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## From the Pastor

The Christmas season is upon us and for the next 30 days we will be surrounded by everything the Christmas season holds. Everything from Christmas trees to eggnog, December is filled with the Christmas season, but have you ever asked yourself why? Why does a culture, that is by and large, not a Christian culture anymore, celebrate a Christian holiday?

To answer that, we really need to understand why we, as Christians, celebrate Christmas in the first place. To answer that we need to understand that the one we are celebrating is God, who has always existed and who had a part of creation, that he was sent to us as a human being to pay for our sins. That he accomplished this by dying on the cross for us, and that through Him, he will make all things new, especially his children, so we need to understand each of these things.

First, we see from John 1:1-3 that Jesus was there from the very beginning: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made." This is important for us to understand as Christians, that not only Jesus existed from the very beginning, but also all of creation was made through him.

Secondly, we need to understand the reason why Jesus was sent to us as a human being. We see the horrible effects that sin has had when sin first entered the world in Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." We see from this verse that even at the darkest time of humanity, our Heavenly Father would bring in our forgiveness through His Son.

Third, we can see from Philippians 2:6-8 that Jesus accomplished our redemption from our sins: "though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a

thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Every time we think of Jesus, we should remember what He accomplished through the cross.

Finally, the Bible speaks about the restoration of all things. Isaiah 11:6 shows us a glimpse of this: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them." It's very heartwarming to think about the Child that we celebrate on Christmas has restored lives, marriages, and homes, will continue to do so, and there will be a final restoration where Christ will make all things new.

These four things should bring us joy, hope, love, and peace. This is what we will be talking about on Sunday mornings in December, but look at those four words again. Don't they really seem like Christmas words that even those that are not Christians celebrate this time of year? Haven't we all seen Christmas movies, heard Christmas songs that may not specifically mention Jesus, but refer to joy, hope, love, and peace?

What that shows is that many people only get a shadow of what Christmas is really about. But we, as Christians, have the full understanding of what Christmas truly is, and this is our message to the those around us, that Jesus, as God, was there from the beginning of time. That all things were made through Him, that God the Father had a plan to save us, even in the darkest of times, that He accomplished the Father's plan of redemption, and that as we are being restored in some ways now as to who we are meant to be, one day, we will be fully restored. This Christmas, I urge you to have these words on your lips, so that others may truly experience true joy, hope, love, and peace.

*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)



**T**eens

**A**fter

**G**od

**2023 Reverb  
Highlights**



See <https://www.epcbergen.org/post/reverb-23-highlights-of-the-night> for more information.



## Poinsettias

- From Bruce & Sandy Partridge in memory of loved ones in their family.
- From Bev Rogers in memory of loved ones.
- From Tom & Cyndy Jones in memory of their Parents.
- From Kay Harmon in memory of her husband, Ron Harmon, and loved ones.
- From Delores Seward in memory of Gordon Lee Seward and in memory of Nancy Lee Seward.
- From Donna Lacey in memory of Richard Lacey.
- From Susan Cokeley in memory of her loved ones.
- From Rick & Amy Stacy in memory of their sister, Nancy Seward, their dads, Casimer Stasweski, and Gordon Seward.
- From Eleanor Bater in memory of her husband, Ron, and their parents.
- From Tracy & Loretta Miller in memory of Barry Miller.
- From Carol Roberts in memory of her husband, Howard Roberts AND in honor of McGee Johnson (in the Army now in Afghanistan)
- From Dick & Shirley vonBergen in memory of Diane and Jim.
- From Alden & Christin Snell in memory of loved ones.
- From Jodi & Bill Engle in honor of Nora Ray McCarthy (their granddaughter who was born in February)
- From Garry & Wendy Hutchurson in memory of their grandson, William Katawazi.
- From John Jessop in memory of his wife, Jan Jessop



## Christmas Caroling



### Sunday, December 10 - meet at Noon

Come with us to spread some Christmas cheer!

Start with Pizza and Subs at Bergen Evangelical Presbyterian Church (38 S. Lake Ave).

We will sing our way from The Village of Bergen to the LeRoy Village Green! (Song sheets provided)  
Drivers wanted!

Questions? Call Christine Wright @ (585-737-5595)

## Bergen Community Christmas Concert

### Saturday, December 2 @ 6:00 pm

Bergen Evangelical Presbyterian Church  
38 South Lake Ave, Bergen, NY

Join us for an evening of Christmas music performed by members of the community.

Young and old are welcome to attend.  
Family friendly, bring all your little ones!  
Cookies, milk, and cocoa to follow.

Need a ride? Please call 494-1251.

Calling all musicians--please share your talent with our community!

Questions about attending or performing? Contact  
Jocelyn Rebisz, 494-6031



## Christmas Pageant

### Sunday, December 10th

Be a part of a 50+ year tradition at  
Bergen EPC

Be a shepherd, an angel, a king, a cow, or a lamb. Kids of all ages are welcome to come participate.

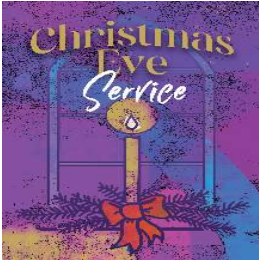
Meet at 9:30 am; Pageant starts at 10:30 am!

A special way to put Christ in Christmas!

Call Christine Wright beforehand to get a costume of your choice (585-737-5595).

See <https://www.epcbergen.org/christmas23> for more information.

## Christmas Eve Service



Services on Christmas Eve:  
10:30 am - Regular Sunday Service  
6:00 pm - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

See <https://www.epcbergen.org/christmas23> for more information.

## Fred Ely's Trike

This picture is of Fred Ely's "bicycle", which he uses to get outdoors and walk the dog. Fred is able to walk and the handlebars steady him.

The parts came from Stu Freeman, who has had a bicycle ministry for a number of years getting used bicycles from a variety of sources. He repairs the bikes and redistributes them to those in need. Stu gets calls from Catholic Charities, Community Action and Counselors telling him of kids needing a bike, or an adult who might need one to get to a job. Stu has given out over 40 bikes this last season.



With Fred's bike, the front part is from Celeste Brownell's bike, and the back from something Stu had. Celeste is the daughter of Susan Brownell. Dwight, Fred's mechanic, welded the parts together. The Mission Committee at church has helped with money toward parts need to fix the bikes.



## Fellowship

We hope that you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving, praising our Lord for all His blessings and sharing with family and friends.

As we continue to share fellowship and refreshments after the Sunday service, in the fellowship hall, please know that many times we may have leftovers. If we do, please bring a container. If you have extra containers that you want to get rid of (cool whip or similar size), we would gladly take them off your hands.

We are looking for donations of baked goods, so please let us know if you could provide cookies, muffins, quick breads, etc. Many thanks to those that have brought food!

We had a wonderful time of food and fellowship at the annual HARVEST DINNER on Sunday, November 12, following the service. Many, many thanks to all that helped out! Special thanks to Marty Hammack for the beautiful decorations and to those that donated and pre-cooked the squash! See the church's website for pictures <https://www.epcbergen.org/post/many-thanks-for-the-harvest-dinner>

We served hot dogs again at the November Foodlink event. This was our last Foodlink for this year. It was a great and mild day. Thank you to those that helped with the hot dogs.

Coming up in December, we have many events that Fellowship will help with and you can help too!

Community Christmas Concert - Saturday, December 2, 2023. We are looking for donations of cookies to serve after the concert. We will also serve hot cocoa

Christmas Caroling – Sunday, December 10, 2023. We will help the Wrights with food and cleanup after the lunch and before caroling.

As always, if you have suggestions for events to bring us all together, please let any of us know.

Thank you,

Fellowship  
Team





### Kimia Center Update from Sarah Speer

Dear Supporter,

Sarah would like to say a special thanks with photos for all your faithful giving. Our leprosy center is called The Kimia Center, which means peace. We are striving to have each who comes to the Center, receive Peace on their bodies and spirits.

Dinner time



Dr. Look treating a skin disorder



Meet some of Sarah's close friends:

This is **Isidre** -with his wooden crutches



One

is too short. The next picture he has a new pair, thanks to those who support me. He is a former leprosy patient and works hard in his garden to survive.

Land Rover loaded for a road trip with extra passengers and cargo.



**Emile** had a motorcycle accident when he was 19 years old. He survived, but has been paralyzed from the waist down. He also had to have an above the knee amputation of his right leg. He is being cared for by Simon and Etienne 24/7. He is now 31 years old.



Our Dugout



Thanks so much for introducing my friends to my North American friends. Many, many thanks for your continued financial support and prayers for the work at the Kimia Centre. God bless & most grateful, Sarah



## Sewing With a Purpose



Sewing With A Purpose again collaborates with the Veteran Ministry.

Faith Willhoft created 11 bags for the Eagle Star Housing veterans from leftover fabrics destined to be thrown away. Faith,

who is skilled at repurposing material/fabric, designed these useful bags. Shirl Harris and Joan Dermody have been gathering useful items (toiletries, hats, socks) for the veterans all year and now will have something special to place their Christmas items in when they visit Eagle Star in December.

Sewing With a Purpose also received the back of a knit sweater, but there was no pattern or coordinating yarn to complete it. So, instead of throwing it out, we repurposed it into a ski hat!



## Christmas Eve Offering Helps Byron-Bergen Students

Hungry Byron-Bergen students who participate in the Backpack Program will benefit from our church's Christmas Eve offering this year.

The program was selected by the Evangelism & Mission Committee. The program is run by volunteers to help some of the neediest students in the local school district. They are from homes that often don't have food available to the kids over the weekend. A backpack is filled with nutritious food that the students take home over the weekend.

It has been operating for several years, but is facing increased financial challenges this year as food costs have increased significantly due to inflation. The number of students in need has also increased. The program started earlier in the school year than in past years, contributing to the over-all budget crunch. Currently, 30 students receive the weekly backpacks.

Traditionally, our Christmas Eve offering goes to a local mission to spread God's love at this time of year. If you want to contribute, you can mail a check, deposit your

gift in the offering boxes by the church entrances, or pay online. Be sure to designate your gift to the Christmas Eve offering.

## Organ Update

Parsons has completed their restoration of our church's pipe organ! If you have been in church since we started using the organ again, you have no doubt noticed the change—it will take some time for all of us to get used to the amount of sound the restored instrument produces!



We thank Parsons Pipe Organ Builders for their high quality work and their commitment to having our instrument ready to play for the Advent and Christmas Seasons. We will share final numbers on the pledge campaign in the annual report in early 2024.

To celebrate the organ restoration, please save the following dates for musical events at church this winter and spring:

- Sunday, February 4, 2024, 6pm: Dedicatory Concert
- Sunday, March 10, 2024, 6pm: Roberts Wesleyan Brass Quintet
- Sunday, April 14, 2024, 6pm: Jaclyn Breeze, flute
- Saturday, April 27, 6pm: Special Door of Hope event featuring local guitarist George Collichio.
- Sunday, May 5, 2024, 6pm: Recital featuring organ students from the Eastman School of Music

## Door of Hope Seeking Help!

Door of Hope is a music and coffeehouse type ministry, based out of our church, as a way to provide comfort to those in our community and teach others about our Lord. Pastor Brandt and the Engles run Door of Hope. "They are looking for more musicians who would like to participate in creating an inviting atmosphere and for help with the set-up and cleanup of the snack area." Please contact Pastor Brandt, Jodi, or Bill if you are interested in helping!

## PB and J Lunches for Open Door

On November 9, members of our church gathered with the homeschool group to make PB+J lunches for Open Door Mission in Rochester. Each lunch includes two sandwiches, two snacks, and a beverage. Open Door passes out the lunches to those who are homeless in Rochester.

Our next PB+J event will be on December 7th, at 11:30 am. Everyone is welcome to attend. We are in need of bottled water and snacks for this event. If you would like to donate to this mission, please leave the food item(s) in the kitchen with a note attached designating the item(s) for PB+J/Open Door. Thank you!

## Eagle Star Veteran Proudly Wears Donated Coat



## Operation Christmas Child 2023

**85!** That is the number of children around the world who will be blessed by a shoebox gift thanks to the love and generosity of our congregation. In addition to the excitement they will feel as they open their shoebox, these children will have the opportunity to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ- the Greatest Gift Ever!!

The 2 youth Sunday School classes had a great time filling 23 boxes with school supplies, hygiene items, toys, and stuffed animals. Thank you to all who donated these items throughout the year to make this possible.

We also wish to thank all who filled individual boxes as well as generously donated money to offset the \$10 shipping cost per box.

Thank You once again for sharing your hearts, hands, and feet in this meaningful mission project as we support the wonderful Christian Ministry of Samaritan’s Purse.

**“GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL TO THE WHOLE CREATION” Mark 16:15 ESV**

*Serving Him with Joy,*

Julie Foeller and Jennifer White (Operation Christmas Child Co- Chairs)



## Calendar

Online calendar:  
[tinyurl.com/29zhbnbr](https://tinyurl.com/29zhbnbr)



### Weekly/Monthly

- First Sunday of the month - Communion
- First Sunday of the month – S A Food Collection
- Sundays, 9:15 am - Sunday School for All Ages
- Sundays, 10:30-11:45 am – Morning Worship
- Each Sunday following worship (unless there is a committee luncheon) is “Fattening the Flock” coffee & snack time.
- Alternating Sundays @ 6 pm - Preaching Class
- Mondays, 1 pm - Tech Class
- Tue & Thurs - Homeschooling Co-op
- Alternating Tues @ 2:00 pm - Women’s Bible Study
- Wednesdays, 6:00 pm – Prayer
- Thursdays, 6:00-7:00 am – Son Risers
- Saturdays, 11 am – Kid’s Quest
- Newsletter Deadline on the 25th of each month
- Last Saturday of the month – Door of Hope Coffee House @ 6 pm (December 30th this month)

### Other Events in December

- Dec 2 (Sat) - Bergen Community Christmas Concert @ 6 pm
- Dec 3 (Sun) - TAG @ 6 pm
- Dec 10 (Sun) - Christmas Pageant at 10:30 am during service
- Dec 10 (Sun) - Pizza & Subs after worship followed by Christmas Caroling
- Dec 10 (Sun) - Preaching Class @ 6 pm
- Dec 12 (Tues) - Women’s Bible Study @ 2 pm
- Dec 13 (Wed) - Sessions meeting @ 7 pm
- Dec 17 (Sun) - E&M meeting following worship
- Dec 19 (Tues) - Deacons meeting @ 7 pm
- Dec 24 (Sun) - Christmas Eve Service @ 6 pm
- Dec 25 (Mon) - Christmas Day - No office hours
- Dec 31 (Sun) - New Year’s Eve

## Anniversaries & Birthdays

### December Birthdays

- 1 - Brandt Hammack
- 3 - Isaac Buckland
- 4 - Donna Lacey
- 10 - Chaz Newmark
- 11 - Wesley McNear
- 11 - Robbie Newmark
- 11 - Sandy Partridge
- 12 - John Jessop
- 16 - Joe Rebisz
- 19 - Rena Wilson
- 20 - David Brownell
- 23 - Wendy Caccamise
- 27 - Sandy Gillett
- 31 - Bev Wooton

### December Anniversaries

- 21 - Tom & Cyndy Jones (51 years)

### January Birthdays

- 1 - Jim Wilson
- 3 - Debby Newmark
- 4 - Collin McNear
- 7 - Rose Wilson
- 8 - Luke Hollenbeck
- 11 - Bruce Partridge
- 12 - Shirley Harris
- 13 - Joe Heukensfeld
- 23 - Eleanor Bater
- 26 - Michael Welch
- 28 - Denny Gillett
- 30 - Lydia Hammack

### January Anniversaries

- 1 - Chad & Wendy Caccamise (31 years)
- 5 - Stu & Gail Freeman (61 years)
- 8 - Brandt & Marty Hammack (13 years)



**Annual Meeting is scheduled for  
January 21, 2024**

**Committee Reports will be due by  
January 2, 2024**

***Thank you!***





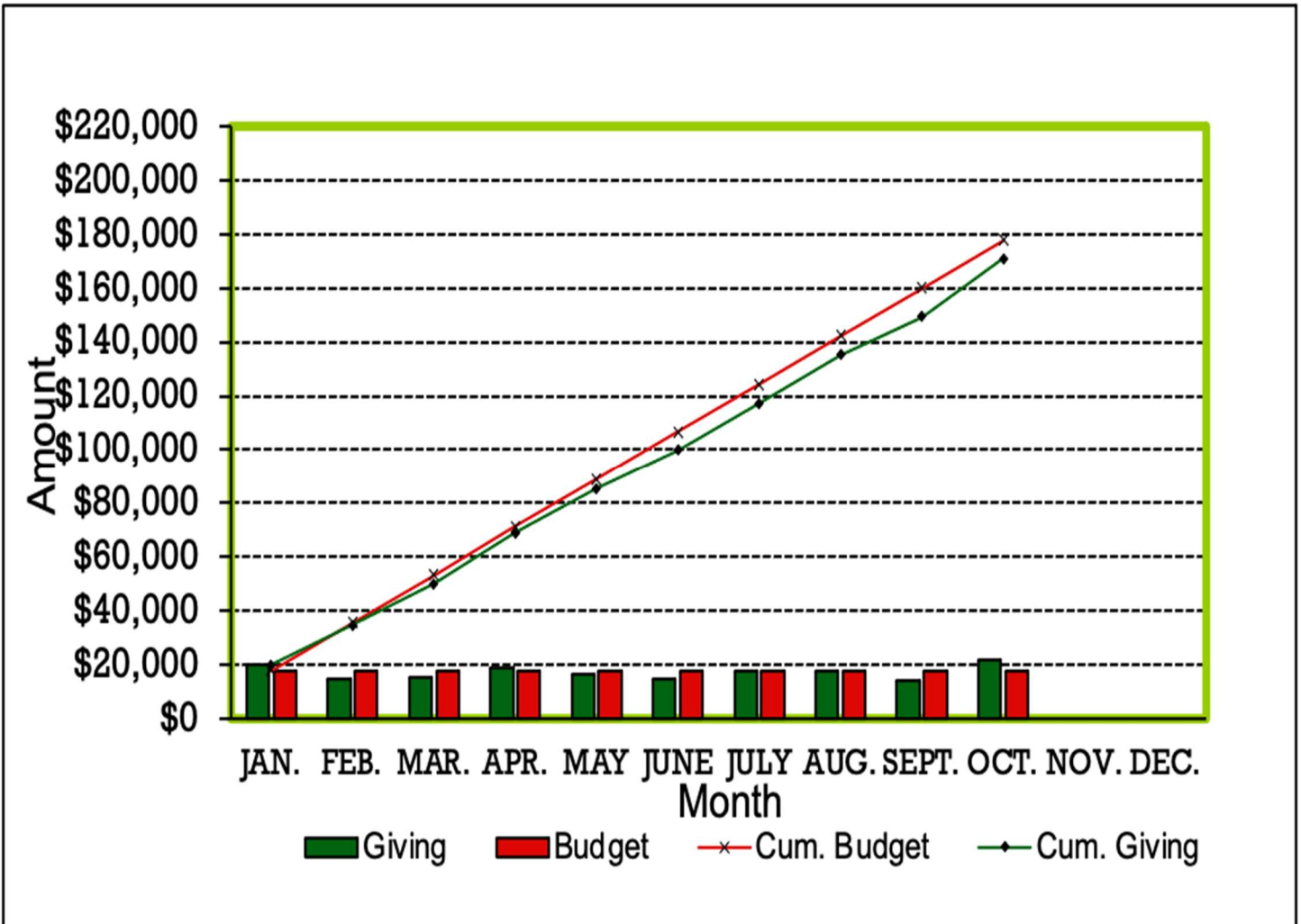
# Church Finances

## October 2023

*"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*

If September was the perfect storm of low giving and high expenditures, October was the perfect opposite - a five-Sunday month with a very high giving of \$21,778 and low expenses of \$13,113. October's giving is the highest for any month in recent memory, and over \$2,000 higher than any month this year. We will be going into the last two months of 2023 with giving running about \$3,000 ahead of last year.



## MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT – OCTOBER 2023

### OPERATING FUND

#### Income

Sunday offering:	\$17,322.00
Net Online Offering:	\$1,449.12
<i>*note – online offering reflects \$43.94 fee taken from gross donations from the vendor before deposit</i>	
Amortized one time gifts:	\$3,007.00
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>	
<i>Total New Receipts</i>	<i>\$21,778.12</i>
<i>Opening Balance (from previous month)</i>	<i>\$219.04</i>
<b>Total Funds Available (opening balance + new receipts)</b>	<b>\$21,997.16</b>



#### Expenses

Gross Expenditures for the month	\$13,133.29
Line Item Paybacks received this month that reduce expenses	
• Amazon return – office supplies	\$19.98

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**Net Expenditures for the Month** **\$13,113.31**

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	\$3,007.00

**OPERATING FUND BALANCE** **\$5,876.85**

### DESIGNATED FUND

Opening Balance (from previous month)	\$11,831.93
New Designated Receipts	\$606.00
Total Designated Expenditures	\$25.64

**DESIGNATED FUND BALANCE** **\$12,412.29**

**TOTAL CHECKBOOK BALANCE (Operating Fund + Designated Fund)** **\$18,289.14**

### OTHER FUND ACTIVITY

#### Accumulated Income Fund

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October Withdrawal <span style="float: right;">-\$0.00</span></li> </ul>	<b>\$3,516.72</b>
<b>Current Balance (10/31/2023)</b>	

#### Organ Fund

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parsons Organ Builders <span style="float: right;">-\$35,935.20</span></li> </ul>	<b>\$12,513.51</b>
<b>Current Balance (10/31/2023)</b>	

