

Newsletter December 2024



Bremen-Bethel Presbyterian Church
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Pastor: Rev. Larry Hoffmann; Clerk: Dee Mowry



FROM THE PASTOR: Rev. Larry Hoffmann

December is a busy month that consists of two liturgical seasons: Advent and Christmas. The first Advent season came into the everyday world of a people who were trying to survive the domination of the Roman Empire. There came a time of great hope and anticipation that God was about to act. John the Baptist declared a message of preparation. The people needed to prepare to recognize and experience the action of God in their midst. This message will be the four week focus of Advent. How do you and I prepare each day to recognize and experience the action of God in our midst? What spiritual disciplines will you and I practice and acquire this month to better prepare us for the excitement of God?

December ends with the jubilation of Christmas. Luke's emphasis on the presence of the Holy Spirit in the creation and life of Jesus and that identical presence of God in the creation and life of the church is a great celebration for us to recognize and experience – God incarnate in the church created to continue the work of the God incarnate Christ child! As the people of the first Christmas lived in politically tumultuous times, so do we. Today we live in a time of political and social instability, growing masses of the poor, and the threat of never-ending violence. Our first response is to close the gate, maintain the tradition, and more clearly identify which people belong to God and which do not. The incarnation of God in our midst moves us to open the gate, find new meaning in the tradition, and be open to God identifying who God's own are.

December is a busy month indeed! We have much to prepare for, a great deal to celebrate!

May God's hope, peace, joy and love of the Christ be with you,

Larry

FROM THE CLERK OF SESSION: Dee Mowry

We have entered one of my favorite times of the year, the 'holiday' season. For the Christian world it is a time of joy and celebration as we celebrate the birth of Christ. It appears that the word Christmas was derived from the old English 'Cristesmaesse' which meant Christ's Mass. The exact date of the birth of Christ is placed at sometime between 7 and 2 B.C. and the day is celebrated on December 25 or January 6 or 7 or 19 depending on the various religions. In the book of the Prophet Malachi (the last book in the Old Testament) 4:2, we read these words. "But for you who fear my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings." Note the spelling of sun. The Book of Luke in the New Testament gives an indirect indication of the birth date.

FROM THE CLERK OF SESSION: Dee Mowry (continued)

Santa Claus, or Saint Nicholas, or Father Christmas, or Christkind etc. present the children with the gifts at Christmas time. As a result the season has become one of the important, if not the most important, retail times of the year. That being said let us not lose sight of the real meaning of Christmas, the birth of a Savior.

Speaking of gifts, one of the greatest gifts you may give a person is the gift of the introduction to the church family. Survey your friends especially those who may need a church family and invite them to visit us.

Kathy and I send our very best wishes to you and to your family for the best Holiday season ever, and even though it is not 'politically correct' (which I have NEVER been) Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. Our prayers will be with you in the future.

FROM THE MISSION COMMITTEE CHAIR: Judy Turner

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING: December is our time to request donations for the Christmas Joy Offering. This offering helps former church employees and their families. Over the next few weeks, you will hear during our Minute for Mission about people who have been helped through the Christmas Joy Offering. There will be special "Joy Offering " envelopes on the table in the back of the sanctuary for you to use for your donation. Or, you can also add it to your weekly donation by completing the "Special Offering" section.

DISH CLOTHS and WASH CLOTHS are needed for the Christmas Food Baskets. Bring donations to the church **by December 8** or call Judy to make arrangements for drop off or pick up.

The Bremen Food Pantry will be giving baskets on **Saturday, December 14**. If you wish to donate a turkey, please bring your frozen turkey to the **Calvary United Methodist Church at 8 am on the 14th** . Also, please sign the sign-up sheet on the table at the back of the sanctuary or let Judy Turner know of your plans to donate, so we will know how many turkeys we may need to purchase. Furthermore, the Food Pantry will take donations of cookies for the baskets. Please have cookies in a disposable container and bring them to Calvary Church on **Thursday, December 11 between 9 am and 5 pm**. As with the turkey, if you plan to donate, please sign the sheet on the table at the back of the sanctuary or let Judy know.

Breakfast to Go: Bremen Bethel is donating approximately 245 bags per week to Bremen Elementary for our Breakfast to Go mission. One way you can help that fund is, if you shop at Kroger, and you have a rewards card, you can go on line and link your rewards card to donate to our Church. Linking your rewards card does not affect your fuel points in any way. Any money we receive from Kroger goes into the Breakfast to Go Fund. If you need help signing up, let Judy Turner know.

FROM THE TREASURER: Kathy Mowry

There are currently 11 households participating in our Kroger Community Rewards. For the quarter of August through October, we received \$37.08. The session has designated the income to the **Breakfast to Go** program.

FROM SERVICE COMMITTEE CHAIR: Cinda Keller

The following is a prayer that Helen Neel handed out to the Zeta Alpha Circle many years ago. I think it is worth sharing again. Cinda Keller

Prayer List

Pray for our leaders and all world leaders for wisdom and the desire for peace.

Pray for our adversaries that they may know the love of God and may come to a knowledge of the salvation that comes from Jesus Christ.

Pray for missionaries and all Christians throughout the world who risk their lives for the salvation of the unsaved.

Pray for tolerance of the differences among nations as well as our own personal differences.

Pray for conservation of our national resources.

Pray for steadfast faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

FROM THE SECRETARY/FINANCE CLERK: Loretta Dawson

The church office will be **CLOSED** the **week of December 2**. Regular office hours will resume the following week. In addition, the church office will be **CLOSED** the week of **December 23**. Regular hours will resume the following week. If you have any questions, please call the office or send an email. Thank you and have a Blessed and Merry Christmas!

Calendar of Events

Dec 2nd – Dec 6 – The Church Office will be closed.

Dec 8th – Zeta Alpha will meet in the church basement at 9:30 am; Bible Study: Let Justice Roll Down, Lesson 4. All women are welcome to attend.

Dec 22nd – Session Meeting after worship service

Dec 23rd – 27th – The Church Office will be closed.

Dec 25th – Christmas Day! **Merry Christmas!**

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Dec 2nd – David Mowry
Dec 7th – Pat Davis
Dec 28th – Kathy Mowry

Dec 30th – Andy & Joanie Ray
Dec 31st – Karen Bergreen
Dec 31st – Bill & Ann Nutter

December Lay Readers, Communion Servers and Ushers:

Dec 1st – Cinda Keller: Lay Reader & Usher
Linda Embrey: Usher
Dec 8th – Sue Henwood: Lay Reader & Usher
Susan Hoffmann: Usher
Dec 15th – Sharon Ankrom: Lay Reader & Usher
Tom Ankrom: Usher
Dec 22nd – Judy Turner: Lay Reader, Communion Server & Usher
Linda Shreyer: Communion Server & Usher
Dec 29th – Mark & Tracy Embrey: Ushers
Cinda Keller: Lay Reader

Kids' Section

HOLY NIGHT

CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH



Nativity Maze

Help the Three Wise Men find the manger.

