Pastor:
Tim Harvey

Minister of Nurture and Music:
Carol Elmore

E-mail:

churchoffice@oakgrovecob.org

Website: www.oakgrovecob.org

Phone: (540) 774-3217

DEADLINE FOR

JANUARY

DECEMBER 15

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:

Rena' Brown

Carolyn Broyles

Nancy Hylton

Josephine Keller

Bryana Lackey

Emily Nelson

CHURCH OFFICE SECRETARY HOURS: Monday-Friday 9:00-2:00 p.m.

THE VISITOR

DECEMBER 2023

Oak Grove Church of the Brethren
2138 McVitty Road, SW
Roanoke, VA 24018



Join us on Sundays Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m.

December Sermons and Scripture

December 3 First Sunday of Advent

O Savior, rend the heavens Isaiah 64:1-9; Mark 13:24-37 Hanging of the Greens

December 10 Second Sunday of Advent

Break forth, O beauteous heav'nly Luke 2:8-11; 2 Peter 3:8-15a Handbell Choir performing during worship.

December 17 Third Sunday of Advent

Christmas Music Worship

We All Bow Down: A Christmas Worship Experience by Marty Nystrom.

December 24 Fourth Sunday of Advent

God rest ye merry, Gentlemen Luke 1:46-55

December 31 Pastor Tim on vacation, Harvey Leddy preaching.





Hanging of the Greens

December 3, 2023

Children's families and youth will participate in our Hanging of the Greens service at 11:00 a.m. Children will be in costume for the Nativity. Sunday School classes will participate in readings and song.

A potluck meal will follow. Bring food to share. Meat will be provided. Please join us!



Tree of Rove

Please bring your mittens, scarves, hats and socks for the Rescue Mission.

The children's class will decorate the tree during their Sunday School class time.



Candbell Music

December 10, 2023

The Handbell Choir will also be playing at Fairington Village (across from Southwest Plaza Food Lion) on December 19, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome to attend.



Christmas Cantata

December 17, 2023

Our choir and instrumentalists will share *We All Bow Down: A Christmas Worship Experience* by Marty Nystrom.



Caroling

December 17, 2023

Join us for Christmas Caroling on December 17, 2023. We will meet at the church at 5:00 p.m. Snacks at the Brogan's will follow.



Christmas Eve Service

December 24, 2023

Join us at 7:00 p.m. for our Indoor Christmas Eve Candlelight Service and Communion.

Church News

Prayer concerns since the last Visitor:

- ...Emma Jean Woodard, recovering from surgery
- ...Ron Mooney, knee replacement surgery
- ...Dennis Ferguson, recovering from surgery
- ...Dennis Shearer, prayers for treatment

November Outreach

- -Three families assisted through our Good Samaritan Fund.
- -Provided food for two families through our Food Pantry.
- -Split and delivered wood with Project WARM
- -Backpack Ministry is now distributing 21-22 backpacks weekly!

Prison Postage Outreach

Once again we are collecting postage stamps and greeting cards for the inmates of the Roanoke City Jail.



You may bring stamps and cards and place in the mailbox in the sanctuary or donate money marked for Prison Postage in the weekly offering collection.

Christmas Cards

We would like to remind everyone of the Christmas greeting board that is placed in the fellowship hall during the Christmas season.



It's purpose is for you to place your Christmas cards to the church family on it instead of sending individual cards.

Happy Birthday

- 2– Joyce Bolender
- 4- Phyllis Petcher
- 6– Gladis Lehman
- 7- Vincent Pizzullo
- 9-Hollie Johnson
- 9- Missy Lankford
- 15– Milton Hartman
- 15– John Phillips
- 16-Ben Foutz
- 18– Nelson Hylton
- 18– Carol Elmore
- 18– Mike Tyler
- 19- Matt Musselman
- 21– John King, Jr.
- 21– John King, III
- 22– Gloria Harmon
- 23 Dea Underwood
- 26– Becky Fowler
- 29– Sara Blaha
- 29– Jennie Garrett
- 30– Sharon Hanger

Happy Anniversary

- 1–Bill & Bennie Pugh
- 9– Bill & Julie Hall
- 17– Ed & Wanda Lynch
- 18- John & Sarah King, Jr.
- 19- Tim & Lynette Harvey
- 30- Mike & Carol Elmore

Project WARM

Join Oak Grove on Saturday, December 23, 2023, at 8:00 a.m. to help. If you would like to assist another time or would like more information, please contact Marc Wilson.

Update from the Church Board

Since our Fall Council meeting, the Board has made two changes to the slate of officers. First, Deanna Knox will serve as 2024 Annual Conference delegate in place of Pastor Tim, so that Tim can serve as Parliamentarian at the request of the Annual Conference officers.

Second, Jodi Zabo's term as Ministry and Worship Commission Chairperson has been extended by one year through 2024. We elected three new members to that Commission; extending Jodi's term will aid in the continuity of their work.

Virlina District Conference 2023 Report

by Don Pizzullo

This was my first opportunity to attend the Virlina District Conference as delegate and I was not fully sure what to expect. I was humbled to have been chosen and wanted to make sure that I did the best job I could serving in this role. The conference was fun and informative. I was happy to see old friends that I had spent time with at the National Youth Conference and meet new friends as well.

Friday night's kickoff "cowbell" service was fun and informative. Everyone received a cowbell when we arrived. We had four different pastors, Doug Diamond, Tim Harvey, Lupita Cruz, and Dava Hensley, who each had 10 minutes to deliver a message before they were rang off the stage by a chorus of cowbells. All four messages were based around a single verse Jesus said, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go" John 11:44b. From this short passage that came from the story of Jesus' resurrection of Lazarus, the four pastors delivered different perspectives on what Jesus meant and how it relates to what Jesus wants from us. I highly recommend going to Mt Hermon's Facebook page to watch the service. There was also wonderful music performed by Lisa Street and the Iglesia Praise Band.

The theme of this year's conference was *Repairing the Rift*. The message in the morning from Nate Polzin (Executive Director of Discipleship and Leadership Formation for the Church of the Brethren) spoke to this and talked about what it means to be Brethren. I know many in the church had grown up Brethren but the question held special meaning to me since I came to the Brethren faith later in life. Brethren care for those around us, we jump in and help those who need it, we seek peaceful solutions and we try to live our life to continue the work that Jesus started and share his love with the world.

There are rifts that we all encounter both in the district as well as our home churches, but I could see our brothers and sisters working on those issues understanding that we come from the common ground of love.

In the election of officers, Naomi Powers, co-pastor of Daleville Church of the Brethren, was called to serve as Moderator-Elect. She will then be the Moderator of the 2025 District Conference. Our own Jodi Zabo was called to a three year term on the Virlina District Board.

Camp Bethel News



The 2023 Christmas TOGETHER Banquet is for end-of-year expenses.

Thursday, December 7, 2023 6:30-8:30 p.m. Camp Bethel's Ark Dining Room Registration form on the next page!



Winter Camp is a fun and spiritual program for kids in 1st-5th grades, youth in 6th-8th grades & teens in 9th-12th grades led by our reunited Summer Staff and Youth Leaders from our District Churches.

Click <u>here</u> for more information or to register.















CAMPA BETHEL Fincastle, Virginia

Christmas Together Banquet

www.CampBethelVirginia.org/Christmas

Thursday, December 7, 2023 at 6:30pm, Camp Bethel's Ark Dining Room "All the believers were TOGETHER." - Acts 2:44

Please donate to our Christmas TOGETHER Banquet for an excellent dinner in our decorated Ark Dining Hall followed by a festive-and-fun Christmas Party.

Your \$50 gift will provide much-needed year-end funding.

- Your support of Camp exemplifies TOGETHERness described in Acts 2:43-47.
- Camp Bethel provides common ground for us to meet, worship, and renew a relationship with God, "They continued to meet together in the temple courts."
- Summer camps and year-round events provide common opportunities to foster and build relationships with God and each other, "They broke bread... and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God."

Menu: Charcuterie appetizer, pork loin with creamy mushroom sauce, Tuscan chicken, parmesan-crusted red potatoes, seasoned broccoli, honey-glazed carrots, rolls (w/ apple butter and butter), mixed greens salad w/ tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers (Ranch, Italian, or balsamic vinaigrette dressing), brownie sundaes, water, sweet & unsweet tea, hot chocolate, coffee, and teas.

Call, e-mail or mail in your individual, family, class or congregational reservation by November 30 to 540-992-2940 or CampBethelOffice@gmail.com, or register on line at www.CampBethelVirginia.org/Christmas.

or register on line at www.CampBethelVirginia.org/Christmas.

In case of cancellation on December 7, we will call you. Snow date is December 14.

	0-
, you	ur phone #
	December 7, 6:30pm, \$50/person.
gift enclosed	I will donate at the table.
d. Please accept the enclosed \$	gift for Camp Bethel.
	OGETHER Banquet on Thursday, S gift enclosed

Please make checks payable to CAMP BETHEL (or pay at table) and mail this form by Nov 30 to:

Camp Bethel, 328 Bethel Road, Fincastle, VA 24090,

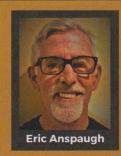
or register on line at www.CampBethelVirginia.org/Christmas

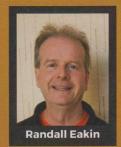
CampBethelOffice@gmail.com or 540-992-2940

In case of snow cancellation on December 7, we will call you. Snow date is December 14 at 6:30pm.

MEET YOUR VIRLINA RACE EDUCATION TEAM









The Virlina District Board added the Virlina Race Education Team (VRET) to the District Witness Commission in 2020. VRET seeks to spread the Gospel that we are all one race — the Human Race. In Genesis, we are taught that we are all made in God's image. Jesus taught us to love our neighbors and our brothers and sisters. In 1 John 3 and 4, we are commanded that we must first love our brothers and sisters before we can truly love God. Since we are all created in God's image, we are all a part of God's family regardless of the color of our skin. Unfortunately, many of us grew up in homes, churches, communities, and schools where people of color were not treated justly or equally. God wants that to stop. Our team is learning about how racism affects our churches and communities and hopes to share what we are learning with you and your church because racism never goes away; it just adapts.

We are eager to meet with congregational groups, teams, classes, etc. to strategize how the church can work together to dismantle racism. Presently, we are engaged in training with the Church of the Brethren's "Standing with People of Color" group, where we are learning about their "Crucial Christian Conversations" curriculum. This training will enable us to facilitate sessions for groups in the Virlina District.

> Team members not shown: Mary St. John (Director of District Conference & Nurture and Witness), Roger Stultz (Ex-Officio), and the Commission on Witness Liaison



VIRLINARET@GMAIL.COM

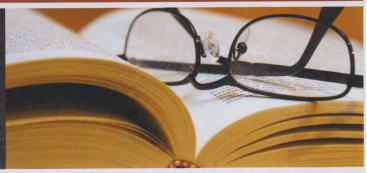


HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/VIRLINA-RACE-EDUCATION-TEAM-106847784694589/



WWW.VIRLINA.ORG

VIRLINA RACE **EDUCATION TEAM** ENDING LIBRARY



The Lending Library at the Virlina Resource Center has a sign-out and sign-in system for your use and is an excellent resource. Here are a few of the titles:

- The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism
- Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism
- Anxious to Talk About It: Helping White Christians Talk Faithfully about Racism
- White Fragility: Why it's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism
- · How to Fight Racism: Courageous Christianity and the Journey Toward Racial Justice
- Who Will be a Witness: Igniting Activism for God's Justice, Love, and Deliverance
- Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.
- Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents
- And more!

NECESSARY CONVERSATIONS SERIES



Find videos from our Necessary Conversations series on Virlina's website (www.virlina.org). Watch for information about upcoming "Necessary Conversations" events in 2024 in the district newsletter and on our Facebook page.

Pastor's Column

Our hymnal is a treasure-trove of the theology that describes our faith. The combination of rich, thoughtful poetry and enchanting melody and harmony warms our hearts and encourages our soul, moving us to sing God's praise.

This is especially true during the Advent and Christmas seasons. Even though the Advent hymns tend to not be our favorites, many of them help us get in touch with what it means to sense the distance between what God has promised to do and what the world around us looks like. Even though Jesus has already come—through his birth, life, death, and resurrection—we know that the Kingdom of God is not yet fully realized. We are familiar with brokenness and loss. And even as we also know and celebrate great joy and deep, abiding faith, there remains a longing for God to move in our lives and in our world, putting all things to rights.

Worship and sermons on the first, second, and fourth Sunday of Advent this year are inspired by Advent and Christmas hymns; more specifically, they are inspired by a verse or even a line of a hymn. We will experience these hymns in worship by either singing the hymn or following along while the hymn is played. To prepare, consider the verses that provide our worship service theme:

December 3: *O Savior, rend the heavens wide* (verse 4)

Here dreadful doom upon us lies.
Death looms so grim before our eyes.
O come, lead us with mighty hand
from exile to our promised land.

December 10: Break forth, O beauteous heavn'ly light (verse 2)

This night of wonder, night of joy, was born the Christ, our brother.

He comes, not mighty to destroy, to bid us love each other.

How could he quit his kingly state for such a world of greed and hate?

What deep humiliation secured the world's salvation!

December 24: God rest ye merry, Gentlemen (verse 1)

God rest ye merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay.

Remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day
to save us all from Satan's pow'r when we were gone astray.

Oh tidings of comfort and joy,

comfort and joy,

Oh tidings of comfort and joy.

In addition to these hymns, a helpful Advent devotional exercise is to take a hymnal and read an Advent or Christmas hymn each day, pondering the words and metaphors and images. I encourage you to do this. How do our hymns help us anticipate Jesus?

Paster Tim

December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Your	th Christm ecember 10 12:15 p. Ichibai	as Lunch 0, 2023 m.		1	2
3 Hanging of the Greens 9:45 a.mSS 11:00 a.m Worship Potluck	4 9 a.m ESL 10 a.m Crafts 12:30 p.m Backpack	5:30 p.m.– Handbells 7 p.m.– Peace & Justice	6 9 a.m.– ESL 6 p.m.– Men's Bible Study 7 p.m.– Choir	7 2 p.mGames 6:30 p.m Christmas Togethe Banquet at Camp Bethel	8 er	9 8:30 a.mSHP Bed Build at 1409 Colorado St., Salem.
10 Bell Choir 9:45 a.mSS 11:00 a.m Worship 12:15 p.m Youth lunch at Ichiban	11 9 a.m.– ESL	5:30 p.m.– Handbells	13 9 a.m.– ESL 7 p.m.– Choir	14 2 p.mGames	15	16
Christmas Cantata 9:45 a.mSS 11:00 a.m Worship 5 p.m Caroling	18 9 a.m.– ESL 12:30 p.m.– Backpack	5:30 p.m.– Handbells 7p.m.– Handbells at Fairington	20 9 a.m.– ESL 7 p.m.– Choir	21	22	8 a.m Project WARM
9:45 a.mSS 11:00 a.m Worship 7 p.m Indoor Christmas Eve Service	Christmas Day Church Office Closed	Church Office Closed Pastor Tim on ve	27 9 a.m.– ESL acation December	28 r 25-31, 2023.	29	30
31 9:45 a.mSS 11:00 a.m Worship					REJO Christ I	DICE s Born