

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 2024

A Message from Pastor Jan

How do you celebrate New Year's Eve? Do you spend it with friends? Do you go out for a nice meal? Do you stay home and watch the festivities on TV? Or do say "I'm not staying up. Goodbye 2023 it's been nice knowing you"?

Every year at the stroke of midnight you will hear people singing at the top of their lungs the Scottish folk song "Auld Lang Syne." When roughly translated it originally meant "days gone by." But in the late 18th century, the poet Robert Burns partially rewrote the lyrics. The new lyrics ask us "be forgot." I bet you singing the song. "Should auld acquaintance be forgot, And never brought to mind?" It is meant to have us remember our friends both past and present, as well as our live experiences. What a beautiful way to start a new year!

Oh. how this song brings back beautiful memories for me. As a child, I would spend every New Years Eve with my grammy. We would have all kinds of goodies to eat. I was allowed to stay up until midnight and we would sing this memorial song together at the stroke of midnight. We would sing right along with Guy Lombardo and the Royal Canadians.

At the end of a new year, we all think back to those memories in our lives. The happy ones, as well as the sad ones. Yes, this is important to remember, but it is just as important to look ahead. Look ahead to the new memories that we will make. The new paths in life that God will lead on.

On New Years many people make New Year's resolutions. You know things like: I am going to exercise more, I am going to eat better, I am going to....

and you fill in the blank. I have to be honest I do not make a New Year's resolution. Why? Well, when I fail, I feel worse about myself than I did before I made the resolution.

Instead of a New Year's resolutions like these, why don't we resolve to be kinder, more loving, and more caring. To be open to the Savior's call for us and go where we are led. Ok, I have to admit that it may not be an easy resolution to keep and at times we might fall short, but oh how it will fill us with love and peace when we see how this resolution touches others' lives. All God asks of us is to try and to do our best.

Let us all find resolve to find the opportunities hidden in each new day. The opportunities to be loving, kind, and understanding to everyone we meet.

Peace and blessings

Pastor Jan



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 later in the day.

January 7 The Baptism of Christ (White)
Defining Moment
Pastor Jim preaching and Pastor Jan liturgist
Organist Audrey Bingaman

January 14 Second Sunday after Epiphany (Green)
Known and Loved
Pastor Jan preaching and Pastor Jim liturgist
Organist Audrey Bingaman
Social time following worship

January 21 Third Sunday after Epiphany (Green)
Follow Me
Pastor Jim preaching and Pastor Jan liturgist
Organist Audrey Bingaman

January 28 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany (Green)
Power to Do
Pastor Jan preaching and Pastor Jim liturgist
Organist Audrey Bingaman



Our Life Together In Prayer

Those in Nursing Homes/Assisted Living:

Heritage Springs: Patricia and Robert Seebold

Family and Friends of those who have died:

Raymond Hoffmaster, Carol Mensch, Donna Shultz, Fay Foster,
Kathy Ranney, Mabel "Susie" Shively, Kitty Frederick

Church Members with Concerns:

Lucille Cope, Donna Sauers, Harry & Mary Kratzer, Scott Leitzel,
Barb Stamm, Bill & Toni Hauck, Jill Benfer, Jodi Cope, Jan Garinger

Friends and Family with Concerns:

Jim Ranney, Francis & Nancy Griffin, Joey Adams, Lisa Williams, Mallory Spade,
Glenn Weaver, Marie Ordonez, Ray & Freida Walter, Judy Brewbaker,
Charles "Chuck" Ritter, Clair Zimmerman, Jeanne Hess, Earl Ferry, Ron Trick,
Elizabeth Klose, Gaye Solomon Wetzel, Linda Martin, Jean Ray, Kurt Kosa,
Barbara Campbell, Sue Mapes, Phyllis & Gerald Evey, Grace Jordan, Mackena Boyer,
Jeremiah Spade, Don Groner

Around the World and Close to Home:

Pray for Peace in our World

All those serving in the Armed Forces

Names will remain on the Prayer List for 6 weeks.

If you wish they remain longer than 6 weeks, please contact the Church Secretary or the Pastors.



Our January Birthdays



January 4 - Susan Renninger

January 5 - Ellen Benfer

January 6 - James Forster

January 7 - Carole Spangler

January 23 - Irene Burgard

January 27 - Becca Delp

January 31 - Sean Leitzel

Our Life Together In Service



Christmas Mission 2023

Our Christmas Mission is accomplished! The gifts have been delivered and because of your generosity, six children had 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.

2024 Prayer Partners

Matthew 18: 19-20 *Even Jesus himself suggested that this strategy brings exceptional power. He said, "If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them."*



If you have participated in the 2023 Prayer Partner program, you may reveal to your prayer partner if you have not already done this.

We will be drawing for the 2024 Prayer Partners in the beginning of January. Please contact Pastor Jim or Pastor Jan if you have any questions.

Men's Breakfast

Please join the men of Emmanuel UCC for breakfast. The men will be meeting on *Wednesday, January 10*, 8:30 a.m., at the East Side Diner in Mifflinburg. Hope you can attend!



MEN'S
BREAKFAST

Ladies Night Out

Ladies Night Out will be on
Tuesday, January 16, at Marzoni's in Selinsgrove.
Sign-up sheet will be in the Fellowship room.
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.

Next distribution: **Thursday, January 18**

Suggested food items from Emmanuel for the month are canned fruits, spaghetti sauce, soup, and peanut butter. Also the Food Pantry greatly appreciates your monetary

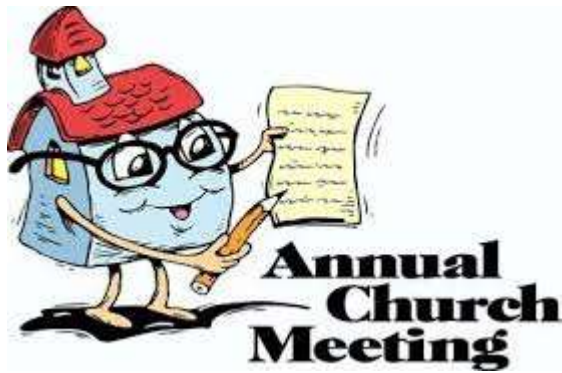
contributions as well. This allows them to purchase other items that are needed. We do thank all those who make donations and offer their time to make this mission and service possible for those who are in need.

Senior Community Luncheon

Senior Community Luncheons at Emmanuel United Church of Christ will be 11:30 to 1:00 pm on
Thursday, January 25

Come socialize with your neighbors and enjoy a hot lunch and fellowship. Friends and neighbors in the New Berlin area and beyond are invited to come and enjoy this time of good food and wonderful fellowships!





Annual Church Meeting Sunday, February 11

The Annual Church Meeting is scheduled for *Sunday, February 11*, following worship. Committee Reports are due to the Church Office by *January 21*.

Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024

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.



"Wish List"



~~ Pastor Jan "wishes" for a Wheeled Utility Cart for games

Is there an item that you need but just have not found it?

Is there an item you see that our church needs?

You may hear that someone needs an item that you have, whether its slightly used or new.

We have started a "Wish List" for the newsletter that will list the items (personal or for the church). If you have the item that someone is wishing for, please contact them. If you are looking for an item, please give a note to Vicki Benfer and she will add it to the "Wish List".

What Is Epiphany? The Meaning of Epiphany, How To Celebrate and When To Mark the 12th Day of Christmas

What is Epiphany and what happens on this day?

'Plus, find out when Epiphany 2024 takes place.

By Jessica Sager, <https://parade.com/1315688/jessicasager/epiphany/>



Epiphany is a meaningful time for many Christians. One of the very first holidays (also called feast days) of the year, Epiphany comes on the heels of Christmas celebrations and is a time of joy and faith. While the biblical origins of Epiphany remain relatively consistent among believers, the actual holiday itself, from the date to its name to its length, actually varies greatly. What is Epiphany **and** what happens on Epiphany? Find out!

What is the meaning of Epiphany?

Epiphany, also called Theophany, is a celebration of God manifesting as the baby Jesus and revealing Himself to the world. The holiday also marks the day the Magi, or the three kings, visited the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. Jesus' baptism is also celebrated during Epiphany. The holiday is also sometimes known as Three Kings Day.

What happens on Epiphany?

During Epiphany, people celebrate the Magi (also known as the three kings or the three wise men, though their number is never actually revealed in the Bible) following a star to visit baby Jesus. According to the BBC, experts believe the Magi were astronomers (some cite them as astrologers) who paid close attention to the stars and planets above. The star is called The Star of Bethlehem. It has been visible several times since Jesus' birth, though it's rare: It was most recently visible in December 2020 and will likely not be seen again until 2080.

What is the Epiphany in the Bible?

In the Bible, the Epiphany is Jesus' visit from the Magi, aristocratic men from the east (often referred to as kings or wise men) followed a star to see the newborn baby Jesus in Bethlehem. The Magi brought Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Gold was considered a symbol of kings, frankincense a perfume representing divinity, and myrrh an anointing and embalming oil that symbolized death.

How do you celebrate the Epiphany?

Epiphany celebrations vary by culture. Many people in the United States honor the Epiphany by eating king cake and putting away Christmas decorations.

How long does the Epiphany last?

The Epiphany date can vary by culture and specific religion. Most commonly, the Epiphany is recognized on January 6, or the first Sunday falling between January 2 and January 8.

Some religions and cultures recognize Epiphany as an entire season lasting from Christmas until February, while others celebrate Epiphany season from the Feast of the Epiphany to Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent.

When is Epiphany in 2024?

Epiphany will be widely celebrated on Saturday, January 6, 2024. Others may celebrate on Sunday, January 7, 2024, or throughout a much larger season, as explained above.

What is the message of Epiphany?

The message of Epiphany can be interpreted in several ways, and none are right or wrong. Some believe it is a message of faith in divine light, which guided the Magi to Bethlehem. Others interpret it as a celebration of Jesus coming to unite the world as the true "king of kings" and that He came to be a savior to all people.

Is January 6th the 12th day of Christmas?

Almost! January 6 is often regarded as Epiphany, while January 5th is called "Twelfth Night" in some areas of the world (and it's where the **William Shakespeare** play got its name). It is considered "Epiphany Eve" and the 12th day of Christmas.

Do Protestants believe in Epiphany?

Some Protestant religions believe in Epiphany, but it is mostly recognized by Catholic and Orthodox churches.

The Blessing of Homes at Epiphanytide

This is a tradition that dates back to the Middle Ages, done on (or near) the feast of Epiphany. Using chalk blessed on Epiphany, mark your main door (or its lintel) with:

20 + C + M + B + XX

where 20XX is the current year.

The following prayer may be said while making the marks:

The three wise men
(C) Caspar, **(M)** Melchior, and **(B)** Balthasar
 followed the star of God's Son who became human
(20) two thousand and **(XX)** _____ years ago.
(++) May Christ bless our home
(++) and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen.

** Chalk is an incarnational image reminding us of the dust of the earth from which we were made. The initials CMB stand for the legendary names of the Magi, as well as Christus Mansionem Benedicat, "May Christ bless this house."*



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 8 at 7:30 p.m.

2024 Emmanuel UCC Church Council

Mary, Beckley, Audrey Bingaman, Donnie Sauers, Jill Benfer,
Marie Eberhart, Bill Hauck, Ron Boyer, Scott Leitzel, Keith McCool

EMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
NEW BERLIN, PA
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING - DECEMBER 10, 2023

Attendance: 28 congregational members including the following consistory members: Vicki Benfer, Deb Benfer, Jill Benfer, Martha Hockenberry, Mary Beckley, Audrey Bingaman, Marie Eberhart, and Pastor James Cope, and Pastor Jan Garinger.

Meeting was opened by President Vicki Benfer at 10:35 am.

Approval of 2024 Budget:

Motion was made by Jan Boyer, seconded by Mary Beckley to accept the 2024 Budget as presented. Motion carried.

Nomination of New Consistory Members:

We have Scott Leitzel, Keith McCool, and Ron Boyer. Motion to accept these three members was made by Audrey Bingaman, seconded by Wilma Leitzel. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned with prayer by Pastor James Cope at 10:45 am.

Secretary, Debra Benfer

EMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
NEW BERLIN, PA
CONSISTORY MEETING - DECEMBER 11, 2023

Attendance: Vicki Benfer, Mary Beckley, Deb Benfer, Marie Eberhart, Audrey Bingaman, Bill Hauck, Martha Hockenberry, Pastor James Cope (via phone), and Pastor Jan Garinger, and newly elected member Ron Boyer.

Meeting was called to order by President Vicki Benfer at 7:40pm with devotions later in the meeting by Pastor James Cope.

Secretary's Report: Motion to accept the minutes of November 13, 2023 and After Church Meeting on November 19, 2023 was made by Martha, seconded by Marie. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Motion to accept the treasurer's report for November 2023 subject to audit was made by Audrey, seconded by Mary. Motion carried.

Old Business:

1. Upstairs bathroom repairs - everything is done.
2. CPR/AED Training - Will be scheduled in 2024.
3. Insurance policy - Trustees will review this with an agent in 2024 and report their findings.

New Business:

1. Christmas Eve Service - Need candle lighters and ushers for communion.
2. Stipend funds for Scott Benfer, Jim Benfer, and Vicki Benfer - Vice President Mary Beckley handled this matter. Motion was made by Mary to give the three sound/video crew named a gift of \$200 each, seconded by Audrey. Motion carried.
3. 2024 Annual Meeting - February 11, 2024 - All reports are due to Shirley by January 21, 2024.
4. Election of 2024 Consistory Officers - Due to the absence of several members; elections will be done at the January 2024 meeting.

Pastor's Time:

Pastor Cope expressed Thank You to leaving members for their service and a Welcome to new members.

Motion to adjourn with the Lord's Prayer at 8:10pm was made by Bill, seconded by Martha. Motion carried.

Secretary, Debra Benfer



Emmanuel United Church of Christ

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

Church email: newberlinucc@windstream.net

Church website: 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

Pastor's Phone: 570-898-5748

Pastor in Care: Jan Garinger

Pastor in Care Email: jang58@ptd.net

Pastor in Care Phone: 570-259-2968