



# MCOB NEWSLETTER



Week of First Sunday in Advent, December 1

Pastor on Call: Amy Gall Ritchie 765.967.0657

Deacon on Call: Chuck Bell

We welcome all to join in prayer...

♥ We hold the **Burkett** and **Wion** families in prayer as they ended last week of memorial services and nearness of family. May we hold Carol and Di in particular closeness as so many get on with their living, as they develop new daily patterns amidst their grief and all accompanying emotions.

♥ We pray for **Esther Hamer**, whose son-in-law **Thomas Schweer** of Germany, died at home of metastatic colon cancer at age 68. Thomas was married to **Esther's daughter Krista**. We hold **Esther, Krista** and the **whole family** in the love of God.

♥ We pray for **Suzy Townsend**, who broke her wrist recently. We give thanks for her family that surrounds her with love and support.

♥ We hold **Jim Myer** in prayer for his eagerly anticipated surgery to receive a pacemaker, on December 6.

♥ We hold our **college youth** in prayer as they finish up their fall semesters. May they have and use all the moments needed to study, absorb, write, test, and restore along the way.

♥ We lift **Hannah Lehman** in prayer as she moves through her year of volunteering. She is learning to listen as an empathetic witness, one who leans into the lives and hearts of others. May she have the nearness of support for this crucial work.

♥ We continue to hold in actionable prayer, the **relief efforts** around the hurricane devastation in **Tennessee, Western North Carolina, and Florida**, as folks continue to rake through belongings, navigate roadlessness, and destroyed homes. We are grateful for **Brethren Disaster Ministries** and **all the people** it takes to see a project through start to finish.

♥ We pray for **cease fires**, and the **end to all wars**. We pray for the **courage** and **knowledge** that allow for the humans in charge to use higher levels of thinking and brain power, activated by head, heart and wholeness so that war can be a thing of the past.

♥ We pray for our sister church in El Salvador, **Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel** and the **San Raphael Clinic**.

♥ We pray for our **District Executive Minister, Laura Stone** and the **District Office Administrative Assistant, Sarah O'Hara**. We pray for the leadership and ministry teams of the **Church of the Brethren**.

## Weekly Calendar (Office Open Mon - Fri 1 to 3pm)

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 2

- 1:00 p.m. Pickleball | FLC
- 6:30 p.m. Handbell Choir Practice | Sanctuary
- 7:00 p.m. Education Commission | Conference Room

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3

- 9:30 a.m. Preschool
- 10:00 a.m. Pastors Meeting
- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting
- 3:30 p.m. Women's Book Group | Video Conference
- 5:30 p.m. Fellowship Commission Meeting
- 7:00 p.m. Property Commission | Conference Room
- 7:00 p.m. Volleyball | FLC

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4

Midweek Update on YouTube

- 9:30 a.m. Preschool
- 1:00 p.m. Tennis | FLC
- 1:30 p.m. Worship Music Meeting
- 4:00 p.m. Messiah Sing-a-Long** | Timbercrest Chapel (ALL ARE INVITED!)
- 6:00 p.m. FLC Reserved
- 7:30 p.m. PMPC | Conference Room

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5

- 9:30 a.m. Preschool
- 1:00 p.m. SMH Working Session | Video Conference
- 5:00 p.m. Gun Violence Prevention Meeting | Chapel
- 7:00 p.m. Sanctuary Choir Practice

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6

- 9:30 a.m. Preschool
- 1:00 p.m. Pickleball | FLC
- 6:00 p.m. Food, Fun, & Friends** *Flanging of the Greens* | Narthex

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8 *Second Sunday of Advent*

- 9:20 a.m. Advent season pre-service music
- 9:30 a.m. Worship (Jim Chinworth preaching)
- "Close to Home: Laying the Foundation (Peace)"**
- Text: Luke 1:57-80; Philippians 1:3-11
- Mentor Recognition
- 10:45 a.m. Sunday School (Peace Patch Gathering) & Adult Christian Education
- 12:00 p.m. Immigrant Support | Library
- 7:00 p.m. Youth Group | FLC Youth Room



*God knows your name, but many folks are still learning. Please wear your name tags as our community grows with new people. This is an easy way of connecting with one another and putting faces to names. Thank you!*



### ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION (DEC.8)

**ALL THINGS CONSIDERED** (Room 220)

**Bob Bowman:** *finishing the story of Luke*

**KOINONIA** (Conference Room)

**BOOK STUDY** with **GENE ROOP:** Isaiah 7:10-14, Matthew 1:15-25

**QUESTERS** (Chapel)

**Book Discussion:** *"Hallelujah Anyway: Rediscovering Mercy"* by Anne Lamott

### [Click here for Time & Talent Survey](#)



There are many ways to serve and uphold one another. There are so many kinds of tasks and services to step into. Do what brings you joy, maybe take on one thing that is an easy challenge. You are gratefully supported in your service!

**Nurture NUDGE:** This is the first week of Advent, and our focus is on Hope. What are your favorite Christmas decorations, and the story behind them? How do they touch hope within you?



*Please do NOT remove the 3 directory drafts in the narthex. These are for everyone to check and mark their contact info if necessary. Please contact the church office if you have questions. Thank you.*

Our theme for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, is Close to Home. When something hits close to home, it affects us deeply. Close to Home acknowledges the “already but not yet” tension of our faith: Emmanuel is with us, and yet, we are find ourselves wandering far from home. May God come close to each of this season.

### *Advent Devotionals*

The Brethren Press devotionals, entitled, “Sing Gloria!” by Laura Stone are available.

### *Food, Fun, & Friends (Hanging of the Greens)*

December 6th at 6pm

Come for fellowship, pizza and stay to help prepare the church for the Advent season.

### *Angel Tree Ministry*

December 11th by 3pm

Gifts to be returned by December 11th to the church narthex or office.

### *Wear Purple for Worship*

December 15th at 9:30am

A visual reminder of the Advent season, we hope purple will act as a stoplight to remind us to slow down and pay attention.

### *Caroling at Timbercrest*

December 17th at 6:30pm

All ages and singing voices welcome as we gather at Timbercrest.

### *Blue Christmas*

December 20th at 6pm in the Chapel

A service of grief, sorrow, and loss during the Christmas season.

### *Sounds & Tastes of Christmas*

December 22nd at 6:30pm

An intergenerational variety show that celebrates the Advent & Christmas seasons. Refreshments will follow.

### *Christmas Eve Candlelight Service*

December 24th at 7:00pm

We gather for our traditional candlelight service.

## Executive Board Update

Lila Hammer, Executive Board chair



### *Envisioning Our Future: Aligning with God's Purpose with Greg Laszakovits*

*“The Aligning with God's Purpose Review and Recommendation Process is designed to help congregations understand and analyze their current state of ministry in the context of an ever-changing, post-COVID world. The goal is to create stronger and more focused congregations that know who they are, know how they are gifted by God, and know how to use those gifts to serve the world.”*

**Why are we doing this?** Times are changing, our congregational demographic is changing – are we ready for these changes? We seek to understand who we are and how God is calling us to live out our faith.

**How is this different from Wild Hopes & Dreams?** The Wild Hopes & Dreams exercise was a great springboard for helping us begin to identify possible directions and ministries for our congregation. This *Aligning with God's Purpose* process is the next step in our discernment about God's calling for us.

**Why are we having an outsider here?** Sometimes it's good to have a neutral party help us look at ourselves. Sometimes we're just too close to a situation – or we're too invested in a specific plan/ministry/process – to look at ourselves objectively. Often there is more truth in how others see us than how we see ourselves.

**What will happen on December 15-16?** Greg will preach on Sunday morning and present *Trends in Thriving Congregations* during the Sunday School hour. And for the remainder of Sunday and all-day Monday Greg will conduct confidential individual 20-minute interviews with you to learn as much as he can about our congregation. Greg also plans to spend time with our youth on Sunday evening. Zoom interviews will be available later for those who cannot attend in person.

**What questions will we be asked in the interview?** We don't know the exact questions Greg will ask; however, the interview process is aimed at helping us identify who we are as a post-Covid congregation, and what God is calling us to do (our ministry/mission), and describe how we can be better equipped/structured to fulfill our ministry/mission.

**Then what?** Greg will compile all the information he learns from the interviews – along with many other documents he's been sent – into a report with his observations and recommendations for moving us forward toward our goals. He will present his findings to the congregation in late February or early March.

**What this process is NOT:** Greg is not coming to “fix” us. He is not coming to help us get a new pastor. Nor is he coming to tell us what to do next. These are all things we – as a congregation – will address after reviewing and discussing Greg's report and recommendations.

[CLICK HERE](#) to sign up for your individual interview with Greg.

Questions? Please contact Lila Hammer at ldhammer@manchester.edu or 260-578-0393.



Decorate  
the Church



The *Worship Décor Committee* and the *Fellowship Commission* are offering you an opportunity to assist in decorating the church for

advent. This family friendly event will happen on **Friday, December 6 at 6pm.** The Fellowship Commission will provide **PIZZA** and Worship Décor will provide the decorations, and creative direction! Please join us! All are invited.



## Looking Ahead in Worship...



### Second Sunday in Advent

December 8

Preacher: Jim Chinworth

Text: Luke 21:25-36; 1 Thess.3:9-13

Theme: Laying the Foundation (Peace)

### Third Sunday in Advent (Wear purple to church)

December 15

Preacher: Greg Davidson Laszakovits

Text: Luke 3:1-18; Zephaniah 3:14-20

Theme: Close to Home: A home for all (Joy)

### Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 22

Text: Luke 1:39-55

Theme: Close to Home: Laying the Foundation (Peace)

### Christmas Eve (Tuesday)

December 24 at 7pm

Traditional Candlelight Service

Text: Luke 2:1-20

Theme: Close to Home: Invited Home

### Christmastide (First Sunday after Christmas)

December 29

Text: Luke 2:41-52; Colossians 3:12-17

Theme: Close to Home: Chosen Home

## Mentor

Noun (n.)

1. an experienced and trusted adviser
2. someone who provides wise counsel and guidance
3. one willing to spend their time and expertise to guide the development of another person
4. a great mentor is hard to find, difficult to part with and impossible to forget
5. one who is admired and appreciated

## MENTOR

## RECOGNITION

**We will recognize our outgoing Mentor & Mentee pairs next Sunday, December 8, during worship.**

We welcome **GREG LASZAKOVITS**

from GDL Insight to help us

Envision our Future!

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15 &  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 16**

Greg will conduct confidential individual interviews with questions focused on:

1. Who are we as a congregation?
2. What is God calling us to do (our ministry/mission)?
3. How can we be better equipped to fulfill our ministry/mission?



## SHEPHERD'S CENTER FALL PROGRAMS

All programs at NM Library in the Blocher Room at 9:30am. (AiL means *Adventures in Learning*)

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4

CURRENT EVENTS in AGRICULTURE: **JOHN HARTSOUGH** - Local Farmer  
AiL: **Vision for El Salvador** - **Brian Daniels**, Retired Timbercrest Director of Programs & Services - **Lin Metzger**, Pastor of Peoria Church



*Changing Lives Through Song*

***YOU ARE INVITED !***

"Heartland Sings" of Fort Wayne, Indiana, has been "Changing Lives Through Song," since 1997.

Four members from "Heartland Sings," including Maestro Robert Nance, are presenting a free Christmas performance of secular and sacred music at Eel River Community Church of the Brethren on Wednesday, December 18, at 7:00 P.M.

A time of cookies and fellowship will follow!

**Please plan to bring your friends  
and families for this joyful occasion!**

Yours in Christ,

Eel River Community COB  
2507 E State Road 14  
Silver Lake, IN 46982



\*Please invite everyone and email [erccob@gmail.com](mailto:erccob@gmail.com) with an estimate of the number of people planning to attend by Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>.

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*Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.  
Please make sure your contact information is correct  
for our upcoming 2025 Church Directory!*

