



# MCOB NEWSLETTER



Week of Second Sunday in Advent, December 8

Pastor on Call: Amy Gall Ritchie 765.967.0657

Deacon on Call: Donna Ritchey Martin

We welcome all to join in prayer...

♥ We give thanks for a successful pacemaker procedure for **Jim Myer**. He was home the same day. We give thanks to his sister, **Jeannie**, and sister-in-law, **Nancy**, who were a big support to him.

♥ We remember **Devon Metzger** who died last week. We pray for his wife **Dianne**, sister **Yvonne**, and close **cousins** and **friends**. There will be a memorial service on January 18 at 11:30 in the Timbercrest Chapel.

♥ We continue to pray for **all** who mourn.

♥ We pray for **all** who are making life decisions and medical decisions in order to live fully each day.

♥ We give thanks for the **local firefighters** who managed destructive fires in the middle of the night. We pray for any workers within, and the loss of poultry in Saturday's blaze at Hi-Grade Egg producers, a company owned and operated by the Krouse family. We pray for **Dan** and **Paige**, **Charlie** and **Alice**. We pray for any loss of human life, employment, poultry life, and business structures.

♥ We pray for **law enforcement officers** who engaged in the dangerous stand-off in North Manchester last week. And we pray for lives that are lived in such a state of devastation that their choices and actions lead to stand-offs. May we continue to work for **gun-violence prevention**.

♥ We pray for our **country**, the **upcoming transitions**, and **those** who are being appointed to powerful positions. May they have wisdom that surprises them for the good of all people.

♥ We pray for the **week ahead**, as plans are made and changed, as we hang on till the winter break begins, as we decorate in the **spirit of Christmas** and the remembrance of the **birth of Christ**.

♥ We pray for our life **together** as a congregation as we pray and care for one another.

♥ We pray for our sister church in El Salvador, **Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel** and with others in our district for the **Buck Creek Congregation** and **Southeastern District**.

## Weekly Calendar (Office Open Mon - Fri 1 to 4pm)

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 9

1:00 p.m. Pickleball | FLC

6:30 p.m. Handbell Choir Practice | Sanctuary

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10

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

7:00 p.m. Volleyball | FLC

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11 *Angel Tree Gifts due!*

Midweek Update on YouTube

Second Harvest Tailgate

9:30 a.m. Preschool

1:00 p.m. Tennis | FLC

1:30 p.m. Worship Music Meeting

7:00 p.m. FLC Reserved

7:00 p.m. Witness Commission | Video Conference

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12

9:30 a.m. Preschool

5:00 p.m. Gun Violence Prevention Meeting | Chapel

7:00 p.m. Sanctuary Choir Practice

7:00 p.m. Stewardship Commission | Video Conference

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13

9:30 a.m. Preschool

1:00 p.m. Pickleball | FLC

2:00 p.m. Timbercrest Choir Christmas Music Program | Assembly Room (all invited)

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15 *Third Sunday of Advent (Wear purple!)*

9:20 a.m. Advent season pre-service music

9:30 a.m. Worship Guest Preacher: **Greg Laszakovits**

[Close to Home: A home for all \(Joy\)](#)

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

10:45 a.m. Sunday School

12:00 p.m. Interviews with Greg | Conference Room

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.15)

**ALL THINGS CONSIDERED** (meet in Sanctuary)

**KOINONIA** (NO CLASS)

**QUESTERS** (Chapel) **Book Discussion:** "Hallelujah Anyway: Rediscovering Mercy"

**Nurture NUDGE:** *Life is full of ups and downs. How have you been able to recover from the down times? Is it the help of rest, friends, community, purpose? When you are on an upswing, are you able to offer recovery to someone on the downswing? How does your faith inform the highs and lows, dark and light, joy and concerns in life? Reread the Zechariah and Elizabeth story from the gospel of Luke this week to perhaps give language to your own pauses and praises.*



Please contact the church office if you need any help updating or checking your information!



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.

### 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 spotlight 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.

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?



### 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.



All are invited! Meet in the **Assembly Room** at **6:30pm**.

**CLICK HERE** to sign up for your individual interview with Greg. **Questions?**

Please contact **Lila Hammer** at [ldhammer@manchester.edu](mailto:ldhammer@manchester.edu) or 260-578-0393.

Manchester Church of the Brethren

All are welcome, always.

# BLUE Christmas

A SERVICE FOR WHEN ALL IS NOT MERRY AND BRIGHT

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20 | 6 PM (Church Chapel)

Blue Christmas Vigil: a contemplative service for those experiencing grief and complicated emotions in this Christmas season. Feel free to bring an item that reminds you of the person you've lost or the relationship/situation that brings sadness.

## Looking Ahead in Worship...

### 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

Preacher: Jim Chinworth

Text: Luke 1:39-55

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



### 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

# Sounds & Tastes of Christmas

Sunday, December 22

CHURCH SANCTUARY

6:30pm

### Hurricane Relief

Here are some links to trusted places to direct donations for Hurricane Relief:

### HURRICANE RELIEF EFFORTS

- [Church of the Brethren Disaster Relief](#)
- [Church World Service](#)
- [Appalachia Funders Network Helene Response Fund](#)
- [Mutual Aid Disaster Relief](#)
- [BeLoved Asheville](#)
- [East Tennessee Foundation](#)
- [Tampa Bay Rapid Response Fund](#)
- [Harvest Hope Food Bank](#)

En este mundo adverso,  
lleno de tristezas y dolores,  
irrumpe la noticia,  
Que un niño es nacido,  
un hijo nos es dado,  
y se llamará  
Príncipe de La Paz.

Que la Fe y  
la Esperanza animen  
nuestros corazones para  
trabajar por un mundo mejor,  
donde las niñas y los niños  
tengan derecho a ser felices,

Que sea posible el mundo  
que Dios quiere, un mundo  
de Fraternidad, de Justicia  
y Paz,

¡Felices y Bendecidas  
Navidades!

Iglesia Bautista  
Emmanuel

Provided as a translation from Google: ***In this adverse world full of sadness and pain, dawn breaks. A child is born, a son is given to us and he will be called Prince of Peace. Hope encourages our hearts to work for a better world where girls and boys have the right to be happy. May a world of brotherhood, justice and peace be possible. Happy and blessed Christmas.***



McCB and Eel River CoB

Wabash County IN  
Growing Project

**In 2024:**

- You raised **\$4,132**
- You helped **75** people find lasting solutions to hunger
- You supported the **Palestine Tubas** program



**Thank you for growing lasting solutions to hunger!**  
To learn more, visit [GrowingHopeGlobally.org](http://GrowingHopeGlobally.org)



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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!*

