More details will be forthcoming.

Make sure to check out our [school's website](#). It has recently been revamped by Silke Mitchell, our committee's chairperson. It looks great and is a good way to keep updated about our Christian Day School.

Thank you to all that came out to Spirit Day at Chick-fil-A. It was a great success.



Out to Lunch Bunch

Please Join Us and Bring a Friend on January 21st at 11:30am. We will be enjoying a meal with fellowship at the Apollo Pizza, 2255 Bristol Pike, Bensalem. Sign up sheet is located in the narthex.

Update for BUMC Directory:

Please make the following changes to your Directory.

Letenauchyn, Kathie
110 Springdale Ave.
Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

Miller, Robert & Cathy
305 West Washington Ave.
North Wales, PA 19454



THANK YOU to all that helped to make our CHRISTMAS COOKIE WALK happen and be a success! The bakers, the volunteers, the donators, the customers, and the well-wishers! We are excited to announce the Cookie Walk raised \$1,565.

Lost & Maybe Found

Have you lost or left your coat/jacket in the Sanctuary coat closet? There are about 3 coats that have been there for many months. If yours is one of them, please claim it and any remaining ones will be given to the Parx donations. Thanks!

Jeannette Schnarr

Jeannette Schnarr attended Huntingdon Valley United Methodist Church her entire life before making the thoughtful decision to attend a church closer to home. Bensalem United Methodist Church quickly became, not just the closest option, but a welcoming and meaningful church family.



Through the years at BUMC Jeannette has been actively involved through the Day School Committee, mission trips, helping at Pocono Plateau, the Traditional Service Choir, and Discovery Service projects, where she supported hands-on building and church-based outreach. She also enjoys participating in holiday events and community gatherings, especially church picnics. Over the years, she particularly treasured the picnics held at Neshaminy State Park. Jeannette continues to support and donate to outreach efforts including school supplies, Parx collections, the Angel Tree, and Easter initiatives. Donald Spedding attended church with Jeannette and served alongside her in these ministries until his passing, and she continues to honor his memory.

Jeannette devoted 25 years as a salon owner and hair stylist and 25 years as a teacher in the Bensalem School District, reflecting a lifelong commitment to serving others. One of her most cherished moments is worshiping alongside her family — her granddaughter Amber Schiefer, Amber's husband Robert, and their children Paige, Damien, and Logan.

Jeannette is a caring, faithful, and family-centered presence whose life reflects love, service, and devotion to both church and family.

Gift Card Ministry Idea

Here is a way to contribute to our gift card ministry that won't cost you any additional money...and it's LEGAL!

If you use a credit card, see if it accumulates rewards points or miles. If so, then go to, "redeem points for gift cards", on the credit card website. Select Target or Walmart gift cards. With these two stores, users of the gift cards can get both food, clothing, and other needed items.



Redeem your points for gift cards that will help those less fortunate. When the physical gift cards come to you, simply put them in the offering plate with their denomination amount, usually on the paper to which the card is attached.

That's it! Giving to others is that simple. It's just redistributing wealth you possibly didn't know you had!

George Dworsky
Leadership Board
Thank you!

BUMC Once Again Spreads Christmas Joy

Many thanks from Bensalem United Women in Faith to all who participated in this year's Reverse Advent Christmas collection for Rev. Bunker at Parx. Your food donations for men and families were welcome additions to the Parx Food Pantry. This was the perfect way to remember others this Christmas season and to share the message of God's love. Your participation was sincerely appreciated.



We are extending a very special thank you to Edith Kitchen who donated 50 cases of food to the Parx Food Pantry. On December 2, we received an urgent request from the Rev. Bunker, the Parx chaplain, to help restock the Parx pantry following the larger than normal Thanksgiving food distribution that left them with some bare shelves. The items Edith purchased covered everything the email requested and more.

Edith was able to make her purchases because she asked for financial donations from family members and friends. She then applied her extensive shopping skills (including budgeting, researching and smart shopping) to achieve "best" value for the money. As a result, she was able to provide nutritious food options for three meals a day and snacks.

Dawn and David Cridland, Bob and Linda Evans, Edith and Pastor Sophy delivered Edith's purchases to Parx on Tuesday, December 9th. Well done Edith! You've proven once again that one motivated person really can make a difference.



Christmas Caroling at Juniper Village

What a joyful time was had on December 21st, when BUMC members went strolling through the halls of Juniper Village to sing Christmas Carols to our monthly Wednesday Worship Service members, former members of BUMC, and many wonderful residents that we met along the way.

We had a great group of joyful singers, as we passed out cookies and handmade ornaments to our special Juniper Residents. Consider joining with us next year!



We had carolers of all ages, with crazy hats, festive clothes, glowing glasses (Connie K.), and joyful bells, to accompany our voices! How happy it was when many of the residents joined in our singing!



Photo Time!

Are you and your family in our last church picture directory? (It's tan in color and was printed in 2018) We cannot create a completely new directory- but would like to prepare a photo book for the church office and include YOU! These pictures are helpful to our pastor and planning committees.

So, would you please take a "selfie" of you and/or your family on your phone and send it to Connie Kurtiz to be printed up a a vertical picture. (OR print it up yourself if you choose) and give the vertical 5x7 shot to Connie. Thank you in advance for your participation!



Safe Sanctuaries Training - Jan. 24

On Jan. 24 from 9:30am-12pm, Safe Sanctuaries training is being offered as both a refresher course and for new people in your church leadership. Please know the training is needed for all leaders as Safe Sanctuaries policies apply not only to churches with youth, but now also to older adults and vulnerable adults. Please join us and have your questions answered for Safe Sanctuary regulations and policy writing. Register here.

January 2026 Safe Sanctuaries Training

Training is being offered over Zoom for Safe Sanctuaries regulations and updates. Those in any leadership roles should attend if a refresher is needed or if you are new to leadership. Please note all churches are covered by Safe Sanctuaries for not only children and youth but older and vulnerable adults. Please join us for training.

Date/Time: 1/24/2026 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Location : Via Zoom

Contact:

Rev. Jacqueline D. Daniszewski

610-698-7253

Epasafesanctuaries@epagnj.org



Faith in Action

A Christian is someone who makes it easier for others to believe in God – not through perfection, but through kindness, grace and love in everyday life. When people see Christ's compassion in us, they're drawn closer to Him.

Are you grieving the loss of a loved one and looking for support?

Join us for our 16-week GriefShare Support Group

Starting January 27th Tuesdays, 6:30pm - 8:00pm

GriefShare®

This group provides a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief.

Led by Rev. Sophy Gamber, BUMC pastor
Clinically trained grief counselor
Call to register: 215-245-1215

You'll discover what to expect in the days following loss and experience a compassionate community of people who will walk with you through grief.

Bensalem United Methodist Church
4300 Hulmeville, Bensalem PA
(Across from Bensalem High School)

B JANUARY 2026 B

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	BEL – Belmont Hills CRN – Cornwells FST – Faust RSH – Rush STR – Struble VLY – Valley	SHF – Shafer SNY – Snyder BHS – Bensalem High		1 Winter Recess – Schools and Offices Closed New Year's Day	2 Winter Recess – Schools and Offices Closed	3
4	5 Schools and Offices Reopen	6	7 FST 4th Gr Trip to Franklin Institute	8	9 BHS Student of the Month Breakfast	10
11	12	13 FST PTG Meeting – 6:30 PM	14 BHS Open House – 6 PM Uttarayan	15 BCMEA Auditions at CR North	16 SHF/SNY 8th Gr Music Students Visit BHS	17
18	19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – Schools & Offices Closed	20 CRN Title I and H&S Meeting – 7 pm	21	22 RSH Paint Night – 6 to 8 PM	23 BEL/CRN/FST 6th Gr. Music Students Visit Shafer CRN Used Book Sale – 6 PM	24
25	26 Marking Period #2 Ends RSH/STR/VLY 6th Gr Music Students Visit Snyder	27	28 School Board Action Meeting – 7:30 PM	29 B.A.D.G.E Meeting in Shafer Library – 7 PM STR Gr. 5 & 6 Good Behavior Dance – 6 to 7:30 PM	30 STR PTO Bingo – 6 to 8 PM	31

BENSALEM
CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOL
4300 HULMEVILLE RD, BENSALEM PA
PHONE NUMBER: 215-245-1610

OPEN HOUSE

FEBRUARY 23RD & 24TH

Can't make it!
Schedule a
personal tour!

9:30 to 11 AM

* HALF DAY PROGRAMS

JUST YOU & ME - 16 MO. TO 3 YRS
TOT TIME - 2YR 7 MO. TO 3 YRS
EARLY LEARNERS - 3YRS
PRE-K - 4 YRS

