
From the Pastor

I wanted to take a pause on looking at the Lord's Prayer for now to write about our church's children's and youth ministry. Like I have heard from many of you, I am very thankful for Mitch's ministry while he was on staff as our child and youth minister. He started something from the ground up and gave us as a church a sense of calling to minister to children, teenagers, and their families. Even more than that, I can say that as a parent, he made a deep impression upon my children in following Christ.

I will be honest with you in saying the loss of Mitch's ministry will be difficult to overcome, but it is something that we will be able to do. The first thing I think is for me to thank the elders who have shown an incredible amount of love and wisdom during this time. I also wanted to let you know that Mitch and I are still in contact, and we are seeking to continue a mentoring relationship, just as I have found valuable mentors in my life. I am excited in the ways that God will use Mitch in the future.

I feel like it is also important to appreciate Joe's ministry with TAG, as well as Young Life, that meets at the church. These ministries fill a void for ministry to teenagers while we search for another child/youth minister who will come onto our staff.

For that end, we will soon be starting up another committee to look for another child/youth minister. Please pray about if God is leading YOU to serve on this committee.

The next thing I wanted to share was about Kid's Quest. The session has asked that we continue with Kid's Quest for every other week. Right now, I have at least five people who have volunteered to help out, and we might be looking for more. One need is for someone to coordinate those volunteers, so if you feel that God is leading you to do that, please let me know.

Finally, I realized that we needed a good curriculum with Bible-centered teaching and activities for the volunteers to lead with minimal preparation. I asked other children's ministers what they suggested, and the best curriculum that I came up with is called "The Biggest Story." From their website: "*The Biggest Story* leads readers on an exciting journey through the Bible, from the garden of Eden to the return of Christ. This fun curriculum based on the book draws kids into Scripture and helps them grasp its overarching message of redemption."

I have ordered the first volume of *The Biggest Story* to see if it is a good fit for our church. I will say that I think this will help us fill the void until we find a new child/youth minister. It is vitally important that we pray that God will lead us to a new child and youth minister that will enable us to reach young people for Christ and thus, fulfill the Great Commission by witnessing to them and disciplining them within the context of our church family.

Pastor Brandt

Lenten Study 2025

Love: Our Greatest Joy and Hardest Work

Join us for a Lenten Study on Sundays, March 9, 23, 30 and April 13 from 6:00 - 7:15 PM

Topics / Schedule:

- March 9:
 - Our Brokenness and God's Love
 - Our Response - Love of God and Love of Others
- March 23:
 - The Characteristics of Love
- March 30:
 - Love of our Brother and our Enemy
- April 13:
 - Love and Forgiveness
 - The Good Gifts of Love



Spring Concert Series

Following our successful organ rededication concert series last year, the E&M committee is pleased to present a new concert series in 2025. We are once again offering five FREE concerts, featuring a variety of talented musicians from our area. A freewill offering will be collected to support music outreach at the church, and there will be a reception following each performance. All are welcome—**please invite a friend!**

Bergen Evangelical Presbyterian Church
38 S. Lake Avenue, Bergen, NY

Invites you to join us for our
2025 Concert Series



All concerts are FREE with a reception following

More information at
epcbergen.org/concerts

Sunday, February 2, 2025, 6pm:
Roberts Wesleyan University Chorale

Sunday, March 16, 2025, 6pm:
Catherine Caton, harp



Sunday, April 6, 2025,
6pm:
George Collichio, guitar



Sunday, May 4, 2025, 6pm:
Organ recital featuring students from
the
Eastman School of Music



Sunday, May 18,
2025, 6pm:
Small Ensembles from the
Genesee Valley Wind Ensemble



This project is made possible with funds from the Statewide Community Regrant Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the arts with the support of the office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature and administered by GO ART!



As we begin a new year, your help, support and prayers are much appreciated.

We are pleased to welcome Faith Willhoft back to our board. Chad Caccamise is joining us as a member. In case you don't know Chad, here's a bio he'd like to share:

"Hello, my name is Chad Caccamise, and I am excited to share a bit about myself with you. I have been married to my wonderful wife, Wendy, for 32 years. Together we have three amazing children: Sara, who lives in Florida with her husband and their two boys; Stephen, who resides in Wisconsin with his wife and their three children; and our youngest, Emily, who lives in Buffalo, NY. Emily is getting married in June 2025, so we are busy with wedding planning.

I pursued a college education to become a Medical Technologist, which means I can work in a hospital lab. The day after returning from our honeymoon in 1993, I started my first lab job at St. Jerome Hospital in Batavia.

Although I initially thought I would only stay for a year, I have now been with Rochester Regional for 32 years. My career has taken many turns, and I currently manage IT for Rochester Regional's nine laboratories.

In my free time, I enjoy spending time outdoors, fishing, kayaking, and walking our 100--pound dog.

I joined the church in 2003, and have served nine three-year terms on the Session. I am now excited to begin my first year as a Deacon.

I look forward to serving our congregation in this new role.

Don't forget to set your clocks **AHEAD** one hour Saturday night before you go to bed on March 8th. Wouldn't want to be late for church and have everyone worried about you.



Foodlink Returns March 20th

Our church will resume hosting Foodlink distributions on **March 20**. Please mark your

calendars and plan to help. We ask volunteers to arrive by 2:45 pm. We will begin unloading the food truck at 3 pm with a goal of opening the food line at 4 pm. We are generally done by 5:30 pm. Even if you can't volunteer for that long, we can find a spot for you

The distribution is in the church parking lot, so please dress for the weather. We ask volunteers to park in the Methodist Church lot across the street to allow the spots in our lot to be open for our clients.

We also have the following dates for the first half of 2025: **April 17, May 15, and June 26**

If you have questions, please call Gregg McAllister at 585-738-6141.

Why is it important to offer these monthly food distributions? Prices for food have continued to climb, which is causing significant challenges to low-income families, often referred to as ALICE. ALICE, an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, is a new way of defining and understanding the struggles of households that earn above the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to afford a bare-bones household budget.

Working through Foodlink, we are able to bring no-cost food to our neighbors in need. Foodlink serves a 10-county area surrounding Rochester. We are fortunate to be able to coordinate and bring the free food they offer here to Bergen.



Special Lenten Offering

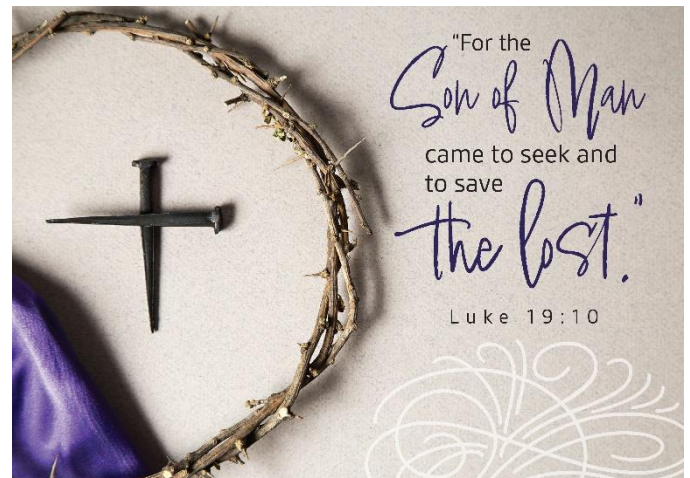
Our church family traditionally collects a special offering during Lent. This year the Evangelism and Missions Committee recommends splitting the offering between a local organization and a mission in Africa.

Locally, money would go to the Byron-Bergen Backpack program. This community effort helps needy children in the B-B school system who often don't have food in their homes over the weekend. The kids, identified by school staff, receive a backpack of food that they can consume over the weekend when they are not in school to be fed breakfast and lunch.

The number of children identified as needing this support has increased over the last couple of years. Food costs have also increased, putting an additional strain on the program that is administered by the Byron Presbyterian Church. Donations are the only support this program receives.

For the international mission, E&M suggests that half the funds go to the Kimia Leprosy Center in Congo, where Sarah Speer is based. An increased number of patients, without increased financial support, has put a severe strain on its operations. The budget has been frozen with a \$7,000 deficit. Sarah has not asked us for money, but has made us aware of the situation. She has asked that we pray about this.

All financial contributions should be marked as *"Lenten offering"*, and can be offered through our traditional methods of a check in the offering boxes, or paid online beginning now through Easter. Money received will be equally divided between the local and international mission.



Sewing With a Purpose

Plans are underway for a Field Trip to St Paul's Lutheran School on Tuesday, April 15. Carpooling from church will be arranged and there will be further information coming, but for now check your calendar and pencil in the date if you are interested in knotting quilts with the St Paul's ladies! Meet at church at 8:15. Quilting starts at 9:00 in Batavia at St Paul's and will last until 11:00. More info to follow.

Eleven women gathered to work on flannel hearts and eye protections Feb 12th.

Thank you to Pam Patmore, Marty Hammack, Neva Lattimer, Faith Willhoft, Shirley vonBergen, Candy Kent, Joyce Coxeter, Sandy Partridge, Melissa Zschoche, and June Hahn.



Neva and Pam at the sewing machines

Welcome new Sewing With a Purpose Team member--- Melissa Zschoche - Melissa is a quilter who is new to our church. She jumped right in to tracing hearts and meeting the sewing team. Introduce yourself to Melissa when you see her in church!



Discussion was held to on whether to partner with Operation Christmas Child to make something to put in the shoeboxes. Ideas were:

- make a stuffed small doll
- make a stuffed heart
- make kid hats -- knit or crochet
- make a bag to put their things in

Other ideas are welcome -- please see, or text or call Marty, Julie F or Debbie McA with your ideas.

Faith, Joyce & Shirley collaborating



Twenty flannel hearts were delivered today to UMMC Batavia Maternity floor. This request for replenishing the flannel heart stock came last week. While they do not have a NICU in Batavia, sometimes they have a premie baby born that needs to be transported to a larger hospital with a NICU and the nurses offer a flannel heart to the Mom and her baby being transported.

Young Life Basket Auction

The 2025 Young Life benefit basket and baked goods auction is returning to Bergen Evangelical Presbyterian Church on Saturday, May 3, 2025. This annual event is a fundraiser for the various activities of Young Life in the Genesee County area (summer camps, monthly meetings, and other special events throughout the school year. Young Life is a non-profit Christian outreach program that spans the whole world. They go where kids are and build relationships: providing fun, adventurous, life-changing experiences. They work in communities, alongside like-minded adults (volunteer leaders, committee members, donors, and staff) Genesee County Young Life currently has a high school program with Rochester West Young Life, Wylldlife (middle school ages), and Young Lives (a teen mom group). Young Life is one of the missions that BEPC supports.

We are looking for donations of gift baskets, new items (that we can use in gift baskets), homemade crafts, baked goods, and/or services. Please contact Gregg McAllister or Sandy Partridge if you are interested in donating toward the auction.

We hope to see you there!

younglife
Genesee County

Basket & Baked Goods
AUCTION

SATURDAY, MAY 3RD
Preview 4:30-5:30pm (snacks served)
Auction 5:30-7:00PM

Bergen Evangelical Presbyterian Church
Fellowship Hall
38 South Lake Ave, Bergen NY
AUCTIONEERS: CRAIG AND BRETT WILCOX
FREE ADMISSION!

PROCEEDS BENEFIT
YOUNG LIFE GENESEE COUNTY

New Ladies Bible Study Starting Soon

I have really enjoyed this ladies' study on the book of Hebrews. Personally, I loved how the book connected the New Testament with the Old Testament, including talk about the tabernacle, the priests, and the sacrifices. All of this really showed me how much Jesus is better. I also loved chapter 11, how the author showed us the outworking of people's faith in the Old Testament and how now, on this side of the cross and the resurrection, it means even more. Some of the other ladies said it was great encouragement, how great our salvation is in Christ, how Jesus is above ALL, how God has a plan through Jesus, and he is faithful and trustworthy, and how the New Covenant has allowed one-on-one time to talk to Him. We have all enjoyed the fellowship, studying, and praying together.

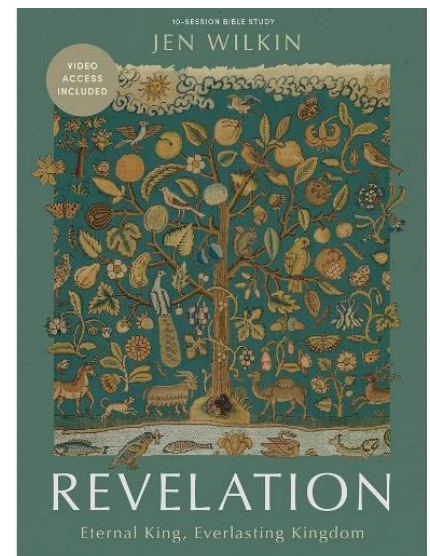
One thing this study has really impressed upon us is the need to take time to study the Bible. It's a constant encouragement to us in our Christian walk and it helps us grow in our faith.

We are really excited about our next study which will be in the book *Revelation*, which is by Jen Wilkin as well. According to Lifeway's website, it is a verse-by-verse Bible study, where she will help us discover how the last book of the Bible—the culmination of God's great story—speaks both a steadying word of assurance and a strong call to endure to the church in every age. We are excited to embark on this new study on April 1st. We hope all the ladies will join us in person, or you are welcome to go through the study at home. Please let me know by March 16th if you would to be a part of the study.

In Christ,

Marty Hammack

The new bible study will be on the book by Jen Wilkin, *REVELATION Eternal King, Everlasting Kingdom*



Happy almost Spring from the Fellowship Team!

Many thanks to all that helped with cookies for the February 2nd concert reception - they were delicious! And thanks, also, to those that donated toppings and helped with the loaded baked potato bar luncheon on February 9th.

We have the following activities planned for March:

Fellowship luncheon, following church service, on Sunday, March 9th. Please join us for good food and especially for the fellowship. This is a great opportunity to invite someone to church and to share lunch after.

Reception, following the concert, on Sunday, March 16th. There will be cookies and drinks served in the fellowship hall after the concert. If you are willing to donate cookies, please contact Sandy Partridge.

Foodlink on Thursday, March 20th. We will be cooking and serving hot dogs to those that are receiving the food. If you are interested in helping with Foodlink in any way (there are lots of things to help with), please let Gregg McAllister know.

Stay warm and safe and please join us for the above events.

Thank you,

The Fellowship Team



Operation Christmas Child (OCC) March - monthly update

Sending the Gospel to the ends of the Earth happens year-round, not just at Christmas.

BEPC will once again be a community drop-off location and the Central Drop-off location for the Genesee Valley Region in 2025 during National Collection Week- November 17-24.

The first quarterly meeting for the Genesee Valley Region team was held February 23 in the Fellowship Hall. The team is excited to see what God has planned for OCC 2025. The goal of reaching 20,153 children with the Gospel was set. That is more than 5,000 shoeboxes that will need to be packed this year to send the Gospel to the 'ends of the Earth' from our region. It's a big goal but....**GOD IS BIGGER!!!** Our Genesee Valley Team scripture verse for 2025 is **Ephesians 2:10 (NLT) For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.**

To keep our congregation up to date on OCC throughout the year, look for information posted on the bulletin board across from the Mission board. **We will also be continuing to collect items throughout the year. With winter hopefully winding down soon, please consider buying hats, scarves, mittens/gloves-many stores will have clearance sales soon. Also, consider looking for clothing items such as t-shirts, sweatpants, PJ's etc. A box will be located in the foyer for donated items- please remember all items should be new, not used. Your generous donations are greatly appreciated.**

There are plans to collaborate with the Sewing with a Purpose (SWP) group to sew / craft items for the boxes. Some ideas include small stuffed bears and tote bags. If you have any other ideas, please contact Debbie, Marty, or Julie.

If anyone would like to take a more active role in OCC by becoming a year-round volunteer, please reach out to me.

Serving Him gladly,
Julie Foeller

TAG ~ Teens After God

Keep the Number One Thing Number One!

Busy, busy, busy!!! In today's world, everyone seems to be constantly overwhelmed by the business of their schedule. I believe this often hinders us in doing the things that actually matter the most and have eternal value. My father-in-law always says, "Keep the number one thing number one!" In other words, keep God number one. Keep His plan for your life and your time number one. I was faced with the, "What is "Number One" in your life?" problem throughout January and February. As the Bills continued their football success throughout January, and then the Superbowl, followed by a concert at the church, and then bad weather, Sunday TAG gatherings kept getting cancelled and pushed back. In other words, the number one thing kept getting put into second place. Finally, my wife, Jocelyn, had to remind me to get the number one thing back into the number one position. So, we held an impromptu bible study at our home on a Sunday night when TAG had to be cancelled at the church. I did not know who, if anyone, might come, since we did not send an invite until just before the gathering. But, as always, God sent exactly who was supposed to be there. We ended up with a great mix of about 20 teens and young adults for the bible study. It was an amazing time of learning, reflection, and fellowship. My takeaway: Keep the number one thing number one. God will take care of the rest!

Our TAG youth group will be meeting in the Teen Room on the following Sundays from 6:00-8:00PM: March 9th, March 23rd, and April 6th. 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!



TAG Teens at the Rebisz House for an impromptu Bible Study February 2025

We Support Rebuilding Hurricane Ravaged South

The Christmas Eve offering was designated for Samaritan's Purse to assist with their efforts to rebuild the several areas in the South that were devastated by the summer's hurricanes. \$766 was donated for this cause.



Samaritan's Purse was on the scene of various locations across the South where flooding washed away many homes and businesses and killed many people. Now Samaritan's Purse is working to rebuild many homes in order to restore the communities and their families.

Here's a video that describes some of the impact Samaritan's Purse has in the flood damaged areas.

<https://video.samaritanspurse.org/a-neighborhood-comes-together-amidst-helenes-destruction/>

After the immediate help in areas where disasters occur, Samaritan's Purse goes into a long-range rebuilding program that creates new homes for many victims. Here is some information about how that works.

After disasters strike and long after the attention of news media has moved on, [Samaritan's Purse is often still working](#) in communities. In the hardest-hit areas, we help rebuild homes.





Calendar **Online calendar:** tinyurl.com/29zhbnbr

RECURRING WEEKLY/MONTHLY

- Sundays, 10:30-11:45 am – **Morning Worship**
 - First Sunday of the month -- **Communion**
 - First Sunday of the month – **Salvation Army Food Collection**
- Sundays, 9:15-10:15 - **Sunday School**
- Thursdays, 6:00-7:00 am – **Son Risers**
- 25th of each month - **Newsletter** deadline
- Last Saturday of the month – **Door of Hope** Coffee House at 6 pm

OTHER EVENTS IN MARCH

Mission of the Month - The Berhami's in Albania

- March 2 @ 12:15 pm - Fellowship Committee meeting
- March 5 - Ash Wednesday
- March 8 - @ 9 am - Joint Session and Deacon meeting
- March 9 - Daylight Saving Time Begins (Spring Ahead!)
- March 9 @ 12:15 pm - Fellowship Luncheon
- March 9 @ 6 pm - Lenten Study
- March 9 @ 6 pm - T.A.G.
- March 12 @ 7 pm - Session meeting
- March 15 @ 8:15 am (for carpooling), 9:00 am @ St. Paul's Lutheran School Church in Batavia
- March 16 @ 6 pm - Catherine Caton on harp (2nd of our 2025 Concert Series) Fellowship to follow
- March 20 @ 4 pm - Foodlink Event
- March 23 @ 6 pm - Lenten Study
- March 23 @ 6 pm - T.A.G
- March 25 @ 6:30 pm - Deacon meeting
- March 30 @ 12:15 pm - Worship Committee meeting
- March 30 @ 6 pm - Lenten Study

Anniversaries & Birthdays

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 4 - Nancy Charcholla
- 4 - Judy Bailey
- 4 - Debbie McAllister
- 8 - Susan Brownell
- 10 - Stu Freeman
- 18 - Kay Harmon
- 21 - Faith Willhoft
- 24 - Sue Kobel
- 26 - Jacob Buckland-Seward
- 26 - Matthew Foeller
- 29 - Paul Lattimer
- 29 - Al Ruge

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

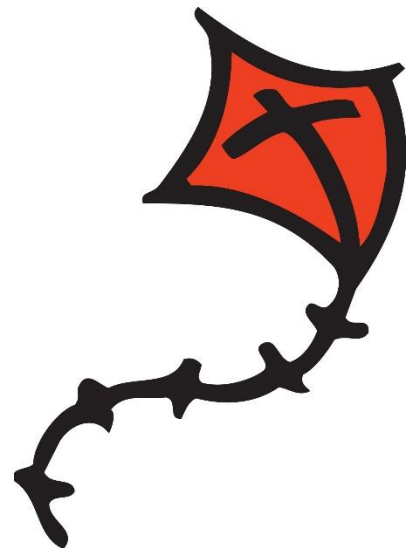
- 29 - Dave and Chris Wright

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

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

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

- April 4 - Harvey and Ruth Morse
- April 12 - Garry and Wendy Hutchurson
- April 16 - Dale and Diane White
- April 23 - Bob and Kathy Cosgrove





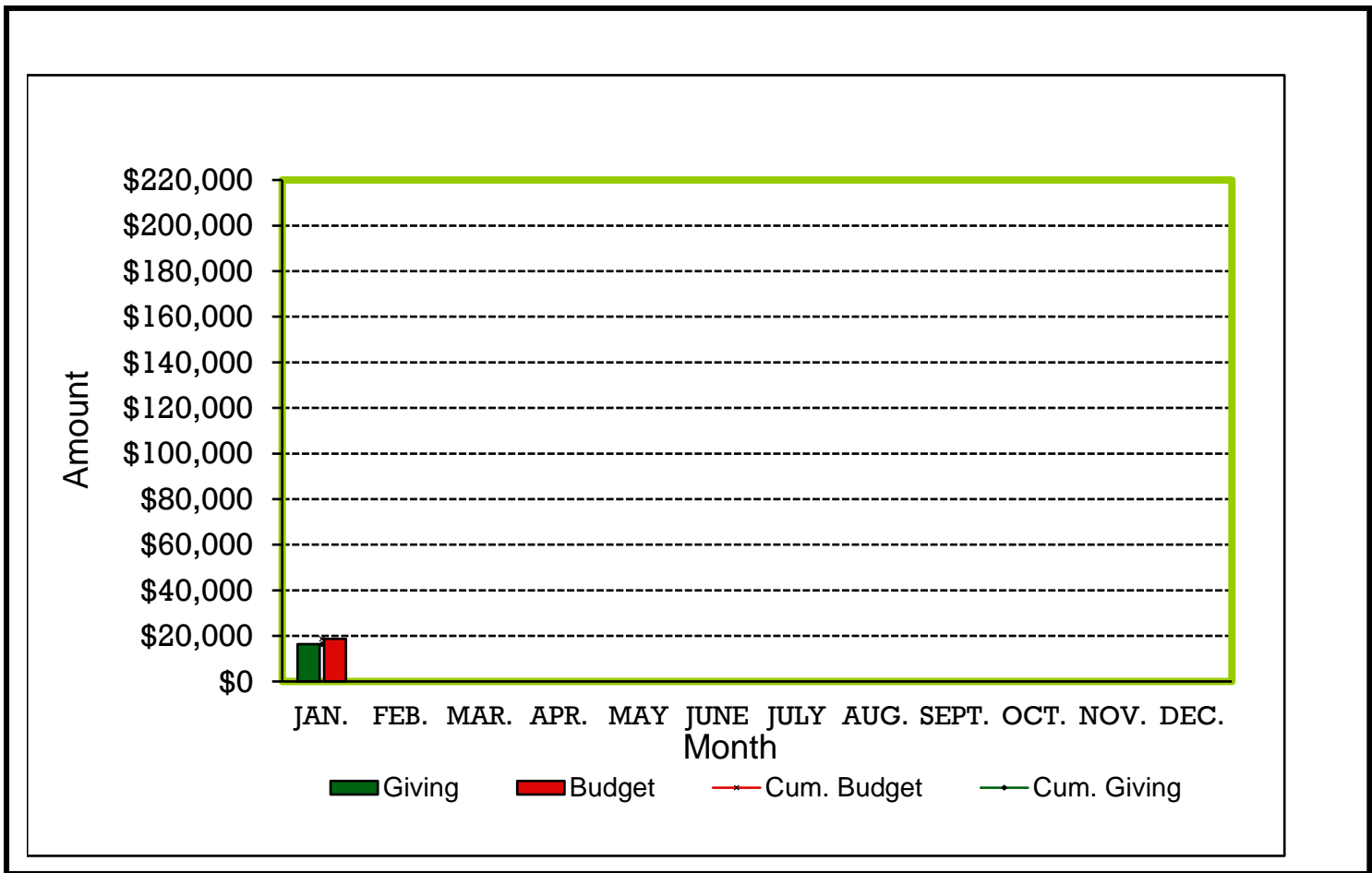
Church Finances

January 2025

"Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need."

Malachi 3:10

January's giving was \$16,420 for the monthly financial support of the annual budget. Based on the approved 2025 annual budget of \$223,865.00, the monthly support needed for this budget is \$18,655.42 per month. Expenses were relatively low as is expected for every January.



MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT – JANUARY 2025

OPERATING FUND

Income

Sunday offering:	\$13,048.00
Net Online Offering:	\$121.91
<i>*note – online offering reflects \$3.09 fee taken from gross donations from the vendor before deposit</i>	
Amortized one time gifts:	\$3,250.00

<i>Total New Receipts</i>	\$16,419.91
<i>Opening Balance (from previous month)</i>	\$359.12
Total Funds Available (opening balance + new receipts)	\$16,779.03

Expenses

Gross Expenditures for the month	\$18,003.75
Line Item Paybacks received this month that reduce expenses	
• Drews Mission/Richards Best Youth Support	\$2,500.00

Net Expenditures for the Month	\$15,503.75
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Accumulated Income Fund Transfer Needed to cover Expenditures	\$2,000.00
Extra Monthly Amortized Gift Overdrawn from the AIF	\$0.00
Monthly Amortized Gift Left in Accumulated Income Fund	\$1,250.00

OPERATING FUND BALANCE **\$25.28**

DESIGNATED FUND

Opening Balance (from previous month)	\$14326.26
New Designated Receipts	\$140.00
Total Designated Expenditures	\$2,557.55

DESIGNATED FUND BALANCE **\$11,908.71**

TOTAL CHECKBOOK BALANCE (Operating Fund + Designated Fund) **\$11,933.99**

OTHER FUND ACTIVITY

Accumulated Income Fund

• January Deposit	\$39,000.00
• January Withdraw	-\$2,000.00
Current Balance (1/31/2025)	\$42,179.14

Drews Mission/Richards-Best Fund

• January withdraw	-\$2,500.00
Current Balance (1/31/2025)	\$117,936.89

Gillette Fund

• January withdraw – Building Supervisor	-\$3,000.00
Current Balance (1/31/2025)	\$179,588.50

