

# THE VISITOR

JANUARY 2026

**Pastor:**  
Tim Harvey

**Minister of Nurture  
and Music:**  
Carol Elmore

**E-mail:**  
churchoffice@oakgrovecob.org

**Website:**  
[www.oakgrovecob.org](http://www.oakgrovecob.org)

**Phone:**  
(540) 774-3217

**DEADLINE FOR  
FEBRUARY  
JANUARY 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.

Published by:

**Oak Grove Church of the Brethren**

2138 McVitty Road, SW  
Roanoke, VA 24018



MAY THE LORD  
SHOWER YOU WITH  
HIS DIVINE FAVOR  
AND BLESSINGS IN  
THE NEW YEAR.

*Happy New Year 2026*

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

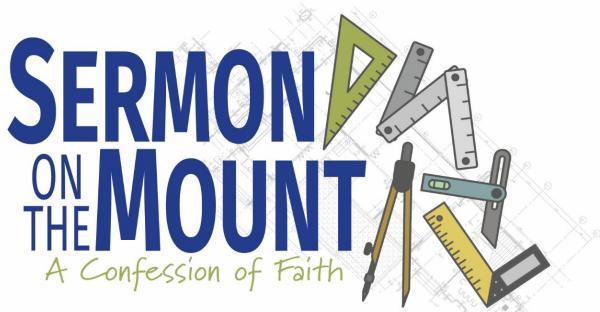
## January Sermon Schedule

**January 4**   **Epiphany Sunday**  
Matthew 2:1-12 and Isaiah 60:1-6

**January 11**   **Sermon on the Mount: *Introduction, part 1***  
Matthew 4:1-11 *Whose world is it, anyway?*

**January 18**   **Sermon on the Mount: *Introduction, part 2***  
Matthew 4:12 – 5:2 *Living on contested ground*

**January 25**   **Sermon on the Mount: *Poor in Spirit***  
Matthew 5:3



# Church News

## Prayer concerns since the last Visitor:

- ...Katie Myer, sepsis and heart issues.
- ...Joyce Bolender, knee replacement
- ...Bill Hall, recovering from surgery

Keep the Woodard family in your prayers. Ed's mother's dementia has worsened and has entered hospice.

## The After-Church Fellowship Team needs help!

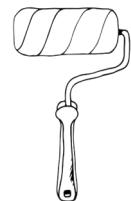
If you are interested, there's a sign-up sheet in the fellowship hall. We'll also have a short walk-through with Kathie and Janet on Sunday, January 18, at 12:30 p.m. This will be a great opportunity to become more familiar with the church kitchen and see how everything works.

For more information, contact Ellen Phillips or Rhonda Marcum.

## Church Work Day

On January 4, 2026 there will be a work day after church. We need to remove everything out of the Nursery, Pre-K room, Historical Room and Educational Closet. If possible, we will have paint and supplies to begin painting. Also, the week of January 5th there will be opportunities for anyone who would like to paint. This work will be preparing the rooms for the asbestos to be removed and new flooring to be installed.

If you have any questions, call Roger Simpson or Mike Elmore.



## MONTHLY OUTREACH December

- Three individuals assisted through our Good Samaritan Fund.
- Food for two families through our Food Pantry.
- Sleep in Heavenly Peace built 60 beds!
- Backpack is delivering 16 bags weekly!
- Project WARM splitting and delivering wood!

## Happy Birthday

- 1- Emily Nelson
- 3- Peter Lubbs
- 10- Wanda Lynch
- 11- Tyler Broyles
- 19- Jonna Detweiler
- 22- Coulton Janney
- 24- Johnny Thompson
- 25- Holly Belcher
- 26- Dennis Ferguson
- 27- Shelly Haas
- 28- Maggie Pizzullo
- 30- Andrew King

## Happy Anniversary

- 1- Nelson & Nancy Hylton
- 1- Dan & Kris Tilley-Lubbs
- 14- Ron & Jill Mooney



Handbell Choir rehearsal begins again January 7, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

Choir rehearsal also begins again January 7, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.



### January 2026 Happenings

- 01-Church Office Closed
- 06-Peace and Justice Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 07-Men's Bible Study returns at 6:00 p.m.
- 07-Handbell Rehearsals return at 10:00 a.m.
- 07-Choir Rehearsals return at 7:00 p.m.
- 08-Women's Faith Bible Study returns at 9:30 a.m.
- 11-Leadership Team Retreat at 12:30 p.m.
- 31-Chocolate Extravaganza & Talent Show (*below*)

### THE PRAYERS OF JESUS

#### Men's Bible Study Schedule

**January 7** *Jesus learns to pray*  
Luke 2:21-52, 4:14-30

**January 14** *Jesus' practice of prayer*  
Matthew 14:23;  
Mark 1:35-39;  
Luke 5:16, 6:12, 9:18-20

**January 21** *Dinner and devotions*

**January 28** No study

**Project WARM EVERY Saturday 8:00 a.m.**



### Chocolate Extravaganza & Talent Show

**January 31, 2026**

We'll serve soup/chili at 6:00 p.m., followed by the talent show at 6:30 p.m. Please bring your favorite chocolate dessert to share—pre-cut portions are appreciated.

This family-friendly event welcomes performers of all ages. In previous years, we've enjoyed musical performances, storytelling, cooking demonstrations, and more. Watch for a sign-up sheet in the fellowship hall.

Questions? Contact [Rhonda Marcum](#) or [Ellen Phillips](#).

# Camp Bethel News



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 the reunited Summer Staff and Youth Leaders from our District Churches.

Click [here](#) for more information or to register!



Camp Bethel is looking for a full time Food Services Coordinator as well as 2026 Summer Kitchen Staff!



If interested, please go to [www.campbethelvirginia.org](http://www.campbethelvirginia.org) and follow the links or click on the QR code to the right!

Join the Camp Bethel Team!



# Kentucky Partner: More Than Disaster Recovery

Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM) Rebuilding Program's local partner in Eastern Kentucky's Letcher County to support the recovery from July 2022 flooding is HOMES, Inc. (HOMES). Originally a project of Mennonite Central Committee, HOMES began in the 1980s and has always focused on more than just initial disaster recovery by working to repair homes in the area and to provide affordable rental properties.

HOMES approaches its disaster recovery work with an eye toward the future. It has made mitigation a priority to make sure that survivors, whether returning to their homes or moving to new homes on higher ground, are not impacted by flooding in the same way again. Before making repairs to a home, it is raised above the flood level. BDM has worked on some of these homes to build the decking that is required to enter the elevated house. HOMES is also part

of larger projects such as the Higher Ground Communities which allow families to move into a new house on reclaimed coal mining land far from the flood plain. This includes the homes in Thompson Branch and Chestnut Ridge, supported by the work of BDM volunteers.

HOMES has developed many initiatives in its efforts to look beyond construction work on houses to support the community and their ability to afford to live and work there. One such initiative is its solar program, developed as a "social enterprise" to address the growing cost of electricity. For some families, including those who own the new houses that BDM volunteers have helped to build, this allows them to stay in

their homes with a monthly electricity bill of around \$25. HOMES is able to use the profits from residents and businesses who can afford to pay the full amount for the solar installation to support the other work that they do for lower income families needing housing support.

Find out more about the work that HOMES is doing in the community, in addition to the work BDM is supporting, at their website [www.homesincorporated.org](http://www.homesincorporated.org).



Solar panels can be seen on the roofs of several Thompson Branch (Letcher County, Ky.) homes on which BDM volunteers worked.

Photo courtesy of BDM

## Virlina District Bus Trip to National Youth Conference

**July 14-25, 2026**

**Cost: \$1,200.00 per person**

Travel Package will include (but is not limited to):

- Motor Coach Transportation provided by Varsity Travel
- 6 nights lodging in hotels with continental or full breakfast
- Sightseeing—Badlands, Wall Drug, Bear Country USA, Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse, Fort Hays Chuckwagon show & dinner, St. Louis Arch
- Snacks and drinks provided at rest stops



A \$200.00 non-refundable deposit is due by March 1, 2026.

Our one bus will fill on a first come-first serve basis.

Final Payments for the bus trip will be on June 14, 2026.

Please contact Kim Martin with questions at (540) 589-8006.  
[virlinayouthministries@gmail.com](mailto:virlinayouthministries@gmail.com)

Additional Expenses—Varies with meal & souvenir choices

- 8 lunches and 5 dinners (not all will be fast food)
- Souvenirs, extra snacks, NYC wrap up video or t-shirt, offerings (optional), etc.
- National Youth Conference, "NYC," registration needs to be done separately and is not included. **See Below**

National Youth Conference –YMCA Estes Park, CO  
 July 18-23, 2026

Registration opens January 5, 2026  
<https://www.brethren.org/nyc/>

National Youth Conference (NYC) provides young people in high school and the first year of college (or are age equivalent) and their advisors with the chance to gather for a week of fellowship, worship, workshops, recreation and more!



Early registration fee (registering in January and February) is \$625 per person. Regular registration (during March and April) is \$650. Late registration (during May and June) is \$675. All registration fees will cover lodging, food, and programming while at NYC.



# Pastor's Column

One Thursday morning last June, I was working on my sermon at Fintel Library when I received a text message from Carol, who was just finishing up that week's Women's Faith Study on *The Chosen*:

The women's group requests a sermon series on the Sermon on the Mount. We think there's a year's worth of sermons.

This was certainly an interesting change of pace from my normal Thursday morning! And, as it turns out, one that I was more prepared for than anyone might have imagined.

You know, that's interesting. I had so much fun writing the Brethren Press Devotional booklet that I've been thinking of asking Wendy McFadden if they would publish a similar one on the Sermon on the Mount. It would take a sermon series or some such thing to make that possible...I went so far and created an outline of this project a few years ago...It has 37 entries.

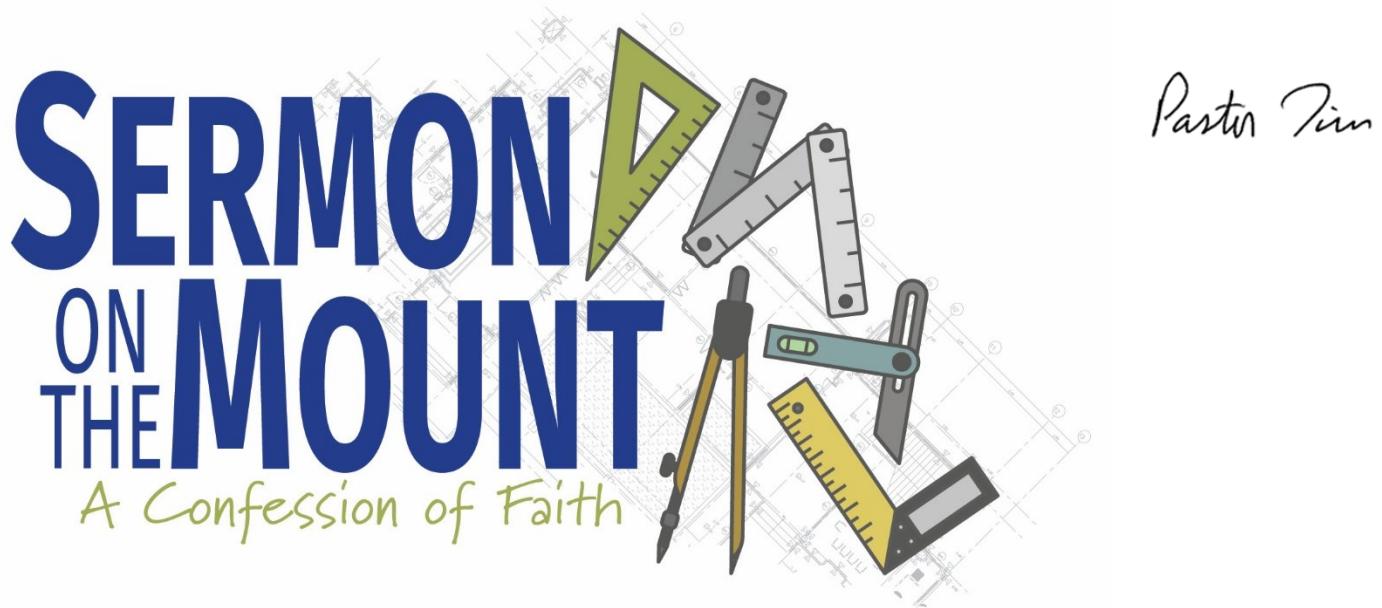
So, I got to work. This fall, our Pathfinders Sunday School class has been taking a slow walk through The Sermon on the Mount—and an even slower walk through the Lord's Prayer—loosely following some old Bible study discussion guides published by Brethren Press in the late 1980's. And I've spoken with Brethren Press; they recognize how long it's been since they've published something on the Sermon on the Mount and are open to a new project. We're working together to determine what might best suit the needs of the wider denomination. Stay tuned!

But more immediately for Oak Grove's needs, I'm glad to respond to the Women's Faith Study request for a sermon series on the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew chapters 5-7. We will begin on Sunday, January 11, 2026 with two weeks of introductory material from Matthew chapter 4. In my study, I'm realizing how important it is to understand both Jesus' wilderness temptation (Matthew 4:1-11) as well as Jesus' initial ministry and calling the first disciples (Matthew 4:12-25) as a precursor to how we should interpret his sermon in the following three chapters. After the introduction, we'll take the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-11) one at a time, a list which will leave us on the cusp of Holy Week.

*Continued next page*

My approach to the Sermon on the Mount will be to interpret it in keeping with Jesus' conclusion in Matthew 7:24: ***Everyone, then, who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.*** We will assume that Jesus gave us these words, ideas, images, and instructions intending that we would build our lives—both individually and collectively—around these words, putting them into effect in our daily living. As such, they will serve us as a *confession of faith*: a list of core beliefs we deem essential to following Jesus in our day and time.

Hopefully you'll see that conveyed in the logo that Debbie Noffsinger (a longtime friend and magnificent graphic designer) created for our inspiration as we proceed through these sermons. As we enter this new year, take some time to read the Sermon on the Mount. Maybe you'll even want to attempt memorizing portions of it so that you always have these important words of Jesus close by to guide your living!



### Leadership Team Retreat

From Connie Bierly, Chair:

My sincere thanks to all who have served in 2025 and have agreed to serve on our Leadership Team in the coming years. We are truly blessed with a congregation filled with talented, gifted, dedicated people. God is good!

Please mark your calendars for our **first meeting of 2026 scheduled for Sunday, January 11, 2026 immediately following worship service at 12:30 p.m.** The specific location and an agenda will be emailed to everyone after January 1.

This meeting is our annual time to organize for the coming year. It is very important for newly elected Leadership Team Members **AND** all elected members who served in 2025 be in attendance. We plan to review last year and continue plans for 2026. Please RSVP to me either by email ([cnbierly@gmail.com](mailto:cnbierly@gmail.com)) or by phone/text (540-314-5862) no later than Wednesday, January 7. Lunch will be provided.

# January

2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1 <i>Church Office Closed</i>	2	3 8 a.m.-Project WARM Winter Camp at Camp Bethel January 3-4
4 9:45 a.m.- Sunday School 11:00 a.m.- Worship	5 9 a.m.- Crafts 6 p.m.-Peace & Justice	6 10 a.m.- Handbells 6 p.m. Men's Bible Study 7 p.m.-Choir	7 9:30 a.m.-Women's Faith Study Group 2 p.m.-Games	8	9	10 8 a.m.-Project WARM
		<i>Bryana on vacation January 5-9.</i>				
9:45 a.m.- Sunday School 11:00 a.m.- Worship 12:30 p.m.- Leadership Team Retreat	11 9 a.m.-Crafts 12 12:30 p.m.- Backpack	12 13 14 10 a.m.- Handbells 6 p.m. Men's Bible Study 7 p.m.-Choir	15 9:30 a.m.- Women's Faith Study Group 2 p.m.-Games	16	17 8 a.m.-Project WARM	
9:45 a.m.- Sunday School 11:00 a.m.- Worship 12:30 p.m.- Kitchen Tour	18 9 a.m.- Crafts	19 20 21 10 a.m.- Handbells 5:30 p.m. Men's Dinner & Devotions 7 p.m.-Choir	22 2 p.m.-Games	23	24 8 a.m.-Project WARM	
9:45 a.m.- Sunday School 11:00 a.m.- Worship 12:30 p.m.- Grandparent Activity	25 9 a.m.-Crafts 26 12:30 p.m.- Backpack	27 28 10 a.m.- Handbells 7 p.m.-Choir	29 9:30 a.m.- Women's Faith Study Group 2 p.m.-Games	30	31 8 a.m.-Project WARM 6 p.m.- Chocolate Extravaganza & Talent Show	
		<i>Carol on vacation January 18-23.</i>				
		<i>Pastor Tim out of the office January 27-29.</i>				