

From the Pastor:

In these articles, we have been looking through the Sermon on the Mount and specifically the Beatitudes. For this article, I want to consider what it means that "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3), as well as what I consider to be the corresponding verse "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

I have often found with the Beatitudes, they are often misinterpreted, especially from a worldly perspective, and that is certainly true with this first one. There are some who think that this glorifies being poor. If that were the case, then poor people would all go to heaven. In fact, the goal in life would be to become poor in the world's terms, and that is not the case when compared with the rest of Scripture.

The key of course is the word spirit. In Greek, it is the word, *pneuma*. It is often used to denote the Holy Spirit, but here, that would not make sense. That would mean that we would be blessed to be poor in the Holy Spirit and we would inherit the kingdom of heaven. No, it really is the second definition of spirit which describes inward thoughts. Blue Letter Bible gives the definition of *pneuma* this way: "the rational spirit, the power by which the human being feels, thinks, decides."

So, being poor in spirit means that we are poor in the way that we feel, think, and desire. So, here's my question, isn't that everyone? Aren't we all poor in the way that we feel, think, and desire? Romans 3:10b-12 tells us this: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

So, if everyone is technically poor in spirit, what is Jesus talking about? I would say that those poor in Spirit acknowledge that they are poor in spirit. As always, I love the way Martyn Lloyd Jones puts it, "That, then, is what

is meant by being 'poor in spirit'. It means a complete absence of pride, a complete absence of self-assurance and of self-reliance. It means a consciousness that we are nothing in the presence of God. It is nothing, then, that we can produce; it is nothing that we can do in ourselves. It is just this tremendous awareness of our utter nothingness as we come face to face with God. That is to be 'poor in spirit'."

As we saw in the last article, the word blessed means happy, and if you know several people, one being poor in spirit and one who is not (They are proud and self-assured about everything they do.), one can tell the difference between them. The one who is arrogant will always strive to prop himself up, and truly, he will never be satisfied. Deep down, he probably realizes that he is insufficient in the most important things in life, namely understanding and applying spiritual values to his life.

Compare that to one who is truly poor in spirit, and he recognizes his own spiritual condition. As a result, he is humble before a Holy God and this reflects in his relationships with other people, especially when it comes to giving mercy as the fifth beatitude states. After all, he sees his own sin very clearly, and as a result, sees how much God has given him mercy, so how could he not give others mercy?

Not only that, He also recognizes his own sin, but even more than that, he recognizes his own spiritual shortcomings. He recognizes that without the Holy Spirit intervening in his life, he would be just as dry, if not more, than the one who is not poor in spirit, so there is a constant reliance upon God for all his spiritual needs. As a result, he is filled with joy despite his many shortcomings and sin in his life.

Jesus tells us that these people will have the kingdom of heaven and will be granted mercy as they have given mercy, and just like poor in spirit and being merciful, these two also go hand in hand. You and I have no hope



of being in the kingdom of heaven unless we receive mercy through Jesus, but through this dual blessing of receiving mercy from God and being in God's kingdom will result in happiness and joy that will touch everyone around us.

Finally, as a church family, I encourage us all in everything that we do, to be poor in our spirit and to consistently exhibit mercy towards those around us, and we will continue to be a joyful church that touches people's lives with the Gospel.

Pastor Brandt

Back-to-School Bash



On Saturday, September 6, the church hosted a Back-to-School Bash in the church parking lot. The highlight of the day was a giant inflatable obstacle course. Our new Youth and Children's Minister, Brandon Northup, worked with Pastor Brandt to plan the event.

The day started off a little damp, so one group started to play Risk while some of the other young people worked on drying off the inflatable with towels. Although the idea of conquering the world appealed to some of the kids, the other activities soon called their names, and the Risk game was abandoned.



Very quickly becoming one of the favorite activities during church events, a group used chalk to draw on the

pavement and was soon involved in a game of Four-Square. Others shot a basketball, and some participated in a game resembling Pickle Ball.



But, once dry, the inflatable was clearly the favorite ...



The only thing that had much success over the obstacle course was pizza, soda, and other snacks ...



More pictures at:

<https://www.epcbergen.org/post/back-to-school-bash>

E&M Update

Reach Out to the Community at Harvest Fest

Our church doors will be wide open on Oct. 31 as we once again host a Harvest Festival on Halloween night. This family-oriented event welcomes anyone from the community to come inside, enjoy some refreshments and play some games.



Our goal is to meet and welcome community residents. We want them to get to know us, and we hope they will feel welcome to come back to other events. It's not just about the candy but our aim is to open dialog where the gospel can be shared. The event allows us to talk and plant seeds for the future.



This popular event draws the most non-members into our church. Games and activities are designed for the kids. Conversation and refreshments are aimed at parents.



Many volunteers are needed to make this happen. Volunteer signup sheets will be posted on the bulletin board near the Fellowship Hall. We also need donations of wrapped candy, cider and donut holes.

Please check the bulletin board and sign up to donate items or to help. We want our neighbors to sense the warmth and love of our church family, so your presence is important.

Fellowship News

We enjoyed fellowshiping and sharing a chili lunch with Adult and Teen Challenge on 9/21/25. Many thanks to all that helped. And a special thanks to Alden Snell for sharing the mac and cheese leftovers from his Eastman grad student event.

We plan to have another fellowship lunch on 10/12/25 after the service. We will be serving hearty soup and some other side dishes. Please join us and bring friends! We always make extra, so if you know of someone that perhaps cannot get out, please let us know and we can make a takeout lunch for them, for you to deliver.



And please save the date of 11/9/25 for our annual Harvest Dinner, following the service. We have again invited Adult and Teen Challenge and hope that they will be able to join us and celebrate our thanks to God with this dinner.

We have welcomed Candy Kent to our team and gratefully thank Delores Seward for all of her help with the fellowship committee over the years. If you want to be a part of the fellowship committee or just want to help, please let us know.

The Fellowship Team

Sewing With A Purpose

Sewing With A Purpose was excited to offer an in-house Project Date on September 9th.

Flannel hearts were made for the NICU at Strong.



Bags were sewn for Operation Christmas Child



Sandy P and Deb H. Embroidering faces for handmade dolls.

Joyce and Linda traced hearts for Eleanor to cut.



100 flannel hearts and 50 eye protections were delivered to the NICU at Strong Hospital! Thank you, team.

Next Sewing Project Day is Wednesday, October 15 9:00 - 11:30 in the Fellowship Hall where we will be making bags for each Operation Christmas Child box.



Foodlink

Forty volunteers served our neighbors in need at the Foodlink distribution on September 25. Attendance was a little lighter than normal, but I think the threatening rain kept some people away.



We served 126 households, including 29 new ones. Those households represented 389 individuals, including 100 who were new to our registration.

Yes, it rained, but only briefly. The fresh fruits and veggies were welcomed by our clients.



At the end of our distribution, some of the leftover food was given to three local food pantries. In addition, Bob Shingleton found some additional pantries and groups to take the leftovers the next day. So our event continues to help others.

For the first time, we had a community health educator, Jennifer Quick, who visited and shared recipes (and

samples!) that could be prepared using foods we often get at our distribution.



Thanks to those of you who took the time to volunteer and share the love of Jesus,

Gregg

Upcoming Foodlink Dates

We will host two more Foodlink distributions in 2025 before we take our winter break. Save the dates of October 23 and November 13 to share food and love with our neighbors in need. We take the months of December, January and February off while winter is at its worst. Dates for 2026 have not been set yet by Foodlink.

The federal government is changing some of the regulations surrounding SNAP benefits (food stamps.) The changes will have an impact on who is eligible to receive SNAP benefits. We don't have the details of the changes that are expected to take place in December, though it is anticipated that they will cause more people to seek food from Foodlink.

Calendar

Online calendar: tinyurl.com/29zhbnbr

RECURRING WEEKLY/MONTHLY

- Sundays, 9:15-10:15 am – Sunday School
- Sundays, 10:30-11:45 am – Morning Worship
- First Sunday of the month -- Communion
- First Sunday of the month – Salvation Army Food Collection
- 2nd & 4th Sunday of the month -- Kids Quest during worship time
- Thursdays, 6:00-7:00 am – Son Risers
- 25th of each month - Newsletter deadline

OTHER EVENTS IN OCTOBER:

- October 5 @ 12:15 pm – Fellowship Comm. mtg
- October 8 @ 7 pm – Sessions
- October 12 @ 12:15 pm – Fellowship Dinner
- October 13 – Office closed – Columbus Day
- October 14 @ 2 pm – Ladies Bible Study
- October 19 @ 1:30 pm – OCC meeting
- October 23 @ 4 pm – Foodlink Event
- October 26 @ 12:15 pm – Worship Comm. mtg
- October 28 @ 2 pm – Ladies Bible Study
- October 28 @ 6:30 pm – Deacon meeting
- October 31 @ 6 pm – Harvest Festival

Daylight Saving Time Ends November 2



Anniversaries & Birthdays

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

October 6 – Debbie Sheldon
 October 13 – Delores Seward
 October 15 – Joan Dermody
 October 16 – Chris Hollenbeck
 October 18 – Mandy Wilson
 October 25 – Dick vonBergen
 October 25 – Dale White
 October 26 – Maddie Buckland
 October 30 – Ruth Morse
 October 31 – Chad Caccamise
 October 31 – Diane White

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

October 1 – Jake & Michelle Buckland-Seward (9 years)

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

November 3 – Garry Hutchurson
 November 5 – Richard Stacy
 November 7 – Fred Ely
 November 11 – Loretta Miller
 November 12 – Marianne Newmark
 November 15 – Deb Heukensfeld
 November 19 – Kevin Hollenbeck
 November 27 – Seth McNear

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

November 27 – Brian and Julie Foeller (32 years)
 November 29 – Joe and Deb Heukensfeld (56 years)

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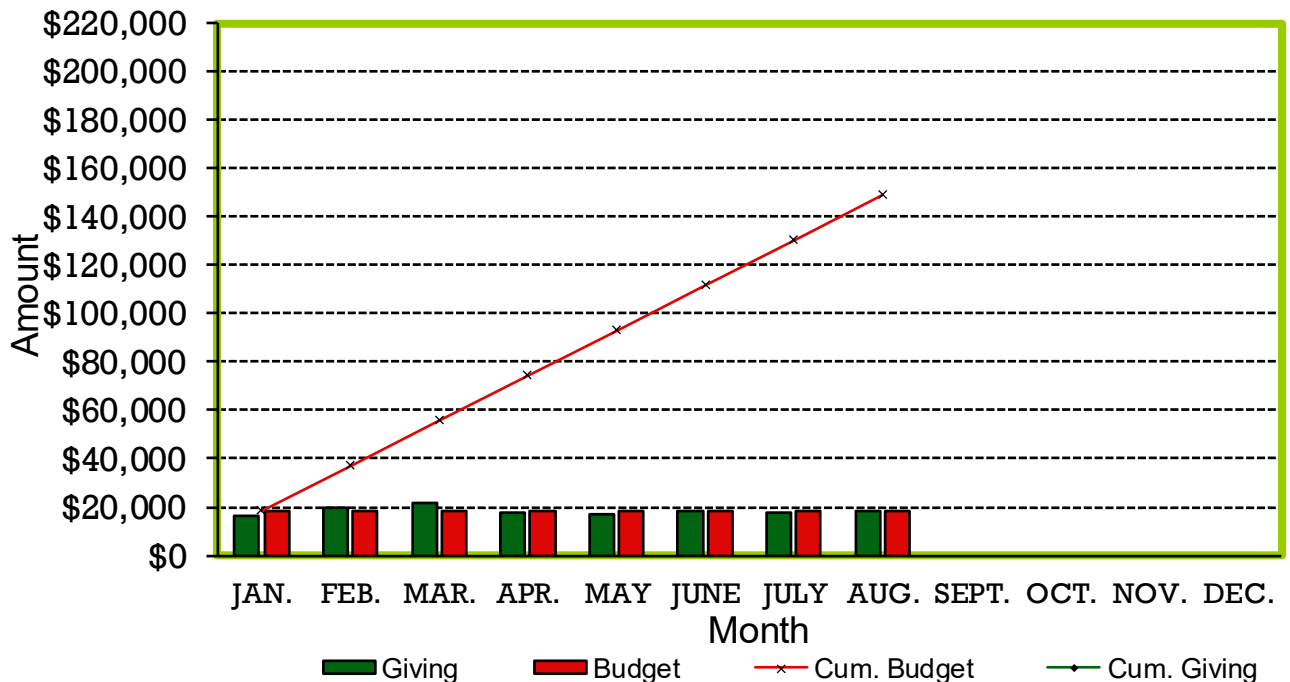
Church Finances

August 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

August's giving was \$18,588.14 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. The giving remains very close to meeting the budgeted amount.



MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT – AUGUST 2025

OPERATING FUND

Income

Sunday offering:	\$14,152.00
Net Online Offering:	\$1,004.32
<i>*note – online offering reflects \$25.18 fee taken from gross donations from the vendor before deposit</i>	
Amortized one time gifts:	\$3,970.00

<i>Total New Receipts</i>	<i>\$19,126.32</i>
<i>Opening Balance (from previous month)</i>	<i>\$139.14</i>
Total Funds Available (opening balance + new receipts)	\$19,265.46

Expenses

Gross Expenditures for the month	\$15,256.45
<i>Line Item Paybacks received this month that reduce expenses</i>	
None	\$0.00

Net Expenditures for the Month	\$15,256.45
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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	\$3,970.00

OPERATING FUND BALANCE	\$39.01
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DESIGNATED FUND

Opening Balance (from previous month)	\$16,515.52
New Designated Receipts	\$302.00
Total Designated Expenditures	\$3,908.14

DESIGNATED FUND BALANCE	\$12,909.38
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TOTAL CHECKBOOK BALANCE (Operating Fund + Designated Fund)	\$12,948.39
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OTHER FUND ACTIVITY

Accumulated Income Fund

August Withdraw	-\$0.00
Current Balance (8/31/2025)	\$19,355.00

College/Breiner Fund

August Breiner Deposit	\$27,114.08
Current Balance (8/31/2025)	\$27,114.08

Tithe Fund

August Withdraw – Reach Global	-\$500.00
Current Balance (8/31/2025)	\$49,245.69

Property Reserve Fund

August Withdraw – Triple O	-\$10,800.00
Current Balance (8/31/2025)	\$34.77

Richards/Best Fund

August Withdraw – Triple O	-\$2,723.08
Current Balance (8/31/2025)	\$127,084.69