
From the Pastor

As I am writing this, there are two tragedies that I am praying about it. The first is the deaths that occurred in Mississippi about a week ago as tornadoes struck. That's difficult because it hit so close to my hometown. I am thankful that all my family is alive and well, but it's difficult to think of the hurt and suffering in a state I grew up in.

The second tragedy though is even more difficult to process. It's the school shooting that occurred in Nashville where 3 adults and 3 children lost their lives (including the head pastor's daughter). That causes a well of emotions, especially as a father to four wonderful children myself. I cannot help but feel deep sadness, but also a deep righteous anger at the shooter.

So deep sadness, anger, a sense of bewilderment as to how these things happen, etc. What do we do with such emotions when we feel them. After all, in this life, there is always pain, tears, and suffering. So are we just simply to exist in a never-ending cycle of terrible feelings all the time?

This is where Jesus comes in and while he doesn't always take away all the hurt and pain inside of us, He does give us hope within the midst of our tragedies. How does he accomplish this? Through His resurrection. I think there are two very important aspects for us to grasp in order for the resurrection of Christ to give us hope during our dark times. These are we need to let the resurrection of Christ touch our intellect, then our emotions.

First, we need to understand that the resurrection of Christ really did happen. It's not some fairy tale, or a metaphor that the New Testament writers get us to see something spiritual. It does us no good if the resurrection of Christ is not based on historical fact. Why? Because otherwise, our faith is futile and we would still be in our sins, meaning we would have no hope in this life or the next where we would spend eternity in hell.

Now, if you are like me, that might not be a problem for you. However, others of you might have a little more problem knowing for certain. That shows you have a mind that strives to intellectually grasp hold of things to stand on your faith. There is nothing to be ashamed in that, as long as you look at things in an honest intellectual manner. If you are like that, Lee Strobel's book, *The Case for Easter, A Journalist Investigates Evidence for the Resurrection that proves the resurrection of Christ*. Also, James Montgomery Boice listed six evidences of Christ's resurrection (<https://www.monergism.com/verifying-resurrection-six-evidences>). Those are the resurrection narratives, the empty tomb, the graveclothes left behind, Jesus's post resurrection appearances, the transformed disciples, and the new day of Christian worship. This must not be ignored if we are going to let Jesus' resurrection touch us emotionally.

The best example of this is I think is Mary Magdalene as she is weeping outside of the tomb, looks in and thinks that someone stole Jesus' body. At first, she doesn't even recognize Jesus, but when she finally did, she immediately cried out "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

I can just imagine the emotions of going from extreme sadness of not only believing Jesus would forever be dead (not to mention thinking that someone stole the body) to extreme joy when realized that her Savior had risen. I can imagine the emotions because, like every Christian, I have felt that same type of surge of joy of knowing Jesus and His resurrection while something in my life brings sadness, and sometimes I even experience these emotions simultaneously.

And so I take all of my emotions, including such things like sadness, anxiety, and anger, and not only do I lay them at the foot of the cross where I will find abundant forgiveness, I also take them to the resurrection of Christ where I know I will find abundant joy and a peace that passes all understanding.

Pastor Brandt



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You can also find us on Facebook.

Office Hours:
Mon, Wed, Fri: 12 - 3:30 pm
Tues & Thurs: 12 - 4 pm

Pastor's Hours:
Tuesday - Thursday
9:30 am - noon (flexible)

Deacon Notes

The Deacons hope you have had a chance to meet and welcome the new people attending our church.

They are: **Ron & Sherry Chraston, Dennis & Sandy Gillet, Joe & Deborah Heukensfeld, and Marianne Newmark** and family.

Fellowship

Many thanks to all that helped with the luncheon on Sunday, March 19. Thank you to Paula Welch for the delicious goulash recipe, and the rest of the fellowship team that put together the lunch. And thanks to all of the church family for all of the delicious brownies! And thank you to the E&M committee that helped us clean up. It was a great time of fellowship and wonderful to welcome Adrienne Willhoft and learn about her ministry!

We will be planning a ladies luncheon this month in April. Details to follow.

There will also be another luncheon/mission program with E&M in May. So, lots of opportunities to get together with our church family!

We have been serving homemade treats during coffee hour and are looking for donations of treats. Thank you to those that have brought cookies, etc. so far. Let one of the fellowship team know if you are able to bring any treats in the future. We have also made available China mugs for hot drinks during coffee hour, as the paper cups can sometimes be hot. Please leave your dirty mugs in the dishpan on the coffee hour table and we will make sure they get washed.

The kitchen and fellowship hall are being used much more now, so please help us out; by putting any dirty dishes, silverware, etc in the dishwasher, used towels in the black bin under the sinks, and wipe any spills, crumbs, etc off the counters. If you have any questions about supplies or equipment in the kitchen (where they are, how to use...), please see someone from the fellowship team.

Fellowship Team:

Helen Hill • Marty Hammack • Diane White
Kevin Hollenbeck • Delores Seward • Sandy Partridge
Paula Welch • Donna Lacey • Pam Patmore

A Note from Connie Logan



... appreciating them just comes naturally.

Thank You
Love,
Connie Logan

Dear Congregation of the Bergen Evangelical Presbyterian Church,

My mother, Katy Logan, passed away on February 27th, 2023, stepping into her heavenly home and reuniting with my father, the love of her life.

As I now reflect back on the past months, I wanted to express my deepest thanks for you all. Your display of love to mom and me this past Christmas season meant so much.

The Christmas Carolers coming to her home to sing and remember her was one of the highlights of her Christmas. It touched her heart deeply. For days after, when visitors would come to see her she would remember and share that Christmas Carolers came to her front door to sing to her. The box filled with meats and food items was lovely and used over the holidays and enjoyed. Thank You so much for remembering us. God bless you richly and your church ministry.

TAG ~ Teens After God

What is Right?

TAG teens are growing and maturing in their faith and understanding of God's plan for their lives each youth group. We are continuing our trek through the book of Luke during our time of bible reading and reflection each week. We read and discussed Luke Chapter 6 verses 1-11 at our most recent meeting. In these verses Jesus has "discussions" with the pharisees pertaining to the Jewish laws regarding Sabbath. Each week I challenge the teens to come up with an application of the scripture read, which is relevant to them in their own life. What the teens took away from our evening reflection on March 19th is that regardless of the circumstances always do what is right and true and pure in the eyes of God!



TAG Teens Fellowship: March 19, 2023

Our TAG youth group will be meeting on the following Sundays from 6:00-8:00PM: April 2nd, April 16th, and April 30th. Please keep all the teens of our group, and in Bergen, in your prayers. Continue to pray for God's protection and guidance in their lives!

A Blessing from the Congo

Sarah Speer, a missionary whom we support in the church E&M budget, works at the Kimia Leprosy Center in the Congo. She sent this blessing to express her gratitude "for your faithful giving to those who are suffering in the Congo. Please make sure that these dear friends know that I truly appreciate their love and compassion!"

The Blessing

*Jesus Christ is your blessing, your life and your heritage.
May you, my child, rejoice in this blessing of mine to you.*

*He is my precious son of love and compassion.
His companionship and leadership in your heart and life
will open yourself to me and all the glory of my kingdom.*

*Fear not His true and powerful ways in your life,
for He will never destroy that which is of eternal value.
He will indeed remove that which is worldly
and earthy in you to the depths of your being.*

*Oh learn to trust Him in all things – the little and the big
– moment by moment –
until you will meet Him face to face!*

*He knows you from the inside out
and will pay attention to each and every detail.
By means of my Spirit, you will be
conformed to the image of Jesus.*

*Let your light (Jesus) shine before men
that they might glorify Me,
that their darkness may turn to light
and that they will come to the path (Jesus)
which leads them to me, the Father.*

*Rejoice in Me
and you will have an abundant life!*

Graduation in Sierra Leone

The following information is from a newsletter we recently received from EduNations, which is supported by our congregation through the annual Evangelism and Missions budget:

Hope ignited.

It's finally here! The culmination of 19 years of quality classroom instruction has led to this moment ... GRADUATION! The first graduating class of EduNations Hope Academy Senior Secondary School will receive their diplomas on April 24, 2023, making their monumental mark in the historical legacy of EduNations.

Beaming with pride. We are so proud of these students as they have exemplified the spirit of hard work and determination that has earned them this great achievement. Your generosity has made their accomplishments possible. Thank you for igniting hope in these students through your faithful giving to EduNations.

Lenten Offering

Sharing Christ with College Students

Adrienne Willhoft knows that college is a formative time for teens who are becoming adults. She wants to make sure that these future community and world leaders include Jesus in their learning and maturing.

Adrienne is on the staff of CCO (Christian Coalition Outreach) at Juniata College in Pennsylvania. Her goal is to share the gospel for students who may not know and also solidify the commitment that some have already made.

Adrienne will receive this year's Lenten Offering. She visited our church on March 19 to share about her work. "Transforming college students to change the world" is CCO's mission. There are approximately 20 million college students in the US, but only about 2% of them are being reached by campus ministries.

Through fellowship, Bible studies, and off-campus dinners, Adrienne and a couple of volunteer staff members are engaging Juniata students with the gospel. Adrienne also serves as an assistant coach for the women's basketball team to build relationships with the student athletes.

[Click here to see Adrienne's presentation.](#)

Ways You Can Pray for Adrienne's Ministry:

- She will lead a group of college students from several colleges to Guatemala in May. It is a time of deepening their spiritual walk while experiencing another culture. Pray for safety, openness and growth for the group.
- Student leadership will soon be selected for next year. Pray for wisdom and guidance.
- Jubilee is a gathering of a few thousand Christian college students for a weekend in Pittsburgh in February. Pray for Adrienne as she follows up with the 25 students who attended from Juniata.
- Pray for leadership development among the basketball team as Adrienne meets with members now in the off season.

Adrienne was a leader of a trip to Peru that Catherine McAllister participated in when she was involved with CCO on the Duquesne University campus several years

ago. Wendy Hutcherson and Brian Gay were both leaders with CCO in the past as well.

If you want to contribute toward Adrienne's work on the Juniata campus, you can contribute through the church online or by making a donation in the collection boxes in the church or by US mail. Be sure to mark your contribution with either Adrienne's name or Lenten offering.



Also, if you want to contribute directly to a student who is going to Guatemala, use the QR code to the right, or go to www.ccojubilee.org/peruregistration.

Lenten Study – Prepare to Stand

We have had a wonderful time watching and discussing Andrew Brunson's **Prepare to Stand** video series (epc.org/preparetostand). We have viewed the first six videos at this point. In the beginning of the seventh one (that we will be viewing on 4/2), Andrew summarizes the first six:

Summary of the Risks of Persecution:

- Acting according to fear
- The heart becoming offended toward God
- Pursuing pleasure as an escape
- Being derailed by deception

Six steps that prepare our hearts to stand:

- Talk about persecution
- Develop the fear of God in the right perspective (to counter the fear of man)
- Pursue the heart of God (this is the most important thing we can do)
 - Underlies obedience
 - Fuels perseverance
 - Best way to overcome offense
- Build perseverance (avoid escape through pleasure)
- Build community
- Guard the Word

In the rest of video seven, he talks about 10 benefits of persecution. Come join us on 4/2 or watch it on the web site above. You can find more information about our study on Rob's web page: willhoft.net/stand.

God Smiles on Foodlink Distribution

The weather during the days leading up to our Foodlink distribution on March 16 was cold, snowy, rainy – a wintry mix that chilled and made it less than pleasant to be outside. Our Foodlink distribution depends on us to be outside in the church parking lot.

As an answer to prayer, the temperature crept upward throughout the hours leading up to the actual distribution on that Thursday afternoon. The sky cleared. God smiled on Foodlink and answered our prayers for good weather to handle the outside distribution. The temperature passed 50 degrees! The clients and our 40 volunteers were able to share love as we shared food.

Food was distributed to 171 families. These represented 151 senior citizens, 183 children and 223 adults – more than 500 of our neighbors in total. Some of our deacons and others in the church family were able to take food to shutins. Any food that is not distributed during the event is given to area food pantries.

Thanks to all volunteers who make the event run smoothly. It takes many hands to make the work light.

Please note the April event is April 13, one week earlier than we usually host the event. Volunteers need to arrive about 2:45, and we generally conclude by 5:30. If you can help any time in that range, please join us.

Sewing With a Purpose



The Sewing With A Purpose Eye Protection Project team have been busy completing our first batch of these needed items for the 1 and 2 pound babies at the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) at Golisano /Strong Hospital. Our team met Feb 1 and we began this project.

Many of the ladies took home parts of the project to complete on their own. So far we have made 109 flannel eye protections. We are delivering 50 eye protections by

April 1. We are also sending 50 flannel hearts at this time, too.

Pictured to the left is June Hahn who cuts out every special liner for each flannel eye protection.

Pictured to the right is Joyce Coxeter, who is carefully ironing each finished eye protection and being “quality control” to ensure each item is sewn correctly.



Hear from Our Missionaries in Albania

Berti and Adelina Berhami have been supported through our church's Evangelism & Mission budget for many years. They serve with CRU (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ) in Albania. In more recent years, Berti has assumed more of a leadership role in the mission works in Eastern Europe in countries surrounding Albania. In addition, they have been working with refugees fleeing Ukraine.

Through the wonder of technology, we will have the opportunity to hear directly from the Berhamis during our worship service on April 16. Be sure to come that Sunday after Easter to better understand their work and hear how we can be praying to support them.

 **Shirley Graves-Harris**
12h · 

A post about everyday ministry by members of our church

Today our Eagle Star Homeless Shelter visit was an exceptional time. The vets were blessed by games, snacks and fun conversation and so were we. Six joined in for bingo. We met three new residents today and ask for prayer for one who is ready to transition and needs an affordable apartment in Batavia near GCC. Our church in Bergen is so honored to be involved with this organization. Please pray with us.

 Like  Comment  Share

Church Calendar

Online calendar:
tinyurl.com/29zhbnbr



Weekly

- Sundays, 9:15-10:15 am – Sunday School
- Sundays, 10:30-11:45 am – Morning Worship
- Sundays, 4/2, 4/16, & 4/30, 6-8 pm – TAG
- Wednesdays, 6:00 pm – Prayer for Door of Hope
- Thursdays, 6:00-7:00 am – Son Risers
- Saturdays, 11 am – Kid's Quest
- Newsletter Deadline on the 25th of each month
- First Sunday of the month – Food Collection
- Last Saturday of the month – Door of Hope Coffee House @ 6 pm

Other Events in April:

- Saturday, 4/1, 10:30 am – Kid's Basketball League
- Sunday, 4/2 – Palm Sunday
- Sunday, 4/2, 6 pm – Lenten Study
- Wednesday, 4/5, 6:30 – Family Movie Night
- Thursday, 4/6, 10:30 am – Lunches for Open Door
- Saturday, 4/8, 10:30 am – Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt
- **Sunday, 4/9, 6:30 am – Easter Sunrise Service**
- **Sunday, 4/9, 7:15 am – Breakfast at Bergen UMC**
- **Sunday, 4/9, 10:30 – Easter Worship Service**
- **Sunday, 4/9 – No Sunday School or Lenten Study**
- Wednesday, 4/12, 7 pm – Session Meeting
- Thursday, 4/13, 4 pm – Foodlink Distribution
volunteers please arrive by 2:45 pm
- Sunday, 4/16 – Berhamis update during the worship service
- Sunday, 4/16 (TBD) – Final Lenten Series
- Saturday, 4/22, 3 pm – Cub Scouts Pork Dinner
- Sunday 4/23, 12:15 – E&M Committee Meeting
- Sunday, 4/23 – New Member's Class
- Tuesday, 4/25, 7 pm: Deacons Meeting
- Sunday, 4/30, 12:15: Worship Committee Meeting

On Sunday, 4/16, Children, Youth, and Adult Sunday School will start into the **New Testament** using the **Gospel Project**. This study of the entire Bible has been a rich blessing to so many who have been involved. This would be a great time for your or your children to join a Sunday School class.

Anniversaries & Birthdays

April Birthdays

- 12 – June Hahn
- 14 – Mason Buckland
- 14 – David Snell
- 15 – Jebidiah Buckland-Seward
- 18 – Alden Snell
- 21 – Christine Martz
- 22 – Sean McNear
- 23 – Julie Foeller
- 28 – Bev Rogers

April Anniversaries

- 4 – Ruth & Harvey Morse (53 years)
- 7 – Michael & Paula Welch (22 years)
- 12 – Garry & Wendy Hutchurson (54 years)
- 16 – Dale & Diane White (35 years)
- 23 – Bob & Kathy Cosgrove (23 years)

May Birthdays

- 13 – Susan Miller
- 15 – Richard Saville
- 21 – Barb Fasoldt
- 22 – Paula Welch
- 23 – Ann Johnson
- 24 – Helen Hill
- 25 – Ward Baily
- 30 – Coxeter Joyce
- 30 – Charlie McAdam
- 30 – Mark White

May Anniversaries

- 13 – Joe and Jocelyn Rebisz (23 years)
- 23 – Erik and Renee Berggren (41 years)
- 25 – John and Janet Wise (49 years)
- 27 – Bruce and Sandy Partridge (45 years)
- 29 – David and Sonya Catalino (29 years)



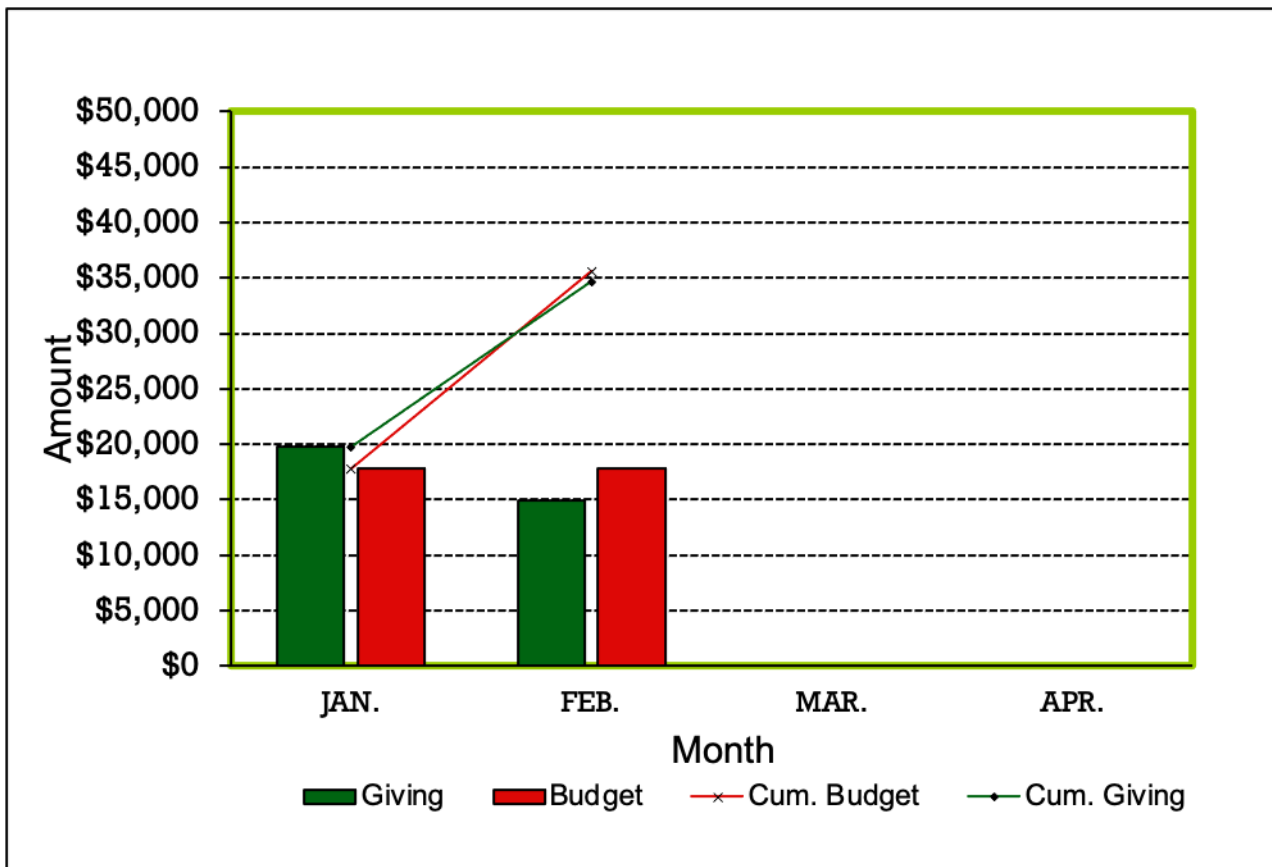
Church Finances

February 2023

“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.”

I Chronicles 29:14,16

Giving for February was certainly not up to the \$19,768 of January but was not bad for a February at \$14,898. With the large checking account carry-over from January and again lower monthly expenses, we, again, did not have to withdraw any funds from the AIF to pay the bills. In addition, we received a \$2,000 gift to the AIF and \$2,165 towards our Organ Fund. Overall, a good financial month for our church.



Monthly Financial Report – February 2023

OPERATING FUND

Income

Sunday offering:	\$10,912.00
Net Online Offering:	\$1,055.92
<i>*note – online offering reflects \$32.02 fee taken from gross donations from the vendor before deposit</i>	
Amortized one time gifts:	\$2,932.00

<i>Total New Receipts</i>	\$14,897.92
<i>Opening Balance (from previous month)</i>	\$3,312.35
Total Funds Available (opening balance + new receipts)	\$18,210.27

Expenses

Gross Expenditures for the month	\$13,390.70
Line Item Paybacks received this month that reduce expenses	
• None	\$0.00

Net Expenditures for the Month	\$13,390.70
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Accumulated Income Fund Transfer Needed to cover Expenditures	\$0.00
Extra Monthly Amortized Gift Overdrawn from the AIF	\$0.00
Monthly Amortized Gift Left in Accumulated Income Fund	\$2,932.00

OPERATING FUND BALANCE \$1,889.57

DESIGNATED FUND

Opening Balance (from previous month)	\$13,807.90
New Designated Receipts	\$3,165.00
Total Designated Expenditures	\$2,231.15

DESIGNATED FUND BALANCE \$14,741.75

TOTAL CHECKBOOK BALANCE (Operating Fund + Designated Fund) \$16,631.32

OTHER FUND ACTIVITY

Accumulated Income Fund

• February Deposit	\$2,000.00
Current Balance (2/28/2023)	\$34,868.93

Tithe Fund

• EduNations	-\$500.00
Current Balance (2/28/2023)	\$32,703.42

