

# The Bell



Bergstrasse Evangelical Lutheran Church

February 2024

## Congregational Retreat Saturday, April 27, 2024 8:30 AM—4:00 PM

SAVE THE DATE. The survey taken at the end of last year showed an interest in doing a retreat, with a lot of the respondents stating that they would prefer a day program, rather than overnight

On April 27, 2024, we are planning a program at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Lititz. They have an outdoor labyrinth and garden that they have graciously offered for us to share, and Rev. Darla Bair will lead a teaching on Labyrinths in the afternoon. She will also be leading us in a unit called "Praying in Color" in the morning. It will also be a great time to get to know one another and spend some Family time together. More information will follow soon.

A donation to cover event costs appreciated.

**February 24  
7:00 PM**

**Ash Wednesday** with Imposition of Ashes



## **God on Tap – Tuesday February 27 Nonna Rosa**

Our guest presenter is Pastor Peter Schwabe-Fry from Muddy Creek Lutheran Church in Denver. He will be sharing his research on "The History of the Holy Land: How Did We Get to Where We Are Today?". His presentation will offer new understandings of the current conflict in Palestine and Israel.

Sign up for dinner reservations by Sunday February 25! Dinner is at 6 pm, Pastor Peter's presentation begins at 7pm.



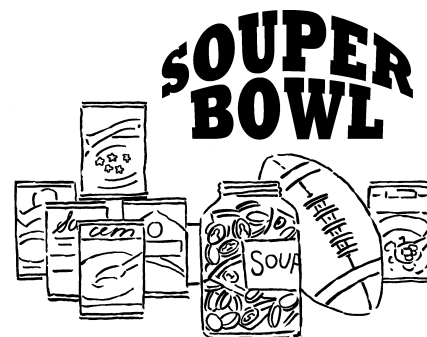


Please bring the following donations each week during February to give to the Food Bank.

**February**

- 4 Pasta and sauce, macaroni and cheese
- 11 soup and crackers
- 18 Hygiene articles, bath soap, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, powder
- 25 Juices, coffee, tea, hot chocolate

Which teams will make it to the Super Bowl? Regardless, because of your generous donations of soup, clients of Ephrata Area Social Services will have a bounty of soup & crackers for distribution. Bring your canned soup(s) and crackers on Sunday February 4 and 11 and place them on the Bounty Tree!



### Free Tax Preparation

This tax season Jeff Donahue is offering to do church members' 2023 taxes and PA Property Tax Rebates, free of charge. Jeff has been participating in the IRS's "Voluntary Income Tax Assistance" program for 12 years.

You would make an appointment with him and meet at Bergstrasse where you would review your tax information with him. The taxes would be prepared by Jeff and reviewed by another VITA volunteer, per IRS rules. Another meeting would be arranged where the printed documents would be signed. These forms would then be e filed to the proper Federal and State departments. You would need to mail Local tax forms and the PA Rebate forms.

If interested, please call Jeff at 717-733-0921.

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bergluth@dejazzd.com  
www.bergstrasselutheran.com  
Worship - 10:00 AM

The Rev. James Goodyear, Pastor  
717-676-3954 (cell)

Jean Wilhelm, newsletter editor

Due date for the **March** newsletter is **February 18.**

#### Financial Update: Ending December 31, 2023

	<b>MONTH</b>	<b>2023 YTD</b>	<b>2022 YTD</b>
Net Operating Income	\$868.83	(\$15,435.56)	(\$5,196.92)
Operating Income	\$15,278.67	\$143,328.60	\$159,834.33
Operating Expense	\$14,409.84	\$158,764.16	\$165,031.25
Net Other Income	(\$171.81)	(\$3,796.74)	(\$3,035.95)
Net Income from all sources	\$697.02	(\$19,232.30)	(\$8,232.87)
Available Funds		\$92,615.56	



## From the Pastor's Desk

For as long as I can remember, I've enjoyed the Olympics. I am in awe of how the world's nations come together for sport for sport's sake. Yes, there are friendly rivalries, but the Olympic games are for the joy of being together. Differing languages, cultures, a myriad of sports, all coming together to celebrate our one humanity. I am excited to watch the Summer Olympics from Paris this summer, in particular the relay races. Four people are spread over the course of the track. The first runner is given a baton to carry, with the sole responsibility to pass the baton onto the next runner. The fourth runner carries the baton across the finish line. Or at least that is what is supposed to happen! Sometimes the passing of the baton falls to the ground instead of the next runner's hand. Regardless of how much you've trained and practiced, if the baton is not passed from hand to hand, the race ends. For that team, the race is finished. No opportunity to start over. Finished.

The third chapter of Ecclesiastes begins 'For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven'. All living creatures, animal, plant, human and nonhuman plant, have a specific lifetime. The life of the living is dependent upon the internal and external nurturing of all that belong to the whole being and their willingness to pass the baton. At our last council gathering, I shared my concerns for the future of Bergstrasse Church. The 2023 fiscal year ended with a \$20,000 deficit. Most months our ministry expenses for worship, mission outreach, and prayer range between \$10,000 to \$12,000 while our financial income ranges between \$8,500 to \$9,500. In addition, our available savings are less than \$100,000. The income and expenses for the cemetery are accounted for separately. Over the past five years, a number of additional significant financial gifts from members, the generosity to cover the cost of mission outreach incidentals, and Thrivent Action teams we've been able to offer many life-giving experiences.

As I reflect on the past five years, I am totally amazed! First is how this congregation coming together to step out of the traditional box to call an openly gay man as their fulltime pastor. The odds seemed to be against us – a new pastor with a different way to engage in ministry and dwindling financial resources. Here we are five years later looking to our future. Second, how the face of this congregation has shifted. My first worship service the gathered congregation sat in their pew, quietly looking ahead. Today, there are lively conversations happening before worship! Speaking of worship, we now include worship assistants participating from their seat, we moved the table to become the focal point of our coming together, we have four competent organists, we now broadcast our worship via Facebook Live and YouTube, even the liturgy (worship order) has characteristics of a more inclusive community.

How about community events that brought other people together – Trunk or Treat, Easter Sunrise Service, Easter Egg Hunts, Friday nights (Smores, movies, games, etc.), God on Tap meeting outside our usual worship space, visible at Lititz Pride, gathering food for EASS & LCL Food bank, creating quilts for LWR, etc. We can't forget the 271 Birthday Bash last spring that happened because we invited the Ephrata Community to help create 200 Birthday bags for EASS. We are beginning 2024 with the creation of a Clothing Closet, a community garden, and Senior Activities on the Hill.

Perhaps the most significant transformation I see happening is the ministry engagement of our newest disciples. Since worship is our measure of ministry engagement, three-quarters of our regular worshippers are new to Bergstrasse since 2019. Outside of Sunday worship that number is closer to 100%. The usual response to Bergstrasse newcomers is 'this place is different!' When pressed deeper, I hear "everyone is welcome here" or "we are to love everyone" or "the pastor speaks from the heart" or "here I can be my authentic self" or "there's more to Church than worship, I do what I like to do to help my neighbor" or "I don't feel as judged here as my last church". Great examples of passing the baton to our neighbor so that love is exhibited in our actions with other human beings.

Living in faith, following the example of Jesus the Christ, is built on relationships. Our relationship with God AND your relationships with other people in the Bergstrasse community. Church culture is moving from a belief in system to one of experiencing God's grace in our human interactions. The Church's gift is a free offering by being present to the current situation and the heart of the person across from you. As Jesus

teaches us 'to meet our neighbor where they are' instead of shaming them with 'could, would, should'. Their experience has value, as does yours.

Current church growth research points to nurturing relationships as the key to creating loving caring communities of faith. Relationships are strengthened by engaging in serving our neighbor together. Why did six people unknown to Bergstrasse show up to help ready the space for the Clothing Closet? Because we want to help our neighbor. It is easy to support any ministry initiative with words or needed items. Showing support is asking how you can help. It might be helpful to ask why this ministry is important to you.

Also new to Bergstrasse is creating a culture of shared leadership. Most people are familiar with a leader being one person in charge of a group of people who then do the work. What is slowly being nurtured at Bergstrasse is an understanding that everyone is a leader! Yes, even YOU! The shift comes in gathering people to engage in the work (ministry initiative) by inviting other people outside of the Bergstrasse Community, who have an interest in what is being done, to be a part of the community. When the whole community knows the purpose of the organization, 'to grow the community who knows, loves, and follows God' you are set free to share your gifts of service to others.

How might Bergstrasse pass the baton of ministry engagement to the next community of disciples? Let's begin with why be engaged in ministry – Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor (fellow human beings). Service is always about helping the person across from you know they matter to all of humanity. In the same manner, the way ministry is experienced is different for each community.

How will you commit to growing the Bergstrasse community of faith? The time is now to pass the baton to a newer time. It is time to release all that binds us by tradition or irrelevant and pass the baton with grace to a new way of being Church.

I am reminded of the song Pass It On. "It only takes a spark to get a fire going. And soon all those around, can warm up in the glowing. That's how it is with God's love, once you've experience it. You'll spread God's love, to everyone, you'll want to pass it on."

Peace,  
Pastor Jim

## **Cocalico Cluster Lenten Services**

The seven Lutheran Congregations of the Cocalico Cluster will again offer Midweek Lenten worship for five weeks beginning Wednesday February 21. This year's theme is "Open My Life, Lord". Worship begins at 7:00 pm. The offerings collected at these services will be given to the Lower Susquehanna Disaster Relief Mission Trip.

Wednesday February 21 – at Faith United Lutheran, Denver  
Pastor Scott Brubaker, preacher *Open my Eyes, Lord*

Wednesday February 28 – at Bergstrasse Lutheran, Ephrata  
Pastor Marissa Becklin, preacher *Open my Hands, Lord*

Wednesday March 6 – at Muddy Creek Lutheran, Denver  
Pastor Jim Goodyear, preacher *Open my Ears, Lord*

Wednesday March 13 – at Mellingers Lutheran, Schoeneck  
Pastor Sandy Gideon, preacher *Open my Heart, Lord*

Wednesday March 20 – at St. John Center Lutheran, East Earl  
Pastor Peter Schwabe-Fry, preacher *Open my Life, Lord*

Ascension Day Service – Thursday May 9, 7:00 pm - at Swamp Lutheran, Reinholds  
Pastor Tim Craven, preacher *The Ascension of Our Lord*

# The Seed of Joy

*In the heart of fear and pain, God plants the seed of our joy.*

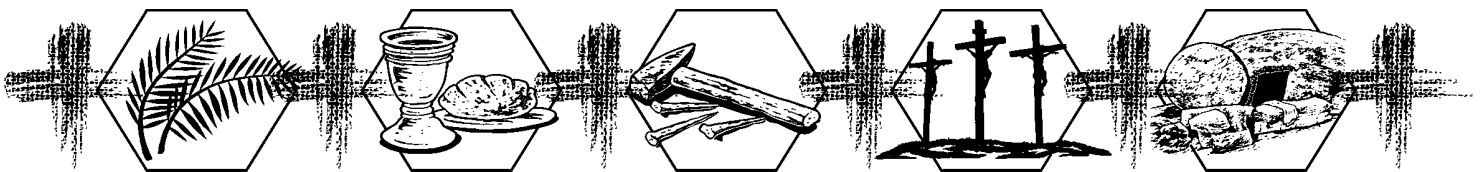


Lent can be a somber season of the church year. It begins with an ashen sign of mortality and sin. Bright colors turn to deep purples, alleluias fall silent, and worshipers ponder what to give up this year. Though the word Lent derives from an Old English word for *springtime*, spring still seems far off in much of the Northern Hemisphere. Easter, on the other hand, is obviously joyful. Bells ring, alleluias echo, white and gold shine brightly, and every single candle is lit. Jesus is risen, and so are the daffodils, hyacinths, and lilies. Joy clearly belongs to Easter.

Why reflect on joy during the quiet introspection of Lent instead of waiting for Easter? Move beyond surface assumptions and something beautiful emerges, richer and more nuanced than sheer happiness. A joyful Lent is not an oxymoron. As it turns out, joy is right at home during a minor-key season like Lent – and if joy is there, perhaps there are other seasons of life that joy calls home, too. Joy is a beacon that points us toward God’s unfailing presence, even in the heart of fear and pain.

## Worship Themes

<b>Ash Wednesday:</b> February 14	<i>Setting the Stage for Joy</i>
<b>First Sunday in Lent:</b> February 18	<i>Persistent Joy</i>
<b>Second Sunday in Lent:</b> February 25	<i>Expectant Joy</i>
<b>Third Sunday in Lent:</b> March 3	<i>Liberating Joy</i>
<b>Fourth Sunday in Lent:</b> March 10	<i>Transformative Joy</i>
<b>Fifth Sunday in Lent:</b> March 17	<i>Vocational Joy</i>
<b>Palm/Passion Sunday:</b> March 24	<i>Joy Everywhere and Nowhere</i>
<b>Maundy Thursday:</b> March 28	<i>An Imperfect Celebration</i>
<b>Good Friday:</b> March 29	<i>Fear not the pain</i>
<b>Easter Sunday:</b> March 31,	<i>Glorious Joy</i>



## Assistant Worship Leaders for February

February	4	11	14 Ash Wed.	18	25
<b>Greeters</b>	Almanara Buffenmyer	Jeff and Gail Donahue		Becky and Pattie Martin	Peggy Rushton-Witmyer
<b>Shepherd</b>	Almanara Buffenmyer	Almanara Buffenmyer		Almanara Buffenmyer	Almanara Buffenmyer
<b>Acolyte</b>	Kris Kramer	Becca Brewster		Jax Brewster	Cloey Hammond
<b>Lector</b>	Lisa Conway	John Gockley		Alice Krahl	Gladys Horvath
<b>Prayers</b>	John Gockley	Wren Dillon		Deb Hornberger	Lauren Hammond
<b>Communion Assistant</b>	Becca Brewster	Charlann Brubaker	Deb Hornberger	XXX	XXX
<b>Counters</b>		13 at 1 PM Bonnie Grater			27 at 1 PM Bonnie Grater
<b>Flowers</b>		Becky and Pattie Martin			
<b>Bulletin</b>					

### Easter Flowers

Name \_\_\_\_\_

In honor / thanks / memory of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Lily (5-6 bloom) \$9.00                      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Tulip \$7.00    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Daffodil \$7.00    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total    \$ \_\_\_\_\_



Please return form by February 25, 2024.

# Bergstrasse Lutheran Church

March 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25 10:00am Worship	26	27 9:00am Stitches of Love 6:00pm God on Tap	28 7:00pm Lenten service at Bergstrasse	29	1 6:00pm Friday Night on the Hill	2
3 10:00am Worship	4	5	6 7:00pm Lenten service at Muddy Creek, Denver	7	8 6:00pm Friday Night on the Hill	9
10 10:00am Worship	11 7:00pm Council	12	13 7:00pm Lenten service at Mellingers, Schoenbeck	14	15 6:00pm Friday Night on the Hill	16
17 10:00am Worship	18	19	20 7:00pm Lenten service at St. John Center, East Earl	21	22 6:00pm Friday Night on the Hill	23
24 Palm Sunday 10:00am Communion	25	26 9:00am Stitches of Love 6:00pm God on Tap	27	28 Maundy Thursday Maundy Thursday service	29 Good Friday 6:00pm Friday Night on the Hill	30 Holy Saturday
31 Easter Sunday 10:00am Communion Sunrise service	1	2	3	4	5 6:00pm Friday Night on the Hill	6

*In Our Thoughts  
& Prayers*

**For Healing:** Nevin Rutt, Vicki, George Blessinger, Sharon Levering, Pat Reber, Marlene, Bernie

**For Grieving:** Ralph Miller, George Beever, Barry Stapleton

**february**  
BIRTHDAYS

Congratulations to those with February birthdays:

2 Nevin Rutt  
2 Kris Kramer  
7 Irene Smith

*Thank You!*

Many thanks for your thoughtful gift of \$50 during the holiday season. I am always surprised by the continued generosity you offer. And, of course, you know how much I enjoy being part of the services throughout the year. Happy 2024!

**Donna Burkholder**

“Faith walks simply, childlike,  
between the darkness  
of human life and the hope  
of what is to come.”

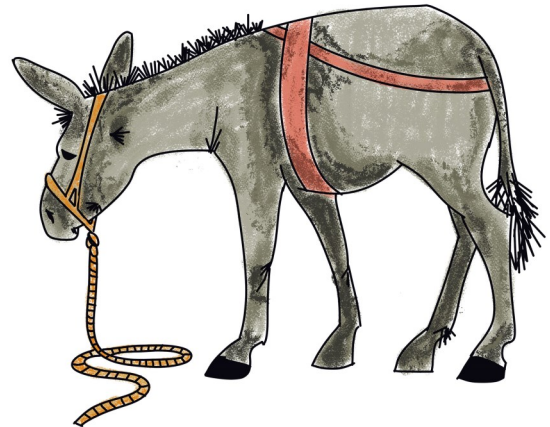
Catherine de Hueck Doherty

## Be the donkey

Corrie ten Boom, a devout Christian who helped shelter hundreds of Jewish people from Nazis during World War II, was asked how she stayed humble despite her fame.

“When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday on the back of a donkey, and everyone was waving palm branches and throwing garments onto the road and singing praises, do you think that for one moment it ever entered the head of that donkey that any of that was for him?” she replied. “If I can be the donkey on which Jesus Christ rides in his glory, I give him all the praise and all the honor.”

Jesus told his followers they’d need to carry (or “take up”) their cross. But how well do you carry your Savior? How do you bring him into a world that desperately needs the good news of the gospel?





**Bergstrasse Lutheran Church**  
**Congregational Council Meeting**  
**Monday, January 8, 2024**  
**7:00pm**

Note: This is a brief summary of the meeting minutes. If you would like to read the full minutes, copies are available at the church for you to take and look over at your convenience.

The regular monthly meeting of the congregational council was held on Monday, January 8, 2024 with the following members present: The Rev. Jim Goodyear, Becca Brewster, Bree Kramer, Sandy Lausch, Dave Wilhelm, Gladys Horvath, Almanara Buffenmyer, Clay Brubaker, Jeff Donahue, and Lynn Hibshman. There were no absentees.

President Dave Wilhelm called the meeting to order at 6:55pm.

Almanara led the council in a brief devotional and offered the opening prayer.

The Treasurer's Report was reviewed and approved.

The Secretary's Report was reviewed and approved.

Jeff gave a Property report covering the following projects: lock changes, the boiler motor, tree removal in the cemetery and at the parsonage, property/deed divisions, and the bell tower exterior double doors.

Pastor Jim gave a report highlighting the following: Continuing education events; Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Ash Wednesday, and Mid-week Lent services; Pulpit supply rates for 2024; Synod Assembly and Spring Assembly; Shepherding program; the congregational retreat; Senior Activities initiative; and the revitalization of the Worship & Music committee into the Worship & Creative Arts Team.

Old Business covered: Camera for livestreaming, a property inventory by the Partners for Sacred Places team, the community garden initiative, and the clothing closet initiative.

New Business covered: Ways to save money on offering envelopes for future years, fixing the fuel odor situation in some of the lower level rooms, and the urgency to think about the future of Bergstrasse.

The meeting was closed by praying the Lord's Prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Becca Brewster  
Recording Secretary

# The Bell

Bergstrasse Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
9 Hahnstown Road  
Ephrata, PA 17522

ADDRESS SERVICE  
REQUESTED

**Our mission at Bergstrasse is to widen the  
community of people who know, love, and follow God.**

