

BUMC's Quarterly

October—December Newsletter 2026

A publication of Bluffton United Methodist Church, Bluffton, SC
Volume 22, Issue 4



What Do You GET to Do?

The wonders of fall and winter activities are underway!

Over the past week or so, I have enjoyed watching our church calendar fill with activities for the next few months. I've listened as folks have negotiated for time and space, and, for the most part, all has been happy and smooth.

So many wonderful things are about to take place!



WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY — October 4

We will remember and pray for Christians all around the world as we gather at Christ's table.



ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY — November 1

We will remember and give thanks for those whose faith continues to bless us.



CHARGE CONFERENCE — November 1



VETERANS RECOGNITION — November 8

This year we are going to do this a little differently. Stay tuned for more information!



THANKSGIVING — November 24

We will gather with several local churches for a special Thanksgiving worship service at St. Luke's UMC.

And that's not all! We will also enjoy the **Blessing of the Pets**, new classes, pecan sales, a new book group, and much more.

And then, just like that, it's Advent!



THE BLUFFTON CHRISTMAS PARADE — December 5

The town and local organizations will have many events, parties, and celebrations throughout the season.



JOY TRIP TO CHARLESTON — December 10

We'll travel to Charleston to see *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. See Sally for details.



CAROLS, CROISSANTS & CRECHES — December 13

New this year, we are adding creches to the joy of the season!

We'll gather to sing the carols and hymns of Christmas, enjoy yummy warm croissants, and, for that weekend only, spend time contemplating a beautiful display of creches.

See Josh Wall about the carols and Sharral Ruth about the creches. More information is coming soon!



REVERSE ADVENT

Our Reverse Advent tradition will begin as we gather food items to be distributed throughout our community.



LIVE NATIVITY — December 15

This year, an alpaca will be joining the festivities!

There may not have been an alpaca in Bethlehem, but there will be one in Bluffton. It makes me think of the words of the hymn:

*"All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all."*



CHRISTMAS CANTATA — December 20

We will enjoy our cantata, which will also be the date of our next combined worship service.



QUIET CHRISTMAS — December 20

As the shadows deepen that afternoon, we will gather quietly for worship in Quiet Christmas, a service designed to acknowledge that there is hurt and grief even in the midst of the shiny joy of the season.



CHRISTMAS EVE — December 24

We will worship together on the front steps of the church at **noon**, and inside the church at **7:00 p.m.** and **10:00 p.m.**





But don't forget the WHY!

It will be glorious. It will be busy. It will be full of music, food, fellowship, worship, laughter, giving, and celebration.

But let's not misplace the reason for all these things.

In other words, don't forget the WHY!

His name is Jesus, and He is WHY we do all these things.

We are told to worship and praise God, and we are given the beautiful example of the angels singing praise at Jesus' birth.

We are told to gather in His name, and we see the example of the early Christians gathering for worship and meals and caring for one another.

We are told to be witnesses to Jesus, and our special services and events give us opportunities to tell the world about Him.

As I look over this list, I feel the excitement building for the next few months. It is going to be grand!

But I am also reminded of a phrase that has floated through my mind for most of my adult life:

We GET to do these things.

It all started when my children were small and there were so many things to do. By the time they were born, I had thought I would never be a wife or a mother, and I am still amazed by the blessings of my family.

I remember those early days of packing diaper bags. I would look at the tiny clothes, the wipes, and all the things you carry around with small children, and I would think:

"I get to do this. I am so blessed."

I have tried to carry that same attitude into the rest of my life—to look at my calendar and my lists and remind myself:

I get to do these things.

And what a privilege it is to worship God freely and with great joy. What a privilege it is to gather with one another, to serve our community, to sing, to celebrate, to remember, to give, to welcome, and to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

So, to take a word from Paul:

"Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord."
—Philippians 3:1

As the days grow shorter and the calendar grows fuller, may we remember not simply how much we have to do, but how much we GET to do.

And through it all, may we keep our eyes—and our hearts—on Jesus.

Faithfully,
Pastor Scarlett

Mark Your Calendars!

- ⇒ Missions Sunday—all ministries are invited to display what their mission is about—Sunday, October 11th. Come share what BUMC has to offer!
 - ⇒ Bluffton Art & Seafood Festival—October 17-18, 2026.
 - ⇒ Church of the Palms 25th Anniversary—October 25, 2026
 - ⇒ Harvest Festival—see more details on page 13.
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Advent & Christmas Dates to Remember!!



- November 23rd at 1:30 PM (Music Suite) - Surviving the Holidays.
- Tuesday, November 24th, 6:00 PM - Thanksgiving Service at St. Luke's UMC.
- Thanksgiving Holiday—November 26-27, 2026—**church office closed**.
- Saturday, December 5th, 10:00 AM - Bluffton's Christmas Parade.
- Thursday, December 10th – JOY Trip to Charleston. We'll travel to Charleston to see *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. See Sally for Details.
- Saturday, December 12 through Sunday, December 13 - Carols, Creches & Croissants in both the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall. Experience the joy of Christmas with a morning treat and some good old-fashioned carol singing on Saturday, along with a display of creches from Saturday-Sunday. There will be no 2nd Sunday Fellowship this day.
- Sunday, December 13th at 5:00 PM - Full rehearsal for live nativity.
- Tuesday, December 15th, 6:00-8:00 PM - Live Nativity. Enjoy the Christmas story and live animals. Weather permitting (no rain date).
- Sunday, December 20th – one service at 10:00 AM - Cantata Sunday, potluck after service!
- Sunday, December 20th, 5:00 PM (Music Suite) - Quiet Christmas. Spend some peaceful time with God and let God's Word and Music speak to your heart.
- Wednesday, December 24th, Noon, 7:00 PM & 10:00 PM - Christmas Eve Services.

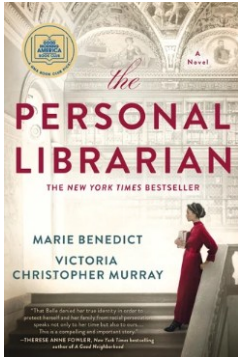


Bluffton Methodist Women Reading Program

NEWS FROM YOUR LIBRARY

Incredibly, 2026 is drawing to a close. Please send me your list if you've read 6 or more books from our library this year by early November. You will then receive a little "happy" at our BMW Christmas get-together on Saturday, December 19th.

I will be placing new books for 2027 in early November. There are many wonderful books on our shelves.



Perhaps you would enjoy *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray:

In her twenties, Bella da Costa Greene is hired by J. P. Morgan to curate a collection of rare manuscripts, books, and artwork for his new Pierpont Morgan Library. She is an extraordinary woman, famous for her intellect, style, and wit, and shares the lengths she has to go to to preserve her carefully crafted white identity in the world in which she lives.

Happy Reading!!!!

Sally Mattingly--blagoonhh@aol.com

Nurture & Discipleship

Galatians 6:9 (NIV) ***“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if***



Don't you just love the fall and all the food that has been grown and harvested at this time of year? The apples, pumpkins, squash and yes pecans! And we should think of the farmers and the many hours of very hard work and how weary they can become hoping and praying the weather has co-operated with sunshine and rain just at the right time to make their harvest plentiful.

But our scripture talks of a different kind of weary and a different kind of harvest. We as a church family have many events and missions throughout the year. Some can be a lot of work both physically and mentally and can make us very weary. But our God is a good God, and he is with us through all the hard work. He gives us the strength to do the work and the fortitude to keep going. He gives us the words to speak with others about our faith. And he gives us the best reference book to learn of his teachings, the example of how to live our lives, and follow the path of Jesus. That of course is The Bible. We can find a scripture to help us through anything that happens in our lives. And for this we need to thank the Lord and sing his praises. Our choir helps us do this. They work very hard each week to sing for us and with us. And their harvest each week is beautiful music. We all reap many harvests if we do not give up.

Blessings to all,

Debbie Kaulig, Chair of Nurture & Discipleship

MISSIONS

As we look back over the past year, the Missions Committee is filled with overwhelming gratitude for the ways God has worked through our congregation. We are truly **blessed to serve** our community and the world through the diverse ministries we support. Because of your prayers, hands-on service, and financial generosity, we have been able to share Christ's love with so many who need it most.

This year, we have approached our calling with a fresh perspective. We started several new initiatives, stepping out in faith to meet emerging needs. In doing so, we have embraced a powerful new guiding vision: looking at how **each team is a team of one**.

While our committee is made up of different ministries, projects, and individuals, we are not acting in isolation. Every small group, every volunteer, and every project functions as a single, unified body moving toward one goal—shining the light of Jesus. This unity has allowed us to deepen our impact and streamline our efforts, proving that when we work as one, God multiplies our reach.

We are incredibly thankful for the dedication of everyone who played a part in our missions this past year. We look forward to seeing how this unified momentum will continue to transform lives in the year ahead.

In Christ's Service,
The BUMC Missions Committee



Sharing Our Gifts

Have you heard about the latest trend - Grandmacore? It's all about creating hand-made items with yarn, fabric and other materials with a vintage vibe. Sort of - WWGD - What Would Grandma Do.

Did you know that our church has a group of people dedicated to the hand arts like Grandmacore? On Thursdays, Sew Be It gathers in the Fellowship Hall to work on projects that we donate to the community or that we sell to make money for missions. Not everyone comes every week, but we gather to sew by machine, to sew by hand, to cut and organize the materials, to iron, and to share in a fellowship of believers. Our projects are often multi-week endeavors with many hands involved in the process. So far this fall, we have focused on fabric-based items, but we hope to expand to plastic canvas and other crafts. It truly is amazing how we accomplish so much while having so much fun.

In the coming weeks, we will offer some "kits" that can be taken home. If the project is one you'd like to keep, we'd appreciate a donation. If you return it, we will sell it and this fall, the proceeds will support the Live Nativity.

We hope that the work of our hands will bring comfort, spread joy, and support members of our church and community. And we'd love to have you drop by and add your hands to our work. Hope to see you Thursday!

Diane Ciba

Evangelism



**Do you remember what it was like to visit Bluffton UMC the first time?
Do you remember what it was like before you knew anyone?**

The Evangelism Committee has been considering how to encourage and acclimate visitors and new members to our congregation. We should be intentional about greeting visitors and prospective new members when they come to our worship services.

It is not a complicated task. We are asking that you greet people who you see in church if you think they might be new or visiting.

The goal is to make sure that you make them feel welcome by extending friendship and hospitality and directing them to resources if they have questions. We have some volunteers who have already begun, but are seeking more members who would like to be involved in this effort. If you would be willing to do this or would like to discuss further, please contact me at oblandda@gmail.com or [8433687136](tel:8433687136).

Thank you for considering this opportunity to be part of efforts to become a more welcoming church.

Doug Oblander



Bluffton Methodist Women

Future events include:

- ♦ October 11—Second Sunday Fellowship after each service.
- ♦ October 15 & 17—Rummage sale in Fellowship Hall from 8-12. Items for sale may be brought to the church on Sunday October 11 after the 11 AM service and Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 10:00 to 1:00. Someone will be there to assist. No items will be accepted the days of the sale. **Reminder no furniture, clothing or large electronic items will be accepted (new or slightly used items only.)**
- ♦ November 8—Second Sunday Fellowship after both services.
- ♦ December 19—Women Christmas Fellowship meeting 10:00 AM in Fellowship Hall. Come for food, singing carols, and participate in some fun activities.
- ♦ December 20—Come together one worship service at 10:00—provide food and assist with serving.

NOTE: There will be no 2nd Sunday Fellowship on December 13th and the BMW will not be selling baked goods during the Christmas parade.

The BMW Circles Meeting Times and Dates

Ruth Anna—4th Monday at 10 AM in Conference Room 2. Leader: Harriet Edwards

Hanna Ulmer—4th Monday at 6:30 PM in Conference Room 1. Leader: Sarah Snow

Esther—4th Tuesday at 9:45 AM in Fellowship Hall. Leader: Debbie Kaulig



Church (gold) Order Form 2026

Bluffton United Methodist Men - BUMMs

Support your local charities by buying our pecans.

100% of profits go to local charities.

Bluffton Self Help, Meals-on-Wheels, Boys & Girls Club, Backpack Buddies, Family Promise, Habitat for Humanity, B/J Volunteers in Medicine, Second Helpings, Salvation Army, OPFOB, PEP, Bluffton Community Kitchen



Your Salesperson: Ron Davies:
rondavies218@gmail.com

Your **final date** to order for Thanksgiving is **Sunday, November 1, 2026.**

Make checks payable to: BUMM's or Bluffton UM Men. Please pre-pay to make the process easier at delivery.

Fancy Jumbo Halves	1 lb. Bag	# _____	@ 16.00 =

Fancy Large Pieces	1 lb. Bag	# _____	@ 15.00 =

Butter Roasted Bucket	2 lb. Bucket	# _____	@ 31.00 =

Honey Roasted Halves	14 oz. Bag	# _____	@ 18.00 =

Milk Chocolate Covered Halves	14 oz. Bag	# _____	@ 20.00 =

Dark Chocolate Covered Halves	14 oz. Bag	# _____	@ 21.00 =

Sugar Free Chocolate Covered Halves	1 lb. Bag	# _____	@ 21.00 =

Praline Pecan Halves	14 oz. Bag	# _____	@ 18.00 =

Pecan Pie (delivered separately)		# _____	@ 28.00
= _____			
Donation			
= _____			



HISTORY CORNER

Communion Traditions

Pastor Scarlett reminds us at Communion that we gather at the Table to share the bread and cup in remembrance of the Last Supper. Did you grow up in a church where you received Communion every time you went to church? Or did your church serve Communion monthly or quarterly? Have you ever wondered why the Bluffton United Methodist Church has a tradition of serving Communion once a month?

The tradition of non-weekly Communion may be rooted in the circuit riding preachers of the early days of Methodist history in South Carolina. A Mission system was set up with a travelling minister who served several congregations. In those days of the horse and buggy, it might be several weeks before the assigned Preacher came to town, and church members waited for their Pastor to officiate at Communion. Here is what we know about how that tradition played out in Bluffton. [Note: Most of the following information came from the Journals of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, available online at the Wofford College archives. The various spellings of Oakitee come directly from that source. Each reference from that source is indicated by an *.]

Oakitee Mission

The first known Methodist Mission in this area was called Oakitee and was served by Pastor Joseph Warnock in 1849.* It was one of 4 missions in Beaufort County, and was named for a large tributary of the Broad River.* At that time, this preacher served 22 cotton plantations in St. Luke's Parish between Grahamville and Bluffton.* At a distance of about 40 miles, it would not have been possible for the preacher to be everywhere at once.

In 1853, the first Methodist Church, now the Campbell Chapel A.M.E., was built on Boundary Street. Rev. George Allen, a former postmaster and local preacher, convinced his father-in-law, Dr. Jacob Guerard, to provide the land for this building.

The Oakatie Mission had grown to 6 preaching places by that time*, and the circuit-riding Rev. A.J. Green could only provide Communion sporadically. Rev. Allen may have served Communion more frequently, but as a local preacher, he might not have performed the Sacraments.

Bluffton Mission

From 1857 - 1861, the name of the Mission was changed to Bluffton and grew to have 2 churches.* By 1862, the Bluffton Mission had been broken up by the Abolitionists.*

Hardeeville Mission

After the War, services resumed in Bluffton as part of the Hardeeville Circuit and Mission. By 1890, the church on Boundary Street had been sold to the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.) and the congregation was preparing to build a church on the current church property. Rev William R. Buchanan was the circuit rider and was serving 8 churches: St. John's, Gillisonville, Ridgeland, Tillman, Hardeeville, St. Luke's, Bluffton, and Shiloh.* Once again, he could not be present every Sunday, so would have offered Communion only occasionally.

Those early roots formed many of the traditions that continue to inform our worship and our Conference. Whether served weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually, Communion remains an important part of Worship whenever it is served. Come share the tradition.

Diane Ciba



Music Ministry

Then Sings My Soul – Looking Back and Leaning Forward

Over the past year, I've had the privilege of sharing a few thoughts on these pages. When I look back at those articles, I realize that music has found a way into many of them. Sometimes intentionally. Sometimes because a hymn seemed to say what I couldn't quite put in writing. And sometimes because, for many of us, the songs of the Church become part of the soundtrack of our faith. Perhaps that is why, as I think about a full year of writing these reflections, one hymn keeps coming to mind: "How Great Thou Art."

There is a moment in that hymn when reflection becomes a response: "Then sings my soul..."

I love that image! The soul does not simply think. It sings. Something has been remembered, witnessed, experienced, or rediscovered that makes silence no longer sufficient. Maybe that is what this past year of reflections has really been about – learning to notice the things that make our souls sing.

In January, we reflected on "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." That hymn reminds us that God's faithfulness is not dependent upon the season we're experiencing. There are seasons when recognizing God's goodness comes easily, and there are others when faithfulness looks more like simply putting one foot in front of the other. Yet through both, God remains.

Looking back, I am increasingly grateful for that truth. Life changes. Family changes. Church changes. We've experienced celebrations we wished would last forever and losses we've wished had never come. We've said hello to new chapters and goodbye to chapters we were not ready to close. Yet – morning by morning – God's mercies continue to meet us.

Then sings my soul...

We also reflected about the "ordinary" choir robe. On the surface, robes are simply pieces of fabric hanging in their slot in the back hallway. But the robes represent something much larger. When we put on the choir robe, much of what distinguishes one person from another disappears. We become part of something together. Different voices, different backgrounds, different experiences – but one choir.

That is a beautiful picture of the Church.

We do not all sing the same part. In fact, we shouldn't all sing the same thing. A choir made entirely of sopranos – or even tenors (perish the thought) – would be missing something. Harmony requires difference. The beauty comes when those different voices listen to one another and discover how they belong together.

Then sings my soul...

That same idea appeared again when we celebrated "Together Sunday" and on the words of my previous article on the words of "The Church's One Foundation." The Church has never been called to uniformity. We are called to unity. We will not always agree. We will have different preferences, different experiences of worship, different ideas, and different gifts. But beneath all of those differences is something much stronger than any of them: Jesus Christ.

Josh Wall, Director of Music Ministries



Music Ministry

Welcome Nathan Shelton!!

I'm Nathan Shelton, and I'm excited to serve Bluffton UMC as organist and pianist! I grew up in De Kalb, Mississippi, as the oldest of seven children in a musical family and a long line of United Methodists. I began studying piano as a child with a family friend who had been taught by my great-great-grandmother. At eleven, I began playing for worship at De Kalb United Methodist Church, where my grandmother served as song leader and her grandmother had served as pianist and organist. Those early experiences began my lifelong love of making music for the church.

Because of music, my church work has been very ecumenical. I've had the opportunity to serve several different denominations as a pianist, organist, choir member, worship leader, and minister of music. I relocated to Savannah in September 2026 and began serving Bluffton UMC in October.

I hold degrees from East Mississippi Community College and Mississippi State University, including a degree in Music with a concentration in piano. I am a member of the Fellowship of Worship Artists and the American Guild of Organists.

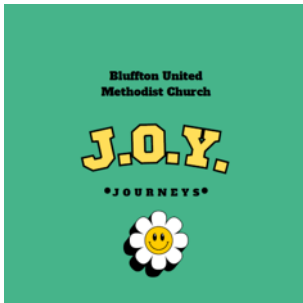


Josh Wall
Director of Music Ministry
MusicMinistry@BlufftonUMC.org

Nathan Shelton
Organist
organist@blufftonumc.org

Nancy Osgood
Director of Wesley Ringers
[njcosgood@gmail.com](mailto:njosgood@gmail.com)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



A Charlie Brown Christmas – in Charleston – December 10 – tickets still available! See Sally.

Plans for another visit to the Mepkin Abbey Creche Festival are underway! This year's theme is stone and should be another beautiful advent display. Email Sally at blufftonumc.education@gmail.com ASAP if you are interested. More details to follow in the bulletin!

Adult Sunday School – For **Seekers** class information Contact Sharral Ruth – ruthsharral@gmail.com for more information. For **Connections** class information, contact Jerry LeSage – jlesage50@att.net

Disciple Bible Study – Our Disciple classes are getting back in the groove. We would like to start a new Disciple I group – Interested? Email blufftonumc.education@gmail.com

Other Bible Studies – watch the bulletin and weekly emails for information about short term studies being offered!



Bluffton Youth Fellowship (BYF) we started off with a fun night of creating bookmarks for new members and learning how pets can teach us spiritual lessons like unconditional love, being in the moment, sabbath and more! All youth from 6th through 12th grades are invited to join us for fellowship, fun and growing closer to God through discussions, service and games!

Confirmation – Plans to start a new confirmation group are underway – please contact Sally LeSage if you have a youth 6th grade and above who is ready to participate.
Blufftonumc.education@gmail.com

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Kids' Church – every Sunday except Communion Sundays, children ages Kindergarten through 3rd grade are invited to leave after the children's message at the 8:30 AM service with the Kids' Church leader. (*Mature PreK children may attend Kids' Church instead of nursery at parents' discretion.*) We have a dedicated team of leaders and fun curriculum throughout the year.

Kids Praise Choir (KPC) – Each Sunday from 4 – 4:45 (ish) children Kindergarten through 5th grade are invited to come learn and sing with us! We are off and running with a fall theme of God's Creation with songs and activities each week!

Our **Nursery Staff**, Millie and Harriet, welcome children 6 weeks up to 5 years old each week at both services. They care for and play with the children and share the love of Christ with each and every one. We are in urgent need of back up nursery volunteers – check the bulletin for details and contact Sally to sign up.

Upcoming Events



October 25, 2026 Harvest Festival 5-7 PM GAMES PEOPLE PLAY!

Join us for chili, hotdogs and all the “fixin’s” and stay to play board games with your table mates! This is a congregational/all ages and stages/everyone’s invited event and we hope to see you all there! **YOU MUST RSVP no later than Sunday October 18 so that we will have enough food and set enough tables!!!!** Costumes are encouraged and children will receive a special “treat.”



SATURDAY December 12, 2026 10 AM – Carols, Croissants and Creches

A reprise of last year's popular Carols and Croissants with a new twist – we are adding a display of church members' Nativity Sets! So come enjoy a morning treat, singing all the carols we don't have enough time for during worship and viewing the variety of creches! No

BUMC Treasurer's Report

As of September 30, 2026

Budget Target is 39 of 52 Sundays or 75%

	YTD In- come/ Ex- pense	Annual Budget	Percent of Budget
Worship Offerings:			
Plate	255,743	-	-
Online	256,730	-	-
Total Worship Offerings	512,473	624,000	82.1%
Other Revenue:			
Unrestricted Memorial Donation	1,355	-	
Altar Flowers, Facility Rental, Interest, Etc.	4,882		
M&E Income (books, events, VBS)	3,401		
VBS Income	841		
PPSPRC	65		
Stephen Ministries Income	146		
UMC Grant			
Roof/HVAC Donations	-	-	
Stock Income	-		
Annex Fire Donations	-		
Total Other Revenue	10,690	-	
Total Revenue	523,163	603,200	86.7%
EXPENSE			
Pastoral	131,253	182,555	71.9%
Worship	59,071	91,750	64.4%
Ministry & Education	54,351	77,575	70.1%
Missions	13,352	21,500	62.1%
UMC Apportionments	41,492	56,231	73.8%
Administration & Finance	60,424	94,300	64.1%
Property *	83,164	95,189	87.4%
Total Expense	443,107	619,100	71.6%
Surplus YTD	80,056	(15,900)	

Notes:

*Annual Property Insurance paid in full

Visit Blufftonumc.org to establish your recurring online giving at the "select page prompt/donate!"

BLUFFTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
P. O. BOX 368
BLUFFTON, SC 29910

October-December 2026



SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:30 AM & 11:00 AM – Online and In-Person

Pastor Scarlett's Email: pastor@blufftonumc.org

Director of Music Ministry — Josh Wall—Email: musicministry@blufftonumc.org

Director of Christian Education — Sally LeSage – Email: blufftonumc.education@gmail.com

Organist—Nathan Shelton- Email: organist@blufftonumc.org

Church Office — Laurie Palmer—Email: blufftonumc@gmail.com

Bookkeeper—Joann Garner—Email: financeatbumc@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.blufftonumc.org>

OFFICE HOURS

Mon. – Thurs. 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM
(843) 757-3351

MAILING ADDRESS

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Bluffton, SC 29910