

# THE GABRIEL

THE NEWSLETTER OF EMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*We press on in the ministry of faith in action in our local community and the world.*

*December 2022*

**A Message from Pastor Jim**



*"Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love." Hamilton Wright Mabie*

Recently, I was paging through a new devotional I received for this Advent season. One of the pages pictured a woman holding a small child and there was a simple message printed in the lower corner which read, "O Love, is that you?" That question has been on my mind relentlessly ever since. "O Love, is that you?"

When I think about the state of our lives, I become overwhelmed. Think about it...we have been bombarded by election details and voting and counting and continuous rancor and divide for weeks...we still struggle with a pandemic that simply won't release its grip on our society...we sit and wait for the news of another mass shooting...we worry about vaccines and new, more virulent diseases...we struggle with mental health issues and how to solve that looming problem...we see cruelty to our neighbors near and far and somehow find justification in allowing it to continue. I could continue but you get the gist of what I'm saying...Yes, life is overwhelming.

When I talk to folks and ask them how they are feeling underneath the façade that we tend to don in public, I find that the general feeling is just one of *exhaustion*. We are exhausted and it isn't an exhaustion that is cured by

“sleeping it off.” What do we do then? How do we get out of the funk we are in? How do we make the world better...happier? Oh...how I wish I had an answer...a cure that I could offer.

The more I thought about our plight though, the more I thought maybe I do have an answer that supplies us with hope and courage to carry us on. That answer may lie in that very simple question, “O Love, is that you?”

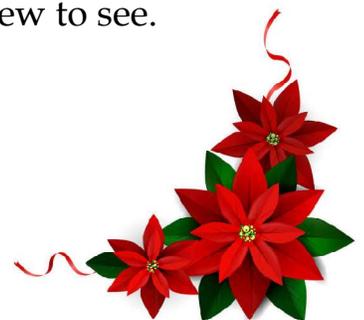
My very regimented puppy wakes me every morning while it is still dark by nuzzling her head under my hand. She wants to be loved. She wants the security of knowing and feeling that she is safe and loved. We both rise with sleep still in our eyes and trudge out into the cool night air. One particular evening, I looked up and saw in the distance the pinkish hue of the sun beginning to brighten the horizon. It was the most beautiful, transcendent color, reminding me of just what a beautiful world we do live in despite all of the troubles and worries we struggle through on a daily basis. What dawned on me was the fact that the troubles of the world have always existed even way back in Biblical times and will always exist into our future and beyond. If we just take a moment to lift our weary, sleepy eyes, however, we will notice the dawn...the dawn of a new day and the assurance that God is indeed in control and bathing us in the beauty of love that we haven't even encountered.

Think about it...this is Advent. A time to sit ready in the darkness, trusting that when the sun rises...there will be something new to see.

*“O Love, is that you?”*

*May you be blessed by knowing that you are loved,*

*Pastor Jim*



# WORSHIP

Worship conducted at 9:30 AM each Sunday morning

In-person (please see In-person Guidelines)

Connect by phone

The number to call: 1 877 309 2073

The access code: 591 680 557 followed by the pound sign #

View on our website [www.newberlinucc.org](http://www.newberlinucc.org) later in the day.

December 4            Second Sunday of Advent (Purple)  
*Angel's Among Us - Mary*  
 Pastor Jim preaching and Pastor Jan liturgist  
 Organist Audrey Bingaman

December 11            Third Sunday of Advent (Purple)  
*Angel's Among Us - Joseph*  
 Pastor Jan preaching and Pastor Jim liturgist  
 Organist Audrey Bingaman  
**Social time following worship hosted by Donny Sauers**

December 18            Fourth Sunday of Advent (Purple)  
*Angel's Among Us - Shepherds*  
 Pastor Jim preaching and Pastor Jan liturgist  
 Organist Audrey Bingaman

December 24            Christmas Eve (White)  
*A Service of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love*  
 7:00 PM  
 Holy Communion  
 Pastor Jan Celebrant  
 Organist Audrey Bingaman

December 25            Christmas Day

**Merry Christmas**

- *There will be no in person service on Christmas Day*
- *A Christmas Meditation will be recorded and posted on the church website for you to enjoy.*



## Our Life Together In Service



When we read closely through the story of Jesus' birth, we meet many characters who had cause to feel afraid due to the circumstances they faced and the cultural context of the time. But angels came to visit them, and the message they brought was "Do not be afraid." In our modern day and age, sometimes we need to hear exactly that same message. This season, we invite you to join in our Advent series each week as we discover ways to encourage one another to "fly in the face of fear." Claiming hope, peace, joy, and love for the world.

Advent 1: "Make Ready a People: More Hope"

Advent 2: "Nothing is Impossible: More Peace"

Advent 3: "Do Not Be Afraid: More Joy"

Advent 4: "This Will Be a Sign: More Love"

Looking forward to seeing YOU in church with us!!!

### *Christmas Mission 2022*

We need your help again this year! We will provide two families with a little help for a Merry Christmas. Dinners for each family includes gift cards for Weis Markets and Walmart. The Christmas Tree in the Social Room will once again have stockings with the gifts to purchase or monetary donations for these children. We are still waiting for one family's needs/wants, then the tree will be up and ready to go in November. Please have all gifts or monetary donations into the church by December 4. If you are currently not attending church in person, please consider a monetary donation marked "Christmas Mission 2022". Your past support has been much appreciated and we thank you for your generosity! We look forward to giving these families a great Christmas and your heart will grow one size bigger!



## Christmas Bazaar, Saturday, December 3, 2022

Cookie bakers, get out those recipes!  
Crafters, get those projects made!  
Go through your Christmas decorations you  
don't use anymore!  
The Christmas Bazaar is back!



On Saturday, December 3,  
we will be selling gently used Christmas decorations and handmade crafts.  
There will be the "famous" Cookie Walk, baked goods for sale,  
and lunch stand. Lots of volunteers and cookies will be needed!  
See Deb Benfer with any questions.

(Only Christmas themed items such as decorations, sweaters, coats, tablecloths, etc. will  
be accepted at this time. Please save your other items for the spring yard sale.)

## *The Christmas Fund Offering ~~ December 18*



### *For the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund*

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. Active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses may be eligible for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and/or Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks.

The 2022 Christmas Fund offering date is *Sunday, December 18*. Please place this special offering in an envelope marked "*The Christmas Fund*" and place in our offering plate. (<https://www.pbucc.org/index.php/christmas-fund-home>)



Remember our ongoing mission project...the New Berlin Food Pantry. Please help us continue to support this vital mission in our local community. The next distributions will be *Thursday, December 15*. Suggested food items from Emmanuel for the month are canned fruits, spaghetti sauce, soup, and peanut butter. We do thank all those who make donations and offer their time to make this mission and service possible for those who are in need.

### Candlelight Christmas Eve Service, Saturday, December 24, 7:00 pm

*A Service of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love*

Please join us as we celebrate  
Christmas Eve with a Candlelight Service  
with Holy Communion at 7:00 p.m.



### Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25

There will be no in-person service.

A Christmas meditation will be posted on the church's website for you to enjoy.

*Merry Christmas to you and your family!*

**Happy New Year!, Sunday, January 1, 2023**  
Please join us after the worship service on Sunday, January 1, to celebrate the New Year with food and games. There will be Hot Dogs and Sauerkraut. Please bring a finger food to share and your favorite game to play.



## Our Life Together In Prayer

### Those in Nursing Homes/Assisted Living:

Heritage Springs: Patricia and Robert Seebold  
Nottingham: George Mull

### Family and Friends of those who have died:

Elsie Mutchler, Mabel June Walter, Deborah Murphy

### Church Members with Concerns:

Lucille Cope, Jim Forster, Dale (Pap) Smith, Donna Sauers,  
Scott Leitzel, Rick Eister, George Mull, Mary Kratzer

### Friends and Family with Concerns:

Frances Stover, John Snook, Mary Hummel, Logan Roush, Cindy Colyer,  
Makena Boyer, Sybil Spotts, Vicki Heimbach, Phyllis Swanger, Keith Phelps,  
John Wagner, Denise Hubbert, Beth Troutman, Jamie Stroup, Adelyn Schlegel,  
Kathy Spangler, Dan Weigle, Bob Witmer, Jr, Pastor Jim Caris, People of Ukraine

### Around the World and Close to Home:

Pray for Peace in our World  
All those serving in the Armed Forces



## Our December Birthdays & Anniversaries



December 4 - Matthew Cope  
December 5 - Carol Miller  
December 6 - Jill Benfer  
December 8 - Debbie Bickel  
December 12 - Jonathon Cope

December 19 - Ricky Cope  
December 20 - Mary Beckley  
December 24 - Bill Hauck  
December 28 - Joyce Kratzer



December 3 - James & Jodi Cope

## 2022 Prayer Partners

*Acts 4:24, 31 (NLT) When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God:... 31 After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.*



If you have participated in the 2022 Prayer Partner program, you may reveal to your prayer partner at your convenience during the month of December. We will be drawing for the 2023 Prayer Partners in the beginning of January. Please contact Pastor Jim or Pastor Jan if you have any questions.

## Ladies Night Out

Ladies Night Out has resumed!  
January's night out is on Tuesday, 1/17  
and the restaurant is the Country Creamery in Kratzerville.  
Signup sheet is on the table in the Fellowship room.  
Hope to see you there!



Our church leaders continually listen for that still, small voice as they discern the next steps for Emmanuel United Church of Christ.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be December 12 at 7:30 p.m.

2022 Emmanuel UCC Church Council

Linda Walter - President

Keith McCool - Vice President

Debra Benfer - Secretary

Vicki Benfer, Audrey Bingaman, Penny Guzanski,  
Martha Hockenberry, Donnie Sauers, Jill Benfer

EMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
NEW BERLIN, PA  
CONSISTORY MINUTES - NOVEMBER 14, 2022

Attendance: Linda Walter, Keith McCool, Deb Benfer, Audrey Bingaman, Martha Hockenberry, Vicki Benfer, Jill Benfer (via phone), Donny Sauers, Pastor Jan Garinger.

Meeting was called to order by President Linda Walter at 7:30pm with devotions by Pastor Jan.

Secretary's Report: Motion to accept the minutes of October 10, 2022, was made by Audrey, seconded by Keith. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Motion to accept the Treasurer's report for October 31, 2022 subject to audit was made by Martha, seconded by Vicki. Motion carried.

Old Business:

1. Roof - Motion was made to have the trustees make a recommendation on the bids and come back to consistory with the results by Audrey, seconded by Martha. Motion carried.
2. Light fixture in sanctuary - Motion was made to have an electrician come and fix it by Audrey, seconded by Donny. Motion carried.
3. Sanctuary painting - research continuing.
4. Parking lot sealing - On hold until Spring.
5. Reserved signs for Pastor parking - Two signs were purchased and Keith's son will make the posts for them.
6. 2023 Budget - Committee of Martha Hockenberry, Sally Farmer, Jim Benfer, and Jay Egli met and brought the proposed budget to consistory. (See New Business)
7. 2023 Consistory nominations - We have Bill Hauck and Mary Beckley. Need one more.
8. Tree trimming - Keith will check with Hackenberg's again.

New Business:

1. Christmas Eve Service - December 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm (Need communion ushers and acolytes).
2. 2023 Budget - Motion to accept the budget presented to the consistory and present it to the congregation was made by Audrey, seconded by Donny. Motion carried.
3. 2023 Consistory nominations - Need to have one more nomination to approve them.
4. Congregational Meeting - Will be December 4, 2022.
5. No service on December 25, 2022.
6. Heating/zone separation between office and Sunday school room will be checked into by the trustees.
7. Review the insurance policy - Beginning of the year a committee will be formed to do this.

Communications:

1. Motion was made to place an ad in the newspapers for Christmas Eve service by Vicki, seconded by Martha. Motion carried.
2. Haven Ministry – Motion to give a \$100 donation (in a Christmas card) was made by Donny, seconded by Vicki. Motion carried.

Pastor's time:

Pastor Jan reported that they finished the Bible Study and will have one in the Spring. She had a major paper for her classes approved. Would like to hold Bible School in the Summer.

Motion was made by Audrey, seconded by Keith to adjourn the meeting at 8:50pm with the Lord's Prayer.

Secretary, Debra Benfer

**If You Look for Me at Christmas...*Author Unknown***



If you look for me at Christmas,  
 you won't need a special star;  
 I'm no longer just in Bethlehem,  
 I'm right there where you are.  
 You may not be aware of Me  
 amid the celebrations.  
 You'll have to look beyond the stores  
 and all the decorations.  
 But if you take a moment  
 from your list of things to do,  
 and listen to your heart, you'll find  
 I'm waiting there for you.  
 You're the one I want to be with,  
 you're the reason that I came,  
 and you'll find Me in the stillness,  
 as I'm whispering your name.

*Love, Jesus*

## Getting to Know You

Our monthly series continues as we feature one of our congregation Cassandra Conrad

**Name:** Cassandra Conrad

**Occupation (If you are retired what did you do for a living?)**  
CAN / Restorative Aide

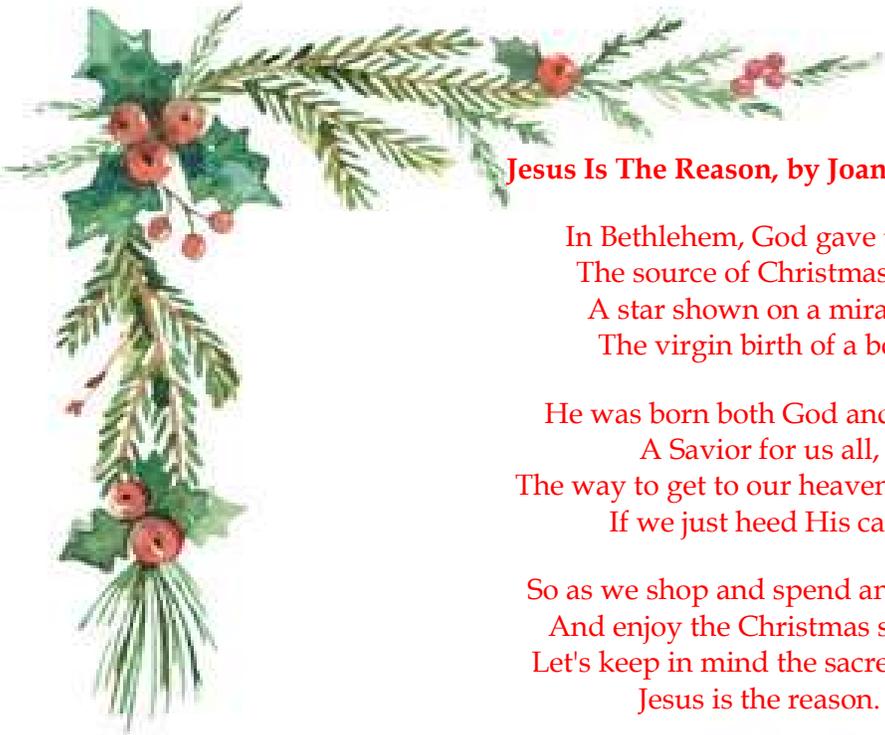
**What is the favorite place that you ever traveled?**  
Ocean City

**What is your favorite Bible verse?**  
Luke 6:35 - Do good and expect nothing in return and your reward will be great.

**What is your favorite memory at Emmanuel?**  
Every time I see my grandchildren participate in the church

**If you could have an endless supply of one food item, what would it be?**  
Chinese food

**What is your hidden talent?**  
I can be/get crafty.

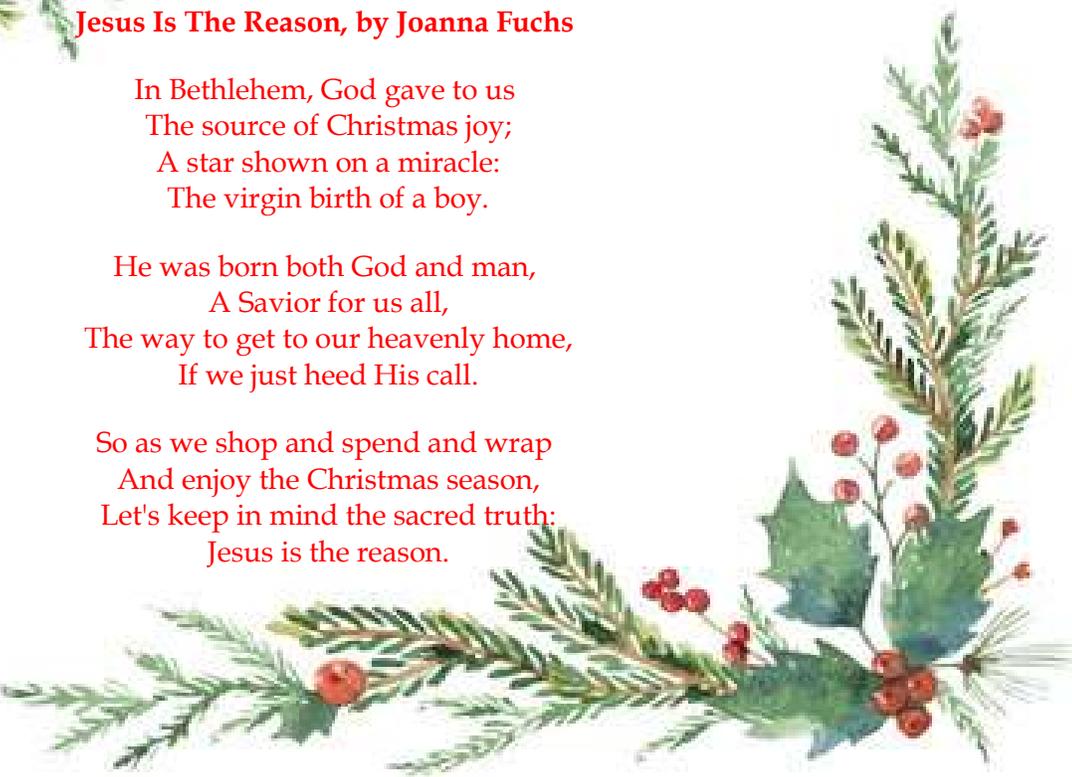


### Jesus Is The Reason, by Joanna Fuchs

In Bethlehem, God gave to us  
The source of Christmas joy;  
A star shown on a miracle:  
The virgin birth of a boy.

He was born both God and man,  
A Savior for us all,  
The way to get to our heavenly home,  
If we just heed His call.

So as we shop and spend and wrap  
And enjoy the Christmas season,  
Let's keep in mind the sacred truth:  
Jesus is the reason.





## Emmanuel United Church of Christ

**Church Address:** 326 Market Street, PO Box 329, New Berlin, PA 17855

**Church email:** [newberlinucc@windstream.net](mailto:newberlinucc@windstream.net)

**Church website:** [www.newberlinucc.org](http://www.newberlinucc.org)

**Church Phone:** 570-966-2880

**Church Secretary:** Shirley Wilhelm

**Office Hours:** As noted in the bulletin

**Pastor:** Dr. James L. Cope

**Pastor Email:** [newberlinuccpastor@windstream.net](mailto:newberlinuccpastor@windstream.net)

**Pastor's Phone:** 570-898-5748

**Pastor in Care:** Jan Garinger

**Pastor in Care Email:** [jang58@ptd.net](mailto:jang58@ptd.net)

**Pastor in Care Phone:** 570-259-2968