

# 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.*

January 2023

A Message from Pastor Jan



In the Daily Devotions for Animal Lovers – “All God’s Creatures” Rosalind C. Hughes wrote the following article.

“When the phone rings at the end of the workday, I know who it is before I even see the caller ID. My son is driving home from his job, a few

hundred miles away, just checking in. His voice accompanies me around the kitchen as I clatter the cat-food dishes. It’s feeding time.

The kittens have never met my son in person. They arrived as nearly new littermates a few weeks after his last visit home, adopted from a local animal shelter where they arrived from out of state, these tiny bundles of rescued love and fur. They have never met him, but whenever I put my son on speaker phone, they abandon their food and run to the sound of his voice. I cannot say for sure what so excites them: whether the vibrations of the phone remind them of their mother’s purring or they are infected by my delight at hearing from him. Perhaps they recognize some family resemblance in his voice. But whatever the reason, they leap up onto the counter and chew on the corner of my phone case, trying to extract him, tasting his words.

I remember how God gave Ezekiel the scroll full of words, full of the Word of God, to eat and to speak, and it tasted sweet, like honey (Ezekiel 3:3). I recall how Jesus at His hungriest said that “Man shall not live on

bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4 NIV).

Although I hope that the kittens do not actually end up eating my phone, they could certainly teach me something about devotion, this pair who love the voice and devour the words of a young man whom they have never met embodied with the affection that is pure and ravenous.”

When I read this story, it reminds me of my Boxer Grand-dog Daisy. When my daughter calls me, we put each other on speakers so that we can continue to do things around the house. When Jenelle tells me that Daisy is right next to her, I say “Daisy - Daisy Mae. Where is Grammy’s girl.” Now understand, that unlike the kittens, Daisy knows her Grammy. Jenelle says she starts to go crazy looking all over the house for me. She runs around looking for me in every room. It melts my heart!

Isn’t this the same kind of love and excitement that we should have when we are listening for God’s “Small Still Voice” to give us direction for our lives. Why do we want to ignore it or block it out? By blocking it out we could be missing such amazing new adventures.

One example of that “Small Still Voice” is what I like to call “God Moments.” Have you ever had one? “God Moments” are when someone comes into your mind and it just will not stop. I say to you don’t ignore it! God is working through you to reach out to that person. Yes, it can sound bazaar but I have found that every time this happens that person needs me in one way or another.

God can use us in more ways that we can ever imagine. All we have to do is listen just like Psalm 46:10 says, “Be still and know that I am God.”

*Peace and blessings*

*Pastor Jan*



Daisy Mae Moyer

# 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.

January 1                      First Sunday After Christmas Day (White)  
*Get Up and Go*  
Pastor Jan preaching and liturgist  
Organist Audrey Bingaman  
**New Year's Celebration following worship.**

January 8                      First Sunday after Epiphany (White)  
*Possibilities Unfolding*  
Pastor Jan preaching and Pastor Jim liturgist  
Organist Audrey Bingaman  
**Social time following worship**

January 15                      Second Sunday after Epiphany (Green)  
*All That We Are*  
Pastor Jim preaching and liturgist  
Organist Audrey Bingaman

January 22                      Third Sunday after Epiphany (Green)  
*Called Together*  
Pastor Jim preaching and liturgist  
Organist Audrey Bingaman

January 29                      Fourth Sunday after Epiphany (Green)  
*The Vision Beautiful*  
Pastor Jan preaching and Pastor Jim liturgist  
Organist Audrey Bingaman



## Our Life Together In Service

### *Christmas Mission 2022 Completed!*



Our Christmas Mission is accomplished!

The gifts have been delivered and because of your generosity, two struggling families will have a very Merry Christmas! Thank you for your help in accomplishing this year's mission, it is very much appreciated. We have been thanked and rethanked for doing this.

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. Hope to see you there!



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, January 19*. 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.





## 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 if you have not already done this.

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.

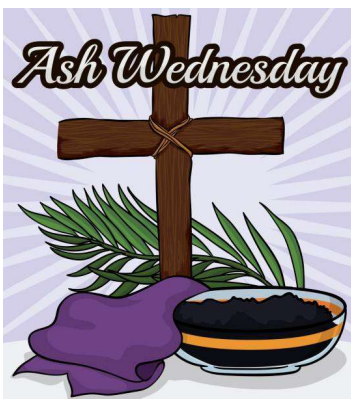
## Ladies Night Out

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!



## Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2023



Pastor Jim and Pastor Jan are offering any and all the opportunity to come to the sanctuary from 6:30 to 8:00 PM on this evening to receive a small prayer and ashes. Please consider beginning your journey through Lent with this very meaningful time of petition and prayer.



Our Deepest Sympathy to the families of  
Ira Keister and Betty Vonada

## 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:**

Loye Leitzel, Ira Keister, Pam Aungst, Velma Lohr Dressler,  
Neil Ulrich, Nestor Bowersox, Betty Vonada

### **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, Keith Phelps, John Wagner, Denise Hubbert, Beth Troutman, Jamie Stroup, Adelynn Schlegel, Kathy Spangler, Dan Weigle, Bob Witmer, Jr, Pastor Jim Caris, Kelly Ferguson, Cynthia Dressler, Melinda Humlichek, Debbie, Mummy, Romaine Kline, People of Ukraine

### **Around the World and Close to Home:**

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



## Our January Birthdays



January 4 – Susan Renninger  
 January 5 – Ellen Benfer  
 January 7 – Carole Spangler  
 January 23 – Irene Burgard  
 January 27 – Becca Delp  
 January 31 – Sean Leitzel

**Epiphany**, also called **Feast of the Epiphany**, **Theophany**, or **Three Kings' Day**, (from Greek *epiphaneia*, “manifestation”), Christian holiday commemorating the first manifestation of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, represented by the Magi, and the manifestation of his divinity, as it occurred at his baptism in the Jordan River and at his first miracle, at Cana in Galilee. Epiphany is one of the three principal and oldest festival days of the Christian church (the other two are Easter and Christmas). Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, and other Western churches observe the feast on January 6, while some Eastern Orthodox churches celebrate Epiphany on January 19, since their Christmas Eve falls on January 6.



The festival originated in the Eastern church, where it at first included a commemoration of Christ's birth. In Rome, by 354 Christ's birth was being celebrated on December 25 (Christmas), and later in the 4th century the church in Rome began celebrating Epiphany on January 6. In the Western church the festival primarily commemorates the visit by the Magi to the infant Jesus, which is seen as evidence that Christ, the Jewish Messiah, came also for the salvation of Gentiles. In the East it primarily commemorates the baptism of Jesus and celebrates the revelation that the incarnate Christ was both fully God and fully man.

In the West the evening preceding Epiphany is called Twelfth Night. The time between December 25 and January 6 is known as the Twelve Days of Christmas. Epiphany is celebrated with special pastries in many countries, and children often receive small gifts in their shoes in honour of the Magi's gifts to the infant Jesus. The holiday also has a number of traditions involving water as a reflection of Jesus' baptism, including the blessing of houses with holy water.

Ethiopian Orthodox Christians celebrate Epiphany, or *Timket*, with a major festival that begins the night before, on *Ketera* (January 18). In honour of Christ's baptism, celebrants escort a replica of the Ark of the Covenant, a *tabot*, to a local body of water with great ceremony. The night is spent in prayer and hymn services. The following morning the congregation is blessed with holy water, and the *tabot* is brought back to its church in a colourful procession. (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Epiphany>)



The True Meaning Behind the "12 Days of Christmas" Song Lyrics, Explained -- Is there really a coded message behind the holiday carol? Whether you love it or hate it, the "12 Days of Christmas" song is a holiday staple. Sure, you might prefer belting out other beloved Christmas carols like "Feliz Navidad" or Mariah Carey's "All I Want For Christmas Is You," but there's something about singing the "12 Days of Christmas" each year that makes you feel a little nostalgic. Even if you don't know all the words, you're likely able to remember an occasional verse like "Nine ladies dancing!" or "A partridge in a pear tree!" But do you know the "12 Days of Christmas" song meaning and the hidden-message theory about the lyrics?

Not much of the song makes much sense in the modern age, but knowing the rich history behind the elaborate song (which ends up totaling 364 gifts, by the way) puts the seemingly odd lyrics in context. Let's dive in!

### **What are the 12 days of Christmas?**

The "12 Days of Christmas" referenced in the carol reference the 12 days following Christmas, also known as Twelvetide in Christianity. The period begins with the birth of Christ on December 25th and ends with the coming of the Three Wise Men on January 6th, also known as the Epiphany or Three Kings Day. The weeks before Christmas are known as Advent – hence, the creation of advent calendars.

### **Is there a hidden meaning behind the "12 Days of Christmas" song?**

There's a theory floating around claiming that during a time when Christians were punished for worshipping openly, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" song was used to secretly pass on the ideology of Christianity. Per this theory, each gift on the list symbolizes a different aspect of the Christian faith:

- The **Partridge in the Pear Tree** is Jesus Christ.
- The **2 Turtle Doves** are The Old and New Testaments.
- The **3 French hens** are Faith, Hope and Charity, the theological virtues.
- The **4 Calling Birds** are the four gospels and/or the four evangelists.
- The **5 Golden Rings** are the first five books of the Old Testament.
- The **6 Geese A-laying** are the six days of creation.
- The **7 Swans A-swimming** are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven sacraments.
- The **8 Maids A-milking** are the eight beatitudes.
- The **9 Ladies Dancing** are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit.
- The **10 Lords A-leaping** are the ten commandments.
- The **11 Pipers Piping** are the eleven faithful apostles.
- The **12 Drummers Drumming** are the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle's Creed.

But while it is true that the "12 days" reference the days between the birth of Christ and the coming of the Magi, Snopes breaks down the many historical and logistical errors in the "hidden meanings" theory, including the biggest flaw in the claim: If Christians were living in fear of even mentioning the basic tenets of Christianity, how were they able to sing a song that mentions the word "Christmas" in every lyric?

Complete article at <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/christmas-ideas/a29212592/12-days-of-christmas-meaning-facts/>





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 January 9 at 7:30 p.m.

2023 Emmanuel UCC Church Council

Vicki Benfer - President

Mary Beckley - Vice President

Debra Benfer - Secretary

Audrey Bingaman, Martha Hockenberry, Donnie Sauers, Jill Benfer,

Marie Eberhart, Bill Hauck

EMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

NEW BERLIN, PA

CONSISTORY MEETING - NOVEMBER 27, 2022

Attendance: Vicki Benfer, Keith McCool, Donny Sauers, Jill Benfer, Martha Hockenberry, Deb Benfer and Linda Walter.

A brief meeting after church to approve the three candidates for consistory (Mary Beckley, Bill Hauck, and Marie Eberhart).

Motion was made to approve them by Donny, seconded by Martha. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned.

Secretary, Debra Benfer

EMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
NEW BERLIN, PA  
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING - DECEMBER 4, 2022

Consistory members present: Linda Walter, Keith McCool, Jill Benfer, Vicki Benfer, Penny Guzinski, Donny Sauers, Martha Hockenberry, Pastor James Cope, and Pastor Jan Garinger.

Approximately 42 members in attendance.

Meeting was called to order following church service by President Linda Walter.

2023 Budget was presented to the congregation (Jay Egli, treasurer noted that the property insurance should be \$7,000 instead of \$6,400). Motion was made to accept the 2023 budget as presented by Mary Beckley, seconded by Donny Sauers. Motion carried.

Candidates for new members – Mary Beckley, Marie Eberhart, and Bill Hauck. Motion to elect these three candidates was made by Jill Benfer, seconded by Donny Sauers. Motion carried. Welcome to new members.

Meeting was adjourned.

Secretary, Debra Benfer

EMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
NEW BERLIN, PA  
CONSISTORY MEETING - DECEMBER 12, 2022

Attendance: Linda Walter, Keith McCool, Deb Benfer, Vicki Benfer, Martha Hockenberry, Donny Sauers, Pastor James Cope, Pastor Jan Garinger, and newly elected members Bill Hauck, Marie Eberhart, and Mary Beckley.

Meeting was called to order by President Linda Walter at 7:30pm with devotions by Pastor Jan based on Luke 2:7.

Secretary's Report: Motion to accept the minutes of November 14, November 27, and December 4, 2022 was made by Martha, seconded by Keith. Motion carried.

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

Old Business:

Trustees report – Trees were trimmed. Working on a way to install Pastor reserve signs. Roofing bids will be looked at in January and will come back to consistory with recommendation.

New Business:

1. Christmas Eve Ushers and Acolytes – Have them.
2. Election of Officers – President – Vicki Benfer was nominated, Vice President – Mary Beckley was nominated, Secretary – Debra Benfer was nominated. Motion to approve the core of officers was made by Marie, seconded by Martha. Motion carried.

Pastor's Time:

Christmas Eve Service is ready.

Pastor James Cope said Thank You to Linda and Keith for their services.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm with the Lord's Prayer.

Secretary, Debra Benfer

## Getting to Know You

Our monthly series continues as we feature one of our congregation, Janice Boyer



**Name:** Janice Boyer

### **Occupation (If you are retired what did you do for a living?)**

After graduating high school, I was hired by Dr. John E. Albright, who taught me the skills of aiding a foot doctor. This included office skills, developing x-rays and assisting with surgeries. No computers, typing on an actual manual typewriter. Ron and I were married while I was employed there. The long Friday night and early Saturday morning hours were hampering our fun times, so I quit.

Fast forward several years and David C. Holman was preparing to open a Podiatric Practice in Mifflinburg. Due to my training by Dr. Albright, I was hired by him and started his opening day. At least now I had an electric typewriter to aid in billing and insurance claims. Then computers were introduced, coding and electronic insurance claims and easier ways of developing x-rays. As each new technology was introduced, I would balk but eventually had to accept it.

After 35 years and at age 70 ½, I told him it was time for me to retire to my recliner.

### **What is the favorite place that you ever traveled?**

Hawaii --- After 25 years with Dr. Holman, he asked where I'd like to go if I could choose anywhere and I said Hawaii. He then gifted Ron and me a 10-day adventure in Hawaii, which included a 7-day cruise of the islands.

### **What is your favorite Bible verse?**

John 4:10 --- This is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

### **What is your favorite memory at Emmanuel?**

My very first visit --- The people were so welcoming and singing hymns from a hymnal. Music speaks to my soul so I feel at home.

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

Chocolate --- Is there anything better?

### **What is your hidden talent?**

As I tell Ron when he gets grumpy, "I sit and think, how can I irritate Ron today?"



## 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