



Bethel A.M.E. Church

# BETHEL BUZZ

Volume 2

January 2026

Issue 2

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Grace and peace to you,

Welcome to our 2nd edition of the church newsletter! It is my sincere prayer that as you read through these pages, you feel encouraged, informed, and spiritually refreshed. May this edition serve not only as a source of connection to church updates, but as a reminder that God has planted each of us here for purpose, growth, and kingdom impact.

Please be reminded that you are chosen with intention, prayed for with sincerity, loved without condition, and favored beyond measure. Whatever you're carrying, I pray God lifts it. Whatever you're praying for, I pray God answers it. Whatever you're believing God for, I pray your faith stands firm until manifestation comes.

Let us continue to pray for one another, serve with compassion, worship with sincerity, walk boldly in faith and indeed be ALL IN. No matter what season you may be in, know this, God sees you, God strengthens you, and this ministry stands with you. I speak divine favor, protection, and overflowing blessings over your home, your heart, and your future. May the peace of God rest upon you, and may His joy be your strength in the days ahead.

Stay encouraged, stay prayerful, and stay connected.

Blessings always,  
Lady Thornton



## Next Bethel Buzz is February

Articles are due by  
Sunday, January 18, 2026.

Send articles to:  
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[Bethelamemobile9@gmail.com](mailto:Bethelamemobile9@gmail.com)

The Rev. Brandon L Thornton, Senior Pastor  
The Rev. Charles A. Lewis, Presiding Elder, The Mobile District  
Bishop Julius McAllister, Presiding Prelate, 9<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District

# Message From Our Pastor

My Dearest Bethelites,

Greetings in the high and holy name of Jesus—the Anointed Christ of God! To that mighty name be all glory, power, honor, and authority, now and forevermore. Alleluia!

## **Happy New Year!!!**

We have stepped into a new year—2026—and with it comes fresh vision, renewed commitment, and a deeper resolve to be all that God has called Bethel to be. As we begin this year together, I am filled with gratitude for who we are and anticipation for where God is leading us.

Many of you have already received the pens that Lady Shandra and I gifted to our members. I want to encourage you to wear them with pride. Let them be more than an accessory; let them be a quiet witness. When you wear them, remember who you are and whose you are. We are Bethel A.M.E. Church, Mobile—a legacy church, a flagship of Alabama, and a people marked by faith, faithfulness, and forward vision.

I thank God for our newly elected officers for the 2025–2026 Conference Year, and I look forward to the confirmation of our Stewards and Stewardesses at the upcoming Quarterly Conference this month. Can you believe we are already approximately 90 days into this conference year? Time is moving, the work is unfolding, and the hand of God is evident among us. Truly, with God, all things are possible.

I am especially excited about our Pack the Pews Rally 2026! This will be a powerful time of worship, witness, and welcome. I am asking every Bethelite to invite your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. Let's turn invitation into impact. We will even have a friendly competition with those who bring the most people. This endeavor will also help us raise funds to support the ministry and mission of our church. Also consider the article in the newsletter in reference to First Fruit Giving. Let's have fun, build community, and expand the Kingdom together. We've got work to do and Replacing the ceiling is high on the priority list!

Beloved, the work ahead is indeed great—but let us never forget: God is greater. Greater than our challenges. Greater than our limitations. Greater than our fears. Let us move with faith in our hearts, unity in our spirit, and determination in our steps.

Thank you for being Bethel. Thank you for loving this church. And thank you for walking with me as we move together from maintenance to ministry and mission.

With love and expectation,  
Rev. Brandon L. Thornton  
aka "Pastor B"



# 2025-2026 Officers

## Steward Board Nomination

Sister Ann Brown  
Sister Barbara Johnson  
Sister Betty Ludgood  
Sister Brandy Black  
Brother Charles Wills, Sr.  
Sister Elaine Gubil  
Sister Emma Prince  
Sister Yulia Richardson  
Sister Faye Webb  
Sister Latonya Heard  
Brother LaQuinn Cannon  
Sister Marva Rodriguez  
Sister Mary Turner  
Sister Mary Walker  
Sister Morgan Peterson  
Brother Tony Goubil  
Sister Twanda Avery  
Sister Vernetta Green  
Brother Willie Spradley

## Trustees

Brother Vernell "Chuck" Smith  
Brother Ronnie Blackmon (Chair)  
Brother Prinic Lewis  
Brother Patrick Andrews  
Sister Michelle Wilson  
Sister Kimberly Scott  
Brother Joseph Rodriguez  
Sister Jacqueline Harris  
Sister Fannie McCampbell  
Sister Dorothy Crittenden  
Brother David Black  
Sister Connie Purifoy (Treasurer)  
Sister April Bush Ellis

## Class Leaders

Barbara Crawford  
Connie Purifoy  
Elaine Marilyn Goubil  
Greg McGlasker  
Irene Cannon  
Jennifer McCord  
Joanne Mcalpine Robbins  
Mary R. Walker  
Rosalind Crum

## Ministry Leadership

Steward Vice-Chair: Pending Confirmation  
Trustee Vice-Chair: Pending Confirmation  
Church School Superintendent: Bro. Greg McGlasker  
Christian Education Director: Sis. Elaine Goubil  
Music & Christian Arts Ministry Director: Bro. Leviticus Thomas  
WMS President: Sis. Marva Rodrigues  
YPD Director: Sis. Morgan Peterson  
Sons of Allen Coordinator: Bro. LuQuen Cannon  
Lay Organization President: Sis. Mary Walker  
Senior Usher Board: Sis. Gloria Cox  
Stewardess Board President: Sis. Dorothy Crittenden  
Class Leaders Coordinators: Sis. Barbara Crawford  
RAYAC President: Pending Confirmation

# VISION 2025–2026

## **WE'RE "ALL IN" Moving From Maintenance to Ministry & Mission.**

God is calling this church to move intentionally from simply maintaining what we have, to actively living out ministry and mission.

### **WHAT "ALL-IN" MEANS**

To be **ALL IN** means every member is:

**INVITED:** Called into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and connected to the life of the church through worship, discipleship, and fellowship. **Membership** (Connection & Belonging) Moving from membership to discipleship.

**INVOLVED** Actively serving through ministry, using God-given gifts to build up the church and bless the community. **Discipleship** (Formation & Service)

**INVESTED** Faithfully supporting the work of the church through stewardship, generosity, and financial commitment. **Maturity** (Stewardship & Leadership)

"We invite you in as members—but we disciple you to become mature believers who serve and lead."

### **OUR VISION**

To be a Christ-centered, Spirit-led church that is **spiritually mature, ministry-focused, and mission-minded**, making an impact in the Down the Bay community and beyond.

### **OUR FOCUS AREAS**

We pursue this vision through four areas of intentional focus:

1. **Membership** – Strengthening commitment, presence, and accountability
2. **Maturity** – Growing disciples in faith and spiritual authority
3. **Ministry & Missions** – Serving the church, the city, and the world
4. **Management** – Practicing excellence, transparency, and faithful stewardship

### **OUR MINISTERIAL PILLARS**

All ministry at Bethel flows through three guiding pillars:

1. **Congregational Care & Discipleship**
2. **Worship & Evangelism**
3. **Family, Community & Leadership Development**

### **A CALL TO RE-COMMIT**

This is a season to renew our **yes**—not only in word, but in action.

To God. To God's Church. To living in **good and regular standing** through worship, service, and faithful giving.

Together, as Bethel A.M.E. Church, **We're ALL IN.**

# Health & Wellness

## Flu Variant

The flu is a contagious respiratory infection caused by a virus.

All flu vaccines for the 2025-2026 season will be trivalent, which means they include three vaccine viruses. This means they are formulated to protect against three main types of viruses.

This flu variant is the cause of extreme cases which can lead to hospitalization.

The 2025-2026 flu vaccine isn't a perfect match for this variant but it does offer protection against severe cases.

### Signs and Symptoms

- Chills
- Cough
- Fatigue or weakness
- Fever over 100 degrees
- Headaches
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Some may have vomiting and diarrhea mostly seen in children

### Risks

- People who are Native American or Alaska Native, Black, or Latino.
- Being 2 years or younger
- Adults over 65 years of age
- Some chronic diseases such as asthma and other lung diseases, diabetes, heart disease and history of a stroke

### Precautions that help prevent or lower chances of getting the flu are:

- Receiving the flu vaccine
- Washing hands/ use hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your face
- Cover your cough or sneezing with tissue or elbow
- Avoid crowds
- Clean surfaces Information

#### FLU PREVENTION TIPS



Article Sources:  
Mayo Clinic & CDC  
<https://www.nrvcs.org/flu-prevention-graphic/>

# December Memories

## Fun Friday



Christmas Cantata

Bethel A.M.E. Church

# December Memories



**Bethel AME Church YPD at the Movies**

# Church, Community & Life

## Ministry Highlights

All ministries within the church are looking for and accepting new members.  
**Join a Ministry TODAY!**  
Get in where you fit in!

We are looking for members to be a part of the Newsletter Committee. If you are interested please see First Lady Shandra. Thank you!

Ministries will be highlighted here each month. Let us know what you are doing!

## Spiritual Growth & Teaching



# Monthly Events

## January Events

January 4	Covenant Renewal Sunday	Bethel AME Church
January 11	Baptism of the Lord Sunday	Bethel AME Church
January 11	Beth-tones Choir Anniversary (10:30 am)	Bethel AME Church
January 12-14	AME 38 <sup>th</sup> Church Growth Seminar	Philadelphia Pennsylvania
January 15	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday	
January 18	MLK Justice & Service Sunday	Bethel AME Church
January 19	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday, Observed	
January 20	1st Quarterly Conference	Bethel AME Church
January 25	Pack the Pew Rally	Bethel AME Church
January 28-31	WMS Executive Board Meeting and L.T.I.	Baltimore, Maryland

## Regular Ministry Meeting Schedules

### Worship & Christian Education

Sunday Church School (All Ages): Every Sunday - 9:00 A.M.

Worship Service: Every Sunday - 10:30 A.M.

Children's Church (Ages 3-12): 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Sundays - 10:30 A.M. (Upstairs)

Bible Study: **In person** - Wednesdays at 12 noon (Beginning 01/14)

**Virtual** - Wednesdays at 6:30 P.M.

Morning Prayer: Mondays- Wednesdays- Fridays at 7:14 A.M. (Virtual)

### Boards & Committees

Trustee Board Meeting: Tuesday after 2nd Sunday - 3:00 P.M.

Sunday School Board Meeting: Tuesday after 2nd Sunday - 5:00 P.M.

Steward Board Meeting: Tuesday after 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday - 6:00 P.M.

Preacher's Meeting: Friday after 2nd & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday - 12:00 P.M.

Class Leaders Meeting: Tuesday after 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday - 5:15 P.M.

Official Board Meeting: Thursday after 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday - 6:00 P.M.

Stewardess Board Meeting: Saturday before 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday - 2:00 P.M.

Quarterly Conference: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday in January, April, & July - 6:00 P.M.

### Ministries & Auxiliaries

Lay Organization Meeting: 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, After worship

Senior Usher Board Meeting: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, After Worship

Henrietta Cheatham Women's Missionary Society Meeting: 3rd Sunday, After worship

YPD (Young People's Division) Meeting: 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, After Worship

Bethel Boosters Meeting: 2nd Sunday, After worship

Alert Board Meeting: ??????????

Alice P. Lewis Usher Board Meeting: ?????

# First Fruit Giving

## First Fruits, Tithes, and Offerings: Beginning the Year God's Way

As we enter a new year, Scripture reminds us that **how we begin matters to God**. In the biblical witness, beginnings are sacred because they reveal priority, trust, and lordship. *"For if the firstfruit is holy, the whole is also holy."* — **Romans 11:16**

Our theme for this season calls us to align not only our words and plans, but also our **worship and stewardship** with God's purposes.

### Three Distinct Biblical Acts of Giving

Scripture presents **three distinct but connected expressions of giving: First Fruits, the Tithe, and the Offering**. Each serves a different theological purpose.

#### 1. First Fruits: Honoring God at the Beginning —

*Biblical foundation:* ~Exodus 23:19 ~Deuteronomy 26:1–11 ~Proverbs 3:9–10 ~Romans 11:16

##### What it is:

First Fruits is the **first and best portion** given to God **before the full harvest is realized**. It is an act of **faith and consecration**, declaring that God is first and trusted with what is to come. Israel brought First Fruits at the start of the season, not knowing the outcome, saying in effect: "God, You are our source, not our surplus." "Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your increase." — **Proverbs 3:9**

##### What it does:

First Fruits consecrates the whole. When the first portion is set apart for God, everything connected to it is placed under His authority and blessing.

#### 2. The Tithe: Returning What Belongs to God —

*Biblical foundation:* ~Leviticus 27:30 ~Malachi 3:8–10 ~Matthew 23:23 ~Hebrews 7:8

##### What it is:

The tithe is **one-tenth of income**, returned to God **after increase is received**. Scripture does not present the tithe as generosity, but as **faithful obedience**. "The tithe... belongs to the Lord." — **Leviticus 27:30**

*In the New Testament, Jesus is our High Priest **after the order of Melchizedek**, and Scripture teaches that our tithes testify that **He lives and reigns** (Hebrews 7:8).*

##### What it does:

The tithe establishes order, sustains the work of the church, and releases God's promise of provision and protection (Malachi 3:10).

#### 3. The Offering: Giving from a Willing Heart — *Biblical foundation:* ~2 Corinthians 9:6–7 ~Luke 6:38 ~Matthew 5:23–24

##### What it is:

An offering is **anything given beyond the tithe**, prompted by gratitude, generosity, or specific purpose. It is voluntary, Spirit-led, and deeply connected to the **condition of the heart**. "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion." — **2 Corinthians 9:7** Jesus teaches that offerings carry the **spiritual posture of the giver** (Matthew 5:23–24). *What is in the heart is attached to what is placed on the altar.*

##### What it does:

Offerings express worship, love, and partnership with God's work beyond obligation.

##### How These Three Work Together:

**1. First Fruits** honors God **at the beginning** **2. The Tithe** honors God **consistently** **3. Offerings** honor God **generously**

Together, they form a holistic, biblical pattern of stewardship that moves us beyond survival into **faithful mission**.

First Fruits must be **intentional**. It is not what is left over, nor what is convenient. When you receive your first income of the year—paycheck, pension, business income, or other increase—you prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit, "Lord, what would You have me give as First Fruits?" That offering is given **first, once, and above the tithe**, as a declaration that God is first this year. *This requires faith. Scripture never presents First Fruits as casual—it is a trust statement.* "Seek first the kingdom of God..." — **Matthew 6:33**

### ALL IN: From Maintenance to Ministry & Mission

Maintenance asks, "Will this be enough?" Faith declares, "God is enough." First Fruits shifts our posture from holding tightly to what we have, to trusting God with what is ahead. When God is honored first, the church is positioned not merely to maintain, but to **minister and to move in mission**.

### The First Fruits Challenge: Pack the Pews Rally 2026

As we prepare for **Pack the Pews Rally 2026**, I invite you to participate in a **First Fruits offering** as a way of consecrating this year and this vision to God. This is not about equal amounts—it is about **equal obedience**.

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." — **Joshua 24:15**

Let's honor God first, trust Him fully, and believe that when the first is holy, **the whole will follow**.

# JANUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				Ouida Mitchell Birthday		Angela Dock Birthday
4 Children's Church Covenant Renewal Sunday	5 Morning Prayer 7:14 AM Jacqueline Harris Birthday	6 Lillie Johnson Birthday	7 Morning Prayer 7:14 AM Communion for Sick & Shut-in Virtual Bible Study 6:30 PM	8 Adrienne Crockett Birthday	9 Morning Prayer 7:14 AM	10
11 Baptism of the Lord Sunday Beth-tones Choir Anniversary Children's Church Bethel Boosters Meeting	12 Morning Prayer 7:14 AM AME 38 <sup>th</sup> Church Growth Seminar - Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	13 Trustee Board Meeting 3:00 PM Sunday School Board Meeting 5:00 PM Steward Board Meeting 6:00 PM Class Leaders Meeting 6:00 PM	14 Morning Prayer 7:14 AM In Person Bible Study 12:00 PM Virtual Bible Study 6:30 PM	15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday	23 Morning Prayer 7:14 AM Preacher's Meeting 12:00 PM	24
18 MLK Justice & Service Sunday Children's Church Senior Usher Board Meeting Henrietta Cheatham WMS Meeting	19 Morning Prayer 7:14 AM Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	20 Quarterly Conference 6:00 PM	21 Morning Prayer 7:14 AM In Person Bible Study 12:00 PM Virtual Bible Study 6:30 PM	22 Official Board Meeting 6:00 PM	23 Morning Prayer 7:14 AM	24 National Compliment Day
25 Pack the Pew Rally Sunday Lay Organization Meeting YPD Meeting Grayson Sanders Birthday	26 Morning Prayer 7:14 AM National Spouses Day	27 Chloe Hays Birthday	28 Morning Prayer 7:14 AM In Person Bible Study 12:00 PM Virtual Bible Study 6:30 PM	29 WMS Executive Board Meeting and L	30 Morning Prayer 7:14 AM Preacher's Meeting 12:00 PM	31 T.I. - Baltimore Marriott Waterfront - Baltimore, Maryland Stewardess Board Meeting 2:00 PM

■ Services ■ Board & Ministries Meetings ■ Bethel Birthdays & Anniversaries ■ District Events ■ Holidays ■ Birthdays and Anniversaries that are listed in Church Center

## Contact Information

### Church Office Hours

Tuesday – Friday 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

### Key Contacts

Facility Needs – Sis Dorothy Crittenden | 251-391-2810  
Announcements – Sis. Emma Prince | 251-554-6259  
Administration Office | 251-206-0013  
Pastor – Rev. Brandon L. Thornton | 334-614-9217

### Weekly Activities

Sunday Church School – 9:00 AM  
Bible Study – Zoom Call – 6:30 PM (Zoom ID: 282 060 9533)  
Communion for Sick & Shut –In Wednesday after 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday  
Unity Prayer Conference Call – Monday, Wednesday, Friday 7:14 AM (Dial 720 843-2557 | Code 546471#)

### Scan to join Church Center



### Birthdays

- 1** *Ouida Mitchell*
- 3** *Angela Dock*
- 5** *Jacqueline Harris*
- 6** *Lillie Johnson*
- 8** *Adrienne Crockett*
- 25** *Grayson Sanders*
- 27** *Chloe Hays*

### Anniversaries

*Birthdays and Anniversaries that are listed in Church Center*

### People Being Healed

Sis. Ann Coleman	Sis. Carolyn Oliver
Bro. David Blackwell	Bro. Walt Dickerson
Sis. Latasha Hall	Sis. Viola Wills
Bro. Claude Hollings, III	Sis. Anita Lewis
Sis. Lillie Johnson	Bro. David McCall
Sis. Deborah Mack	Sis. Geneva Williams
Bro. Ulysses McNeal	Sis. Elaine McCants
Sis. Nicole Rocker	

Rev. Brandon L. Thornton and First Lady Shandra Thornton	
Sis. Mary Bennett	Sis. Aquilla Rush
Sis. Ardelia Andrews	Bro. John Rush
Sis. Emmer Bryant	Sis. Tataneshia Rush
Sis. Vernetta Giles	Sis. Katherine Parker-Williams
Sis. Julia James	Bro. Charles Wills, Jr
Bro. Tamyrick Nunn	Sis. Donna Wills
Sis. Diane Smith	Bro. Ronald Witherspoon
Sis. Jackie Erskine-Porter	Sis. Vanessa Young-Dickerson
Rev. Irmatine Chastang	Sis. Faydene Morris
Bro. Eddie Smith	Sis. Annie G. Cockrell
Sis. Rosa Gordon	Bro. Ronnie Blackmon
Sis. Amelia Cade Bacon	Sis. Omega Taylor
Bro. Chris & Sis. Lenor Drexler	Rev. Donna James' Mother

### College Students

Kennedy Black	Kierra Giles
Alivia Cannon	Jalen Prince-Woodland
Chelsea Cooper	Samiah Morris
Khelsea Cooper	Wynstonee Salter
Kellen Fairley	Winston Salter
Jazzlyn Gaillard	Sarah Fair
Marlon Fairley	Hayley Cleaton
Ethan Oliver	

