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## *From the Pastor's Desk*



In that magical time between Christmas and New Year's we often spend time thinking about this past 12 months and what awaits us in the year ahead.

Life in 2025 has been full of changes – some exciting and new, and others draining and a bit scary. Many in our world are holding their breaths waiting for the next shoe to drop and to see what the new year will bring. Many are wondering how they are going to make it through from paycheck to paycheck.

Even during these benevolent days of the holidays, many are reacting very badly, using these times as permission to enact violence against others just for who they are, how they identify themselves, and what they believe. Into these challenging and scary times, we hear the words of the angel to Mary and the shepherds upon Jesus' birth, "*Do not be afraid.*" We hear these words echoed by Jesus over and over again throughout his adult ministry, "*Do not be afraid. for I am with you.*" We take great comfort in the fact that our God is with us always and working to bring good out of the chaos that we create in our world.

Through Advent, we kept hearing that we can choose how to respond to what is happening in our world. We can feed into the fear, help to keep the negativity spinning and draining the life out of all of us, or we can focus on the Joy of God's blessings in our lives. We can choose to send good out into the world by being kind to others, showing compassion to those hurting, helping our neighbors in need. Even the smallest gesture of kindness magnifies God's love and goodness in our world. It can and will cause a ripple effect, sending waves of goodness further and further out into the world, touching more and more people every moment of every day.

Today is a new day, a fresh start. I wonder... what will you, I, we choose to do with our days? How will we reflect and magnify Jesus' selfless acts of love for each of us? Will we put our energy to spreading goodness and love, or will we enter into the spiral of doom and gloom? We can choose.

May your days ahead be filled with hope, love, joy, and peace. May we work together to make our corner of the world a more welcoming, loving, and life-giving place for all who enter.

Happy New Year!  
Blessings and Love,  
Pastor Brenda



## **WORSHIP SERVICES FOR JANUARY 2026**

### **JANUARY 4, 2026 “Epiphany”                      COMMUNION**

Isaiah 60:1-6 “Arise, shine, for your light has come”  
Matthew 2:1-12 Magi visit the Holy family

### **JANUARY 11, 2026 – “Possibilities Unfolding”    BAPTISM OF CHRIST**

Matthew 3:13-17                      Isaiah 42:1-9

### **JANUARY 18, 2026 – “All That We Are” Cindy Innerst-Axe preaching**

Psalms 40:1-11      1 Corinthians 1:1-9      John 1:29-42  
Annual Town Meeting after the worship service

### **JANUARY 25, 2026 – “Called Together”**

Matthew 4:12-23 Jesus begins ministry in Galilee/calls first disciples

### **CARING AND SHARING FUND**

There is a basket on the table in the Gathering Room for you to contribute to the Dallastown Area School District’s Caring and Sharing Fund which helps students and their families who are in special need. Donations can be put in one of the marked envelopes or if writing a check, you can designate Caring & Sharing Fund on the memo line. Thanks to your generosity, in 2025 we contributed \$716.50 to this fund.

In addition, you are encouraged to bring good, used clothing to Community Aid, tell them it’s for DASH, and DASH will then get a certain amount of money per pound of clothing, to go toward the Caring and Sharing Fund. If you are unable to take good used clothing to Community Aid, you can bring them to the church and put them in the bins in the Gathering Room. The bins will be emptied and clothes taken to Community Aid on a regular basis.



Our offering envelopes for 2026 may now be picked up from the Welcome Table in the Gathering Room. If you did not use envelopes in 2025, but would like some for 2026, please contact the church office.

Using offering envelopes helps to ensure the privacy of your donations and also makes it easier for us to keep track of what you have given for tax purposes. Thank you.



### **EMMANUEL’S CLOSET**

Thanks to your generosity, we were able to give grocery gift cards to 35 families for Thanksgiving and 38 for Christmas to use to purchase meat and other perishable items for their holiday meals. We also gave Christmas gift cards to 47 children whose families were clients at Emmanuel’s Closet.

We continue to collect non-perishable food items, toiletries and paper products to give out each month. You may put donations in the marked bin in the Gathering Room.

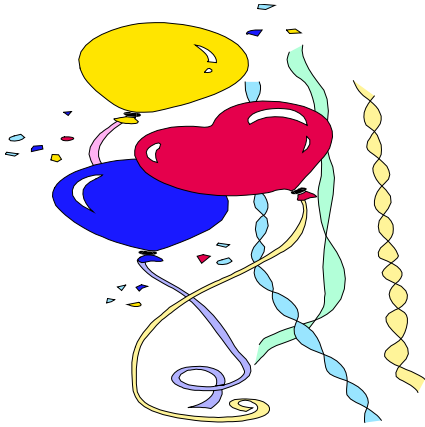
Thank you again for caring and for helping to make the holidays a bit brighter for these families.



### **TOWN MEETING**

On Sunday, January 18, there will be a Town Meeting immediately after the worship service to discuss and approve the budget and the members of the Coordinating Ministry Team for 2026. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend!

**JANUARY**  
**BIRTHDAYS**



*May God  
Bless You on  
Your  
Birthday!*

1. Jared Miller  
Todd Miller  
Derek Troop
2. Chet Wise
3. Keith Markey  
Delores Noll
4. Tracey Dilling  
John Sterling
7. Nicholas Innerst  
Morgan Keller
8. Nancy Myers
9. Paige Barley
11. Damion Albright  
Steven Knickel
12. Tina Leader
14. Benjamin Barley  
John Herbst
15. Hannah Leader
16. Brooks Barley
18. Silvia Knickel
20. Rick Sipe
21. Ed Adams  
Gwen Wise
26. Cindie McKinsey  
Renne Myers
31. Terry Stein

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## Undesignated General Fund

Month-2025	Income	Expense	Net			
January	\$7,763.00	\$10,980.79	(\$3,217.79)			
February	\$8,040.00	\$10,783.87	(\$2,743.87)			
March	\$11,744.00	\$16,632.22	(\$4,888.22)			
April	\$8,612.00	\$8,434.27	\$177.73			
May	\$11,583.00	\$13,079.42	(\$1,496.42)			
June	\$11,541.00	\$13,404.75	(\$1,863.75)			
July	\$9,360.00	\$11,104.65	(\$1,744.65)			
August	\$7,405.00	\$9,587.43	(\$2,182.43)			
September	\$9,301.90	\$12,834.83	(\$3,532.93)			
October	\$16,737.00	\$10,090.42	\$6,646.58			
November	\$11,754.64	\$10,883.93	\$870.71			
December						
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$113,841.54</b>	<b>\$127,816.58</b>	<b>(\$13,975.04)</b>			

Balance of Undesignated General Fund @ December 1, 2025  
(transferred \$7,195.00 from investments in September)

(\$3,028.88)

## Financial Assistance Given through Hand of Hope Fund - 2025

	#	Total	Monthly	Available
	Families	\$\$\$	Donations	Balance
Beginning				\$ 542.38
January	4	\$ 225.00	\$ 81.00	\$ 398.38
February	3	\$ 175.00	\$ 87.00	\$ 310.38
March	2	\$ 100.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 320.38
April	4	\$ 200.00	\$ 92.92	\$ 213.30
May	2	\$ 75.00	\$ 84.21	\$ 222.51
June	2	\$ 225.00	\$ 143.19	\$ 140.70
July	0	\$ 0.00	\$ 91.81	\$ 232.51
August	0	\$ 0.00	\$ 177.00	\$ 409.51
September	5	\$ 250.00	\$ 86.00	\$ 245.51
October	4	\$ 175.00	\$ 186.65	\$ 257.16
November	4	\$ 400.00	\$ 151.00	\$ 8.16
December				
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>\$ 1825.00</b>	<b>\$ 1283.78</b>	

## **REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS and those in need of PRAYER**

**Terry & Fran Doll**  
Room 346  
Residence @ Fitz Farm  
2200 Springwood Rd.  
York, PA 17403  
Terry's cell (717) 968-2454  
Fran's cell (717) 968-8754



**Peggy Luckenbaugh**  
Room 710B  
York View Nursing Home  
970 Colonial Avenue  
York, PA 17403

**Wendy Black**  
**(Jeanette Black's daughter)**  
Room 210B  
Pleasant Acres Rehab  
118 Pleasant Acres Rd.  
York, PA 17402

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**Remember  
and pray for  
Our Members  
in the  
Military**

**Tech Sergeant Brandon Ness**  
221 E. Catalpa Ct.  
Derby, KS 67037

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***B - I - N - G - O***

Thank you for the donations that you have given to Homewood Homes for both Bingo prizes and Christmas gifts and cards. Your generosity is much appreciated by the residents.

We will be taking a break from collecting during the months of January and February, but will be resuming again in March.

### ***Medical Equipment***

Due to the generosity of our church family, we have medical equipment available for use by our members. Speaking from my recent experience, my sister was released from the E.R. and needed a wheelchair and a walker to aid in her mobility. Hearing about her need through our church's Prayer Vine, Barb Adams called me offering immediate use of a wheelchair and walker. Hallelujah!! My sister's mobility needs were met.

After this experience, I inventoried the medical equipment we have stored at the church and made it available to our church members free of any cost.

All we ask is that you sign for the equipment when you pick it up. This way we can track where the equipment is so that another church member may use it in the future. The sign-out sheets are in the 3-ring notebook sitting on our secretary's desk.

Thank you, Joel Frey

### ***Gift Cards***

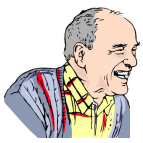
Would you like to help your church without spending any extra money? You can do this by buying gift cards to use for everyday purchases or as gifts. For every card sold we earn a profit from 1½% all the way to 16%, depending on the merchant. Many of you did your Christmas shopping this way, but the cards you buy don't have to be used as gifts. Buy them for yourself to use at grocery stores, gas stations, restaurants, etc. and help your church at the same time throughout the year.

To get your cards, just fill out an order form (available on the table in the Gathering Room) and attach a check or cash. Checks should be made payable to St. John's Blymire's UCC. You may drop the orders in the offering plate or place them on Wanda's desk in the office. Payment must be included with your order. Orders will be sent in each Monday morning. You may pick up your gift cards from Sandy Innerst at church the following Sunday.

### ***KNITTERS/CROCHETERS***

We continue to collect donations of handmade scarves and blankets for Memorial White Rose Hospice. They are especially in need of items for men. If you would like to participate in this ongoing project, there is a box in the Gathering Room for you to put your donations.





## **MEN'S GROUP**

Our next Men's Group meeting will be Tuesday, January 13, at 7:00 PM at



the church. Our guest speaker will be Deb Carman, expert insect carekeeper, who will talk about "Creating Habitat for Butterflies."

Her bio is here: Debra Carman—Penn State Master Gardener - York County; Native Plant Habitat Team Committee Chair; Butterfly and Moth Habitat Specialist Deb's mission is to inspire others to make positive environmental changes in their gardening practices. Butterflies are excellent examples to show the complex connections between wild creatures and native plants. Through the natural attraction which people feel for butterflies, Deb teaches the importance of creating environmentally friendly habitats with native plants that foster food webs for all wildlife.

**Creating Habitat for Butterflies - Program Description** The program will cover the habitat elements necessary for the survival of butterflies from egg to adult. The important ecological role that our native plants and butterflies play in food webs will be highlighted. Multiple species of butterflies commonly occurring in PA will be profiled. Deb's informational sheet "Butterfly Larval Host Plant List" will be available, along with other related topics.



## **SECRET PALS**

If you participated in the Secret Pal program in 2025 or have signed up to join in 2026, don't forget about the upcoming brunch. Sandy Innerst and Cindy Innerst-Axe will host a brunch on Saturday, January 10, at 10:00 AM at Sandy's home to reveal our 2025 Secret Pals. At that time, we will also receive our Secret Pals for 2026. If you plan to join us, please let Sandy or Cindy know by January 4 so they can prepare enough food.

Are you looking for some gentle, easy exercise? Come check out our **CHAIR YOGA** classes! These classes are especially good for beginners. No equipment is necessary. Yoga is one of the most highly recommended forms of exercise for seniors! You can come once, twice, three times a week or just occasionally. Classes are Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10:00-11:00 AM here at the church. There is a \$10 fee for each class.

## **Meat Pie Fundraiser**

The Fun Team will soon be taking orders for Zook's homemade meat pies. These delicious pies are made in Paradise, Lancaster County. They are available in two sizes: 6" (12 oz) for \$7.00 and 9" (32 oz) for \$14.00. You may choose from chicken, beef, or sausage flavors.



Beginning January 18, look for the signup sheet on the Welcome Table in the Gathering Room. Deadline for orders will be February 8 and pickup will be the last week of February.



The FUN Team will be hosting a social on the fourth Sunday of each month between our worship service and Sunday school. The purpose will be to celebrate those members whose birthdays or anniversaries fall during that month. Please join us, especially if you are of those being honored that day.

## **WOMEN OF WONDER**



Who? What? Where? When? We are a group of women who just enjoy each other's company, conversation and compassion...while sharing a message of God's love to each other, our church family, and our community. We read scripture and share devotions. We offer advice, support, and sometimes a shoulder. We laugh together and find joy.

If this sounds like something you or a friend would like to do, please join us. We meet at 11:00 AM on the 4th Saturday of each month. Our next gathering will be on January 24. Lunch afterwards is optional. Everyone is welcome. Text or call Ginny Weber (202) 549-4358 for more info.



## **CARD and GAME CLUB**



We have started a group to play card and board games here at the church. Everyone is welcome, and if you don't know how to play certain games, there will be someone who can teach you. You can bring lunch or order in. Meetings are now the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month starting at 11:00 AM and playing until people are ready to stop. Our January meetings will be on the 14th and 28th. Come join in the fun one or both weeks.

"Every person you see is someone  
Jesus thought enough of to die for.  
Remember that in how you treat others!"

Unattributed



JANUARY 2026

"If you could erase all the mistakes of  
your past, you would erase all the  
wisdom of the present. Remember the  
lesson and not the disappointment."

Unattributed

### TALK TO JESUS

Talk to Him about your week  
Talk to Him about your dreams  
Tell Him what you're afraid of  
Tell Him what you are learning about  
Tell Him about a decision you're facing  
Tell Him what you are discouraged about  
Tell Him what you need His help with  
Tell Him what you need His forgiveness for  
Tell Him how He has blessed you  
Tell Him what you love about Him

Dennis Hackler



"The birds are gone,  
The ground is white,  
The winds are wild,  
They chill and bite;  
The ground is thick  
with slush and sleet,  
And I barely feel  
my feet."

Maybe the miracle this  
year wasn't what God  
changed around you,  
but what he changed in  
you. A deeper strength,  
a quieter faith, a  
tenderness that took  
root when life unraveled.

Unattributed

### CHANGE THE WAY YOU SEE!

I don't have crow's feet, I have happy  
memories of laughing with friends  
until the tears flowed.  
I don't have frown lines, I have the marks  
of frustration and confusion, which I  
battled through, smiling in the end.  
I am not going grey, I have shimmering  
highlights of wisdom, dashed  
throughout my silver hair.  
I don't have scars, I have symbols of  
the strength I was able to find,  
when life got tough.  
I am not fat, I bear the evidence  
of a life filled with abundance,  
blessings and good times.  
I am not forgetful, I have a mind so full of  
stories, memories and moments there is  
scarce room to hold much else.  
I am not old, I am blessed, with a life  
of great length, something not  
everyone can say.  
Don't change the way you look, my  
friend, change the way you see.

Donna Ashworth

### REFRESH YOUR FAITH

I was in Flint Michigan. It was a sunny spring day and the  
weatherman had predicted mid 70's for the day. I stepped  
outside and found the roads in every direction had been  
freshly salted. *What in the world?*

It was a head-scratcher. It turns out that the winter had been  
exceptionally mild that year, and the amount of salt they would  
get the following year was dictated by the amount of salt they had  
used this year. So they salted the roads when they didn't need to.

I wonder if we do the same thing with our faith gatherings.  
Here's what I mean. We tell the same stories, teach the same  
lessons and cover the same topics with the same people, over  
and over. Don't get me wrong, these stories are good and true,  
but even with an infinite universe of examples, metaphors and  
engaging topics, we still lock in on a few stories and overuse  
or overteach them. It's like Flint Michigan thinking they were  
helping by salting roads that didn't need it.

For decades I have met with eight guys on Friday mornings.  
It's not a Bible study, but a Bible-doing group. This is not a  
distinction without a difference. We don't want to read or tell  
the same stories over and over, and then merely agree with  
Jesus once again. In doing so, we would just be salting snow-free  
roads. We want to do what Jesus did, risk the ways He risked,  
and be compassionate in the ways He was compassionate.  
Tell a couple of new stories today. Find a few new Bible verses  
that are important to you, and instead of merely talking about  
them, go do something about them.

Bob Goff

"We need much less than we think we need."

Maya Angelou



## THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back  
with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among people,  
To make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman



## I HOPE THAT IN 2026, YOU MAKE MISTAKES

If you are making mistakes,  
then you are trying new things,  
learning, living, pushing yourself,  
changing yourself, changing your world.  
You're doing things you've never done before,  
and more importantly, you're Doing Something.  
So that's my wish for you, and all of us,  
and my wish for myself.  
Make New Mistakes.  
Make glorious, amazing mistakes.  
Make mistakes nobody's ever made before.  
Don't freeze, don't stop,  
don't worry that it isn't good enough,  
or it isn't perfect, whatever it is:  
art, or love, or work or family or life.  
Whatever it is you're scared of doing, Do it.  
Make your mistakes, learn, change & grow!

Neil Gaiman

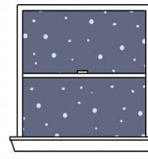
## NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FROM KIDS



"Eat more butter"  
"Build a mud hut"  
"Learn to drive"  
"Try my hardest at everything,  
except math"  
"Make up a new language"  
"Invent Goggle"

# LESSONS from Winter

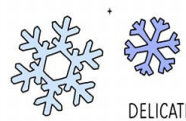
@POSITIVELYPRESENT



NO DARK DAY  
LASTS FOREVER.



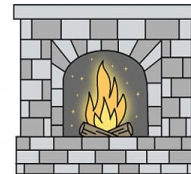
CHOOSING COMFORT  
IS AN ACT OF LOVE.



DELICATE  
THINGS CAN BE  
POWERFUL.



LIFE IS FILLED  
WITH LITTLE  
PLEASURES.



STAY CLOSE TO WHAT  
WARMS YOUR HEART.



WHAT'S FROZEN WILL  
SOMEDAY THAW.



RESTING IS PART OF THE  
GROWTH PROCESS.



EVERY  
SEASON HAS  
ITS BRIGHT  
SPOTS.

## KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON HIM!

My service dog struggles to keep her focus on me when there are distractions. As a motivator to look at me, our trainers recommended I remove treats. They want forward movement, and pleasing me to be the motivation, not treats. They instructed me to stop occasionally, and wait for her to lift her eyes to meet mine. The moment she locked on to my gaze, I was instructed to praise her and say, "Yes, let's go."

Our thirty minute walks became an hour, as I waited for her to choose me over the distractions. With practice, her skills have finally begun to improve.


During one of our extended training sessions,  
I cried out to God in frustration,  
"Lord, why won't she focus on me?"

That prayer pierced my heart. How often have I failed to focus on my Master, Jesus, when surrounded by distractions? As the world screams for my attention, my eyes and my heart wander from God. But as I acknowledge His constant presence, praise Him, and grow closer to Him, my desire to follow Him increases. God invites me to keep my eyes on Him, because He knows I'll need His strength and guidance. As I trust God more, I'll want to keep my eyes on Him, wherever He leads!

Xochitil Dixon




# Snowflake SNACK CAKES



Celebrate the beauty of winter with these fun snowflake-inspired treats!

**What you need:**

- Graham cracker squares or sugar cookies
- White frosting or marshmallow fluff
- Pretzel sticks (snowflake arms)
- Shredded coconut or white sprinkles
- Mini marshmallows or candy pearls




**What you do:**

1. Frost each cracker or cookie.
2. Arrange pretzel sticks in a crisscross for the snowflake base.
3. Sprinkle with coconut or sprinkles for snow.
4. Add marshmallows or candy pearls to the ends for detail.

**Lesson tie-in:**  
Remind kids that God made each of us unique—just like no two snowflakes are alike!  
(Psalm 139:14, KJV)

# PUZZLE



## TRANSLATE GOD'S WORD

The Bible we use is translated into English from other languages.  
"Translate" the verse below using the code.

CODE		E=△	L=□	R=✦
A=■	G=●	M=↗	S=■	
B=×	H=◀	N=⋮	SH=☀	
D=◀◀	I=▲	O=⊗	T=♪	
	K=	P=□	TH=♥	

Y

W

F

W

U

**Proverbs 3:13**

Answer: Happy is the one who finds wisdom and the one who gets understanding.