

# Newsletter January 2025



Bremen-Bethel Presbyterian Church  
142 Purvis Ave., Bremen, OH 43107  
(740) 569-7320

[bremenbethelpc@gmail.com](mailto:bremenbethelpc@gmail.com)  
<https://www.bremenbethelpc.org>

Pastor: Rev. Larry Hoffmann; Clerk: Dee Mowry



## FROM THE PASTOR: Rev. Larry Hoffmann

The year 2025 brings a host of opportunities to the realm of new beginnings. Yet, it follows a sacred celebration: the birth of Jesus in our world, and in our own lives. Christmas tells us that the loving Creator wanted to enter our world and individual lives. Within our search for new beginnings found in the new year lies our search for the risen Jesus and seeing his presence in our living each day.

Morton Kelsey tells us there are two common practices that can effectively keep God from meddling in our lives. First, we keep so busy that we never stop to think about the meaning of life, or the mystery of our lives, the mystery of the universe. We can avoid the meaning of our lives by never stopping to pause and reflect. We can even be so busy with religious affairs that we have no time to relate to the risen Christ.

We also can avoid the loving God in a second way: We can become so absorbed in outer material things – clothes, entertainment, human fame, delicious food, our power or money – that we ignore the fact that there is a spiritual world as well as a material world. We never lift our eyes above the earthly horizon; we are caught in the Western illusion that only the physical, material world is real.

Perhaps a new beginning for the year 2025 is setting time aside to explore the spiritual realm. Some suggestions to help us are:

- Set aside 15 to 30 minutes of quiet and silence daily to pause and reflect. Without times of silence, prayer and meditation we can avoid the reality of Jesus revealed to us. Prayer is not so much presenting a wish list to the Divine, as it is fellowship with the Holy One.
- Keep a daily diary or religious journal to record your experience of the Divine, your failings, lack of caring for others, busyness, and new insights. In keeping a journal, many people see their spiritual lives become more real and have more of a sense of the presence of the Holy in their lives.
- Keep a religious tradition. Keeping one's own tradition usually keeps us naïve and deluded. Jesus had a religious tradition, and he made only a few changes in it.
- Share the Divine love revealed to us with other. Love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity are all freely given to be shared. I've read somewhere, "...to do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."

May God bless the new year with a growing sense of the presence of the Holy One in each of our lives. God's peace be with you, Larry

## **FROM THE CLERK OF SESSION: Dee Mowry**

As we look forward to a new year, the Prophet Isaiah, born probably shortly before 760 B. C. said in Chapter 43, verse 19, 'Behold, I am doing a new thing: now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.'

2025 brings a 'new thing' in our Bremen-Bethel Church life (although not necessarily in the 'wilderness or the desert.')

We have new leaders, i.e., elders of the Class of 2027, Scott Bergreen, Kerry Boyd, Sally Spangler and Judy Turner. Congregational representatives for the nominating committee, Tom Ankrom, Cindy Cullumber George Shreyer who will be joined by two retiring elders (Class of 2025) and the congregational representative to the personnel committee, Brenda Winegardner. The church owes a vote of thanks to these members who make up an important segment of Bremen-Bethel. Please note that the Book of Order states that there will be two 'officers' of the church, the moderator and the clerk, hence the term 'leaders'.

The 2025 pro forma budget has been approved which was compiled by the standing session committees, the personnel committee and the church treasurer. The clerk just received the 2025 Directory for the Scioto Valley Presbytery. The Scioto Valley Presbytery includes 83 churches (97 churches in 2022) with a total membership of 12,175 members (16,971 members in 2022). The presbytery is dominated by the urban center of Columbus and extends southward in the central portion of the state to the Ohio River. Membership-wise Central College (Westerville) one of the larger churches in numbers and McArthur Presbyterian, one of the smallest. Bremen – Bethel reports 50 members, i.e., after the last session meeting where one member was dropped from the church roll. Session training will be January 25 as well as serving as the January session meeting. This will be followed by the congregational meeting on January 26, 2025. If there are questions, contact either Rev. Hoffmann or the clerk.

## **FROM THE TREASURER: Kathy Mowry**

\$330 was collected for the Christmas Joy Offering.

### *Calendar of Events*

**Jan 1<sup>st</sup>** – Happy New Year!

**Jan 12<sup>th</sup>** – Zeta Alpha will meet in the church basement at 9:30 am; Bible Study: Let Justice Roll Down, Lesson 5. All women are welcome to attend.

**Jan 25<sup>th</sup>** – Session Training and Session Meeting at 9 am.

**Jan 26<sup>th</sup>** – Congregational Meeting following worship

### *Birthdays and Anniversaries*

**Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Mark Embrey

**Jan 25<sup>th</sup>** – Shirley Elick

**Jan 25<sup>th</sup>** – Joanie Ray

**Jan 30<sup>th</sup>** – David Winegardner

\*\*\* *There are no anniversaries for the month of January.*

# January Lay Readers, Communion Servers and Ushers:

**Jan 5<sup>th</sup>** – Linda Shreyer: Lay Reader & Usher  
George Shreyer: Usher

**Jan 12<sup>th</sup>** – Cinda Keller: Lay Reader & Usher  
Judy Turner: Usher

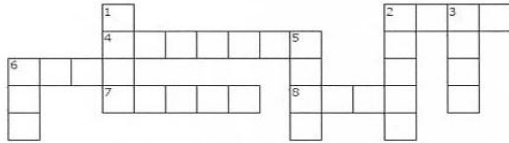
**Jan 19<sup>th</sup>** – Scott Bergreen: Lay Reader & Usher  
Karen Bergreen: Usher

**Jan 26<sup>th</sup>** – Ron Cullumber: Lay Reader & Usher  
Cindy Cullumber: Usher

## Kids' Section

### The Visit of the Magi

On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. Matthew 2:11 (NIV)



#### ACROSS

- The wise men who visited Jesus and Mary and Joseph shortly after Jesus was born
- A substance that is burned to produce a sweet smell
- To come into existence by birth
- Presents which are given without cost to the one receiving them
- A twinkling point of light in the night sky

#### DOWN

- A male ruler of a country
- A sticky substance with a strong smell which is used in making perfume
- A valuable, shiny, yellow metal used to make coins and jewellery
- The direction which is opposite to west
- To kneel or bend the head or body forward as a show of respect

MAGI	BOW	STAR	GOLD	KING
GIFTS	EAST	BORN	MYRRH	INCENSE



### ISPY WINTER



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**The Magi bring gifts**