

**December 2024**



**Ebensburg  
Presbyterian  
Church**

**Mission Statement:**

*"Ebensburg Presbyterians  
are Christians giving help  
and hope to all by sharing  
God's love."*

**Contact us**

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**Web page:**

www.ebgpresby.org

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Ebensburg Presbyterian  
Church

**Worship Service**

Sunday Worship 1100 AM

**Church Staff**

Rev. Danielle Kendig

Church Treasurer

Kristine Segear

Clerk of Session

Jim Stratton

Secretary

Martha O'Brien

Custodian

Don Buterbaugh

Organist

Melissa Douglas

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**PHOTO CREDITS:**

*P. 12 photo by Herman Carl  
Back cover photo by Kris Segear*



**CHURCH HOURS**  
*Monday: 9:30-3:00  
Tuesday: 9:30-3:00  
Wednesday: 9:30-1:30  
Thursday: 9:30-3:00  
Friday: Closed*

# From Pastor Danielle's Desk

Dear Church Family,

The season of Advent is upon us—a season of waiting, watching, and anticipating the arrival of our Lord. As we light each candle on the Advent wreath, our hearts are drawn toward the hope, peace, joy, and love that come with the birth of Christ. It is a time of both preparation and celebration, a time when we stand between the “already” of Christ’s first coming and the “not yet” of His promised return.

Advent is countercultural in its pace and focus. While the world around us rushes toward Christmas with frantic busyness, Advent invites us to pause, to breathe, and to wait. This waiting is not passive but active—it is a time to prepare our hearts and homes for the coming of the Christ Child. It is an opportunity to reflect on what it means to welcome Emmanuel, God with us, into our lives.

## *Waiting for the Lord*

Waiting is hard, isn’t it? Whether it’s waiting for answers, waiting for healing, or waiting for a promise to be fulfilled, it can feel as though time stands still. Yet Advent reminds us that waiting is not wasted. It is in the waiting that God works, shaping us, preparing us, and drawing us closer to Him.

The people of Israel knew what it meant to wait. For centuries, they longed for the Messiah, clinging to the promises spoken by the prophets. In their waiting, they learned to trust God’s timing, even when it felt as if He was silent. And when the fullness of time came, the Messiah arrived—not in the way they expected, but in the humble birth of a baby in Bethlehem.

In our waiting this Advent season, let us remember that God is faithful. Just as He fulfilled His promise to send a Savior, He will fulfill His promises to us. Advent calls us to trust in God’s timing, to lean into His presence, and to prepare our hearts for His coming.

## *The Birth of Christ*

The beauty of the Christmas story is in its simplicity and its majesty. A young mother, a humble carpenter, a baby born in a stable—all part of God’s extraordinary plan to bring salvation to the world. The angels’ proclamation to the shepherds still rings with wonder:

*"Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11)*

This good news is for all people, including us, here and now. The birth of Christ changes everything. It reminds us that God is not distant but near, not indifferent but deeply invested in our lives. Through Jesus, God stepped into our world, into our messiness and brokenness, to bring light and life.

## *Hearing the Story Anew*

One of the most profound ways to experience the Christmas story is through fresh eyes. This brings to mind the movie *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. If you haven’t seen it, it’s the story of a church Christmas pageant turned upside down by the arrival of the Herdman kids—six unruly siblings who know nothing about church, let alone the Nativity story. As the Herdmans hear the story of Jesus’ birth for the first time, they are captivated. They ask honest, unfiltered questions: “Why was He born in a barn? Why didn’t someone give them a better place to stay? Who are these Wise Men, and why didn’t they help?” Their raw, emotional reactions challenge the churchgoers, who have grown comfortable with the story, to see it anew.



Continued...

# From Pastor Danielle's Desk



What unfolds is both hilarious and deeply moving. By the time the pageant arrives, the Herdmans' authenticity brings a surprising depth to the familiar narrative. They remind us that the Christmas story is astonishing—a tale of sacrifice, love, and unimaginable grace.

This Advent season, let us approach the Nativity story with the same wonder as the Herdmans. Let us hear the angels' song, see the star over Bethlehem, and kneel beside the shepherds and Wise Men as if for the first time. The story of Christ's birth is more than a tale we tell each December—it is the foundation of our faith, a reminder that God's love knows no bounds.

## *Celebrating Christmas*

As Advent gives way to Christmas, we celebrate the fulfillment of God's promise: the birth of our Savior. The carols we sing, the candles we light, and the prayers we offer all point to the joy of this miraculous event. Christmas is a time to rejoice, to gather with loved ones, and to share the light of Christ with a world in need. Yet Christmas is also a time to remember that the story doesn't end in Bethlehem. The baby born in the manger grew up to be the Savior who would lay down His life for us. As we celebrate His birth, we also look ahead to His return, when His kingdom will be fully realized.

In the midst of the festivities, let us not lose sight of the One we celebrate. Whether it's in the laughter of children, the glow of a candlelight service, or the quiet moments of prayer, may we encounter the living Christ this Christmas season.

## *A Final Word*

As we journey through Advent and into Christmas, I invite you to slow down and savor the season. Take time to reflect on the hope we have in Christ, the peace He brings, the joy of His presence, and the love that holds us all together. Let us remember that the greatest gift we can give is the gift of God's love, shared through our words and actions.

May we, like the Herdmans, be captivated by the wonder of the Christmas story. And may we, like the shepherds, go forth to share the good news with all we meet:

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom He favors!" (Luke 2:14)*

Wishing you a blessed Advent and a joyful Christmas,  
With love and gratitude,

*Reverend Danielle Kendig*

This month invites the congregation to journey through Advent's themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, culminating in the wonder of Christmas. Each sermon emphasizes how Christ's coming speaks to these core themes, encouraging the congregation to experience them deeply in preparation for the celebration of Christ's birth and the season of Christmas. This Advent and Christmas season encourages the congregation to not only experience each theme in worship but also to carry these virtues into their lives, embodying hope, peace, joy, love, and wonder as they anticipate and celebrate Christ's birth.

## **DECEMBER PREACHING PLAN**

- December 1- First Sunday of Advent: Hope, COMMUNION  
Sermon: "Hope for a New Beginning"  
Psalm 25:1-10, Jeremiah 33: 14-16
- December 8- Second Sunday of Advent: Peace  
Sermon: "Peace in God's Refining Presence"  
Malachi 3:1-4, Luke 1:68-79
- December 15- Third Sunday of Advent: Joy  
Sermon: "The Joy of Salvation"  
Isaiah 12:2-6, Philippians 4:4-7
- December 22- Fourth Sunday of Advent: Love  
Sermon: "The Depth of God's Love"  
Psalm 80:1-7, Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)
- December 24- Christmas Eve 7PM Candlelight Service  
Sermon: "The Gift of Emmanuel – God With Us"  
Psalm 96:1-13, Luke 2:1-20
- December 29- First Sunday of Christmas  
Sermon: "The Glory of Christ Shining Among Us"  
Psalm 148, Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)



The retirement of Skip Noftzger, long-time Executive Presbyter, was celebrated at a special dinner recently. And now the search committee for his replacement is hard at work, as indicated below:

The Interim Executive Presbyter Search Committee of Redstone Presbytery has been working diligently since the last meeting of the presbytery. We would describe our work as being accomplished without 'undue haste or undue delay.'

Since September 24th we have met as a committee 6 times, often with our Synod Executive, Forrest Claassen. conducted individual Zoom interviews with 7 candidates.

That phase is now complete.

We are now in the process of discussing the candidates and discerning who we will move forward with to the next step of in-person interview(s).

We continue to ask for your prayers as we work to discern God's will for our presbytery's future!

Respectfully submitted,  
Norma Prina Murphy,  
Chair, IEP Search Committee



*"Dickens Weekend" in Ebensburg brings many special treats. Here at the Ebensburg Presbyterian Church, we will join the festivities by offering hot beverages and cookies for a donation during the parade on Saturday morning and hosting a Christmas Recital on Saturday afternoon.*

EBENSBURG PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*A Christmas Recital*

Please join us for brass, organ, and other musical features.

Altoona Brass Collective

Indiana, PA Chapter:  
American Guild of Organists

Free Admission December 7, 2024  
1:30 - 2:30 P M  
200 N. Center St. Ebensburg, PA

## *What's Happening...*

***Important announcement: Congregational meeting December 22 following worship. Please try to attend!***

### **Report from Session**

Rev. Kending opened the November 11<sup>th</sup> Session meeting with prayer and a brief study of I Timothy 2: 1-2. It emphasizes the need to pray for our church leaders- local, regional, and national. The agenda was approved with two additions. Book of Order training was about the purpose of the Presbytery- governance, support, provide for Preaching of the Word and Sacraments.

The October minutes were approved, and the Treasurer's Report was received.

Committee Reports included the following:

Budget, Finance, Stewardship: The draft budget for 2025 was presented. It will be voted on in December.

Family Life reported on plans for November and December. They include Coffee Conversation, Christmas cards for veterans at the Veteran's Home and the Altoona VA hospital, Christmas gifts for Central Cambria students, and a Christmas luncheon.

Mission is sending \$250 to the Peace and Global Witness Offering. Funds will also be sent to the PDA for hurricane relief. We will participate in the Christmas Joy offering.

Property Management reported that a sensor was replaced on one of the boilers and adjustments were made to the way the boilers are used.

Worship reported that Christmas decorating will take place on November 30<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am. Pulpit supply will be provided for November 24. The Christmas Eve Candlelight service will be at 7 pm on December 24.

In Old Business, bids for repair of the dome are still being sought.

In New Business, cookies and beverages will be available for a donation before and during the Christmas Parade on Dec. 7. The piano in the sanctuary will be tuned. An ad for the Christmas Eve Service will be placed in the local paper. A Congregational Meeting will be called for December 22.

In the Moderator's Report, Rev. Danielle reported on contacts with members of the congregation.

The dates for the next Session meetings are December 9<sup>th</sup> and January 13<sup>th</sup>.



***The Family Life Committee activities for the month include sending Christmas cards to veterans and hosting a Christmas lunch. If you are able, please take a few minutes to add your signature to some of the cards on the counter in the meeting room behind the sanctuary.***

***And please plan to join us for lunch at 12:30 on December 15.***

# Help make Christmas merry for local students!

The Mission and Family Life Committees are collecting items for needy children in the Central Cambria School District.

If you would like to help, **please take a tag from the tree in the meeting room behind the sanctuary**, purchase the item, and bring new, unwrapped items to the church by **December 15**.

**Monetary donations for this project are also appreciated.**

(Please note “Christmas Kid Project” on the memo line of a check or the front of an envelope with cash and place your donation in the offering plate.)

This year’s wish list includes both games and hygiene products as indicated on the tags on the tree.





*Paige Forberger*

*December 6*

*Sylvan Vietmeier*

*December 9*

*Roxanne Lamer*

*December 10*

*Makenzie Kendig*

*December 13*

*Holly Lyons*

*December 18*

*Martha O'Brien*

*December 18*

# Sunday Scripture Readings

**December 1, 2024**

**First Sunday of Advent**

Jer. 33:14-16

Ps. 25:1-10

1 Thess. 3:9-13

Luke 21:25-36

**December 8, 2024**

**Second Sunday of Advent**

Mal 3:1-4

Luke 1:68-79

Phil. 1:3-11

Luke 3:1-6

**December 15, 2024**

**Third Sunday of Advent**

Zeph 3:14-20

Isa. 12:2-6

Phil. 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18

**December 22, 2024**

**Third Sunday of Advent**

Micah 5:2-3a

Luke 1:46b-55

Ps 80:1-7

Heb. 10:5-10

Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

**December 29, 2024**

**1st Sunday of Christmas**

1 Sam.2:18-20

Ps. 148

Col. 3:12-17

Luke 2:41-52





## Focus on Our Youth

### *The Presbyterian Giving Catalog*

The Presbyterian Giving Catalog features opportunities to support populations around the globe through gifts such as livestock, seeds, food, water purification equipment, and hygiene products.. Each year, our Mission Committee allocates a certain amount of the monies donated throughout the year and invites the youth of the congregation to choose items from the catalog.



## Special Offering



### CHRISTMAS JOY SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



Please plan to give generously to this special offering on Christmas Eve. Envelopes will be available in the pews during the month of December.



For any pastoral needs please reach out to contact  
Reverend Danielle Kendig at:  
RevDanielleKendig@gmail.com

**Contact Us**

Ebensburg Presbyterian Church: 814-472-6920



*Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light!*

**EBENSBURG FINANCIAL  
SUMMARY**



**Year to Date as of November 7, 2024**

**Actual Operating Income: \$ 70,404.26**

**Actual Operating Expenses: \$ 66,091.06**



**Gain/Loss: \$ 4,313.20**

**2024 Per Capita**

**2024 Per Capita** - Our Per Capita offering, which supports the work of the presbytery, synod and general assembly, has been set at **\$44.00**. We are a connectional church, and we encourage you to submit your per capita as soon as possible! Just mark your envelope or the memo line on your check. We are then responsible for sending this full amount to the Redstone Presbytery. Thank you!

# Ebensburg Presbyterian Church

## December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></p> <p><i>Worship 11 am and Facebook</i></p> <p><b>Communion</b></p> <p><i>5 to 8: Scouts</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b></p> <p><i>6 pm Point of Freedom NA</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>6</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7</b></p> <p><i>1:30 pm: Christmas Recital</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>8</b></p> <p><i>Worship 11 am and Facebook</i></p> <p><i>5 to 8: Scouts</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>9</b></p> <p><i>7 pm Session meeting</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10</b></p> <p><i>6 pm Point of Freedom NA</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>11</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>12</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>13</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>14</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>15</b></p> <p><i>Worship 11 am and Facebook</i></p> <p><b>12:30 pm: Christmas lunch</b></p> <p><i>5 to 8: Scouts</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>16</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>17</b></p> <p><i>6 pm Point of Freedom NA</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>18</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>19</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>20</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>21</b></p> <p><i>NA Business meeting 9:45 a.m.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>22</b></p> <p><i>Worship 11 am and Facebook</i></p> <p><b>12 noon: Congregational meeting</b></p> <p><i>5 to 8: Scouts</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>23</b></p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Christmas Eve Service 7pm</b></p> </div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>25</b></p> <p><b>Christmas Day</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>26</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>27</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>28</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>29</b></p> <p><i>Worship 11 am and Facebook</i></p> <p><i>5 to 8: Scouts</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>30</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>31</b></p> <p><i>6 pm Point of Freedom NA</i></p>				

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