

EBENEZER Happenings



MAY 2025

The Monthly Newsletter of
Ebenezer Reformed Church
Morrison, IL

Inside this Issue:

- ◆ The Pastor's Note
- ◆ Mother-Daughter Banquet
- ◆ Sunday Worship Highlights
- ◆ Calendar & Birthdays
- ◆ Ladies Aid & Bible Studies
- ◆ Prayer Concerns
- ◆ Meetings-at-a-Glance
- ◆ The Quilter's Corner
- ◆ Directory Update
- ◆ Volunteer Service Schedules
- ◆ Memory Verse of the Month
- ◆ Missionary Spotlight
- ◆ Heaven's Express
- ◆ New Books in the Library
- ◆ Attendance & Giving
- ◆ Elder & Consistory Reports

Ebenezer Reformed Church

309 E. Park St.
Morrison, IL 61270

Phone: (815) 772-2472

Pastor J.T.'s Email:
pastorJT@ercmorrison.com

Website:
www.ercmorrison.com

Our Mission: Helping people
find & follow Jesus

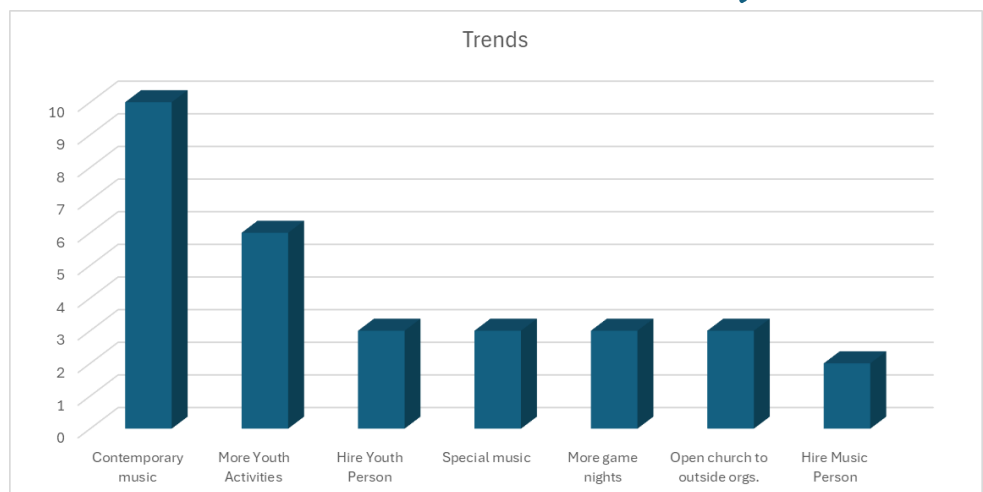
Dear Friends of Ebenezer,

As the trees and flowers of Spring burst into full bloom we can rejoice at all of the new things that God is doing in the world. There are new things in store for us this month in ministry as well. We are set to welcome dozens of women and young girls to enjoy our annual Mother-Daughter Banquet on Tuesday, May 13th. Our guest speaker will be Korene Sturtz from Clinton, IA. She will be speaking on the topic of "Life After Death" and sharing some of her personal testimonies of God's grace in the life of her family.

We will also be welcoming many new members to our fellowship through baptisms and membership transfers. In addition, we are giving serious consideration to the feedback we received at our recent congregational gathering. The graph below illustrates what was most commonly discussed in terms of the direction the church body wishes to go. The two most common themes were the need for contemporary music to be blended into our worship, and the need to focus on young families in order to minister to more children and youth.

These are challenges that we will face head on with the help of Jesus our Savior. Please be faithful in praying our daily 8:15 prayer: "God, guide us forward and open new doors. Help us to see the path You have chosen for us at Ebenezer Reformed Church. Give us wisdom to discern truth, courage to take risks, courage to follow through, and faith to not give up. In Jesus name, Amen.

A Joy to Serve You, *Pastor J. T. Bean*



Sunday Worship - May 2025

→ COUNT your
BLESSINGS

4

Series: The Book of Ephesians, Part 1
Sermon: “Spiritual Blessings in Christ”
Scripture: Ephesians 1:1-14
Speaker: Pastor J.T. Bean



11

Series: The Book of Ephesians, Part 2
Sermon: “Thanksgiving and Prayer”
Scripture: Ephesians 1:15-23
Speaker: Pastor J.T. Bean



18

Series: The Book of Ephesians, Part 3
Sermon: “Made Alive in Christ”
Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-10
Speaker: Pastor J.T. Bean



25

Series: The Book of Ephesians, Part 4
Sermon: “Reconciled Through Christ”
Scripture: Ephesians 2:11-22
Speaker: Pastor J.T. Bean



Worship Highlights in May

May 4 Pastor J.T. will return to begin a new sermon series going verse-by-verse through the New Testament book of Ephesians. The series is titled “A New Way of Living”.

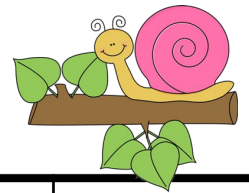
May 11 This is Mothers’ Day and we will appropriately be having an infant baptism on this Sunday. Mason & Alyssa Pautsch will be joining us with their daughter Kennedy who will be baptized. Alyssa is the daughter of Michael and Deane Patten. We will also be hearing a missionary update from Alister White on his recent trip to Moldova. Alister is the grandson of Mike & Marcia Blean.

May 18 We will be installing a large group of new members during the service. Afterwards, we will have a brief celebration in the fellowship hall for all the members we have installed so far in 2025. After that, everyone is encouraged to gather at the Morrison fire station for their annual pancake breakfast fundraiser.

May 25 This is Memorial Day weekend. We will have a time to honor our Ebenezer members who have passed away and served in the military. And praise the Lord for another baptism! This time it is for Hannah Daniel who will be baptized by immersion.



May 2025



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. ↓				1 Food Bank 9:45am Worship Team 5:15pm	2	3  Men's Bible Study 7:30am
4 Youth/Ed Cmt. 10:45am Endowment Cmt. 10:45am	5 Exec Team Mtg. 9am Church Life Cmt. 10:30am	6	7 Women's Bible Study 1:30pm 	8 Food Bank 9:45am O.M.E. Task Force 3:30pm	9	10  Men's Bible Study 7:30am
11 Mother's Day 	12 Elders 6pm Consistory 6:30pm	13 Mother-Daughter Banquet 6pm Program 7pm 	14	15 Food Bank 9:45am	16	17  Men's Bible Study 7:30am
18 New Members Reception 10:45am	19	20	21 Ladies' Aid 1:30pm 	22 Food Bank 9:45am	23	24  Men's Bible Study 7:30am
25	26  MEMORIAL DAY (Office Closed)	27	28 Church Staff Mtg. 10am	29 Food Bank 9:45am	30	31  Men's Bible Study 7:30am

May Birthdays

5/1 Gerald Wiebenga
5/3 Tyler Todd
5/6 Nina Damhoff
5/7 Emma Allison
5/8 Sophie Damhoff
5/11 Abby Bush

5/11 David Behrens
5/12 Bob Wiersema
5/12 Pat Stuart
5/12 Tracie Heusinkveld
5/13 Neva Baar
5/20 Derik Damhoff

5/21 Brayden Tichler
5/22 Pat Fuller
5/23 Halen Patton
5/27 Lesa Wiersema
5/28 Barb Geerts

➔ Please contact the church office to make sure your birthday is on our list.

♥ Also: If you are married, tell us your wedding anniversary.

Ladies Aid

Ladies Aid will meet at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 21 in the Fellowship Hall. Kalita Johnson (one of our missionaries) will provide the program. Be sure to come and hear her testimony and give her your support. Refreshments will be provided by Pat Pessman.

Women's Bible Study

Please join us for a Bible Study the first Wednesday of the month (May 7th) at 1:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Our leader is Doris Bielema.

Men's Bible Study

The Men's Bible Study is open to young and old. We meet every Saturday morning at 7:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Bring your Bible. Coffee and donuts will be served. We are currently going through a study of the book of Acts.

Mid-High Bible Study

The Mid-High class will not meet during the month of May as the Upper Room will be under construction.

Consistory Mtg.

The Consistory meeting this month will be on Monday, May 12 at 6:00 p.m.

Prayer Concerns

- Pray for those who need restored health, healing, and encouragement: Ruth Rosenow, Ron Wiersema, Keith Morine, Jenny Patton, Neva Baar, Fred Hadley, Barb Geerts, Elmer Huizenga, Diane Boelkins, Jeg Weets, and Joyce Wilkins. Pray also for those with special needs or unspoken prayer requests, as well as our shut-ins and nursing/assisted-living residents.

- Pray also for our military men serving in the U.S. Armed Forces:

Elijah Bean (Air Force)

Gregory Bush (Air Force)

Tyler Haan (Air Force)

Brevin Pruis (Navy)



- Pray for our missionaries: Andrew & Sophia Pitcher with Wycliffe bible translators, Roger & Sue Scheenstra in Africa, Ben & Kelita Johnson in Honduras, and Jeff & Chelsea Lampen to Germany, Angel Lopez in Mexico, and Joel & Seiko Lovestrand in Japan.

- Prayer is available after each Sunday worship service. There is always an elder there to meet in the prayer room to pray about whatever concerns are on your heart.

- Contact the pastor or church office to put a prayer request on the email "prayer line". Prayer requests will be sent out as soon as the pastor is able to do so.

May Meetings At-a-Glance

Thurs. 5/1 - Worship Team 5:15 p.m.
 Sun. 5/4 - Youth/Ed Meeting. 10:45 a.m.
 Sun. 5/4 - Endowment Cmt. 10:45 a.m.
 Mon. 5/5 - Executive Cmt. 9:00 a.m.
 Mon. 5/5 - Church Life Cmt. 10:30 a.m.
 Wed. 5/7 - Ladies Bible Study 1:30 p.m.
 Thurs. 5/8 - O.M.E. Task Force 3:30 p.m.
 Mon. 5/12 - Consistory Mtg. 6:30 p.m.
 Wed. 5/21 - Ladies Aid 1:30 p.m.

News from the Quilter's Corner: HELP! Since 1921, there has been sewing downstairs at Ebenezer. Yes, that is 104 years! In 1974, there were 18 quilters enjoying hand-stitching the three layers of a quilt together that had been brought in by other seamstresses who made the top layer. When the quilt is finished, the seamstresses pay for our hand quilting. That revenue goes to the Ebenezer Ladies' Aid for church supplies and projects. Today we have only 3 regulars. We also appreciate hand quilters from other churches. Please come join us! We will value your skill or give lessons. We normally meet Monday and Tuesdays, 8 a.m. to Noon, but we would appreciate any amount of time you are able to help. Call Karen Zuidema at (815) 499-0365.



Nursery Schedule

May 4 - Kevin & Shawn Soenksen
 May 11 - Beth Milnes & Kinlee Prins
 May 18 - Jackie & Alicen Wiersema
 May 25 - Angie Tichler & Allison Weaver



Sunday Greeters

May 4 - Pat Pessman
 May 11 - Harvey Zuidema
 May 18 - Youth / Karen Landheer
 May 25 - Jen Patton



Welcome Center

May 4 - Keith & Joyce Hamstra
 May 11 - Jack & Susan Bland
 May 18 - Jon & Martha Kophamer
 May 25 - Nick & Melinda Hamstra



Tech Team

May 4 - Jen & Will Patton
 May 11 - Scott Meurs & Phil Ardapple
 May 18 - Gregg Wiersema & Todd Kullerstrand
 May 25 - Scott Meurs & Jovie Patton



Fellowship Hour

May 4 - Arlyn & Marilyn Tichler
 May 11 - Mothers Day
 May 18 - New Members Recognition
 May 25 - Keith & Joyce Hamstra



* Please call the church office if you'd like to be added as a volunteer on any of the service teams.

Memory Verse of the Month:

Ephesians 1:3

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”

Church Directory



If you have registered an email address, you may sign in to the Online directory at any time:

instantchurchdirectory.com

We would love to have more photos. It's as simple as a snap on your phone.

Please call or stop by the Office to provide updates or to get your paper copy printed for you at any time.

Missionary Spotlight

an Update from Andrew & Sophia Pitcher

Andrew & Sophia live in St. Paul, MN. and have served with Wycliffe Bible Translators since 2010. Andrew grew up in Morrison and Sophia in Chicago. They met at the Illinois Math & Science Academy in Aurora. After marriage, they moved to Minnesota in 1998 and joined Wycliffe Bible Translators in 2010 and served in different capacities over the years in France, Senegal and South Africa. They have been married for 26 years and have 3 daughters—Jasmine (23) recently married and lives near Baltimore and works as a software developer. Isabel is 20 and a junior at Northwestern Univ in Northwestern and majoring in engineering, and Violet is 15 and a sophomore in high school. From 2016 to 2021 they were based in South Africa but COVID forced them to do their work via ZOOM. So they decided to return to the US until Violet finishes high school. They are currently serving Bible translation teams in Southern Africa on ZOOM via remote assignment.



We are doubly blessed to have **TWO UPDATES** from Andrew and wife, Sophia. The first was an Easter card that the church received, dated April 16. Andrew writes: “As we celebrate Resurrection Sunday for the 15th time since we joined Wycliffe, I thank God for the faithful partnership of prayer and regular giving we have enjoyed with Ebenezer Church over the years. Though I didn’t find faith until after I left Morrison, it is a huge blessing and honor to partner with you to reach the Bibleless with God’s Word! Over 2,000 years ago, a dying robber spent his last day on earth watching and listening to the Son of God being crucified beside him. Today, by translating the Bible for ALL tribes and peoples and languages, we are together making it possible for

generations present and future to watch and listen to Jesus. May they, too, cry out in faith, “JESUS, REMEMBER ME!” (Luke23:42)

Andrew also enclosed a beautiful poem entitled, “Ballad of the Two Thieves”, written about the thief on the cross, who said these words to Jesus as both were dying. It’s posted on the bulletin board at the bottom of the entryway stairs. Take a moment to read this poem and look at the note card from Andrew and Sophia. If you would like a copy of the poem, extra copies are available on the front table by the entryway.

HERE IS ANDREW’S 2nd UPDATE, received by email this past Monday, April 21. In this update, Andrew states: “I am delighted to report that I have taken over as the translation consultant for the South African Sign Language Bible Translation Project. I have just finished the consultant check for the last four stories in the story set. When these stories are published on the Deaf Bible App later this year, the deaf in South Africa will have access to 110 Bible stories, from Genesis to Revelation—that’s nearly 10% of the entire Bible! Theirs will be the **FIRST** sign language in Southern Africa to have that much of the Bible translated into their own language. Next month the team will begin translating whole books of the Bible, starting with the remaining portions of Acts, Revelation, and Mark.

“PLEASE PRAY for the health of all the members of the translation team, and for the integration of a new team member, a deaf video editor, who is replacing the one who left the Project early this year. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED PRAYERS!!” —Andrew & Sophia

***NOTE:** If you would like to hear more about what the Pitchers are doing, you can receive regular updates in your own email inbox. Just drop an email to the Pitchers at: mizmorim@gmail.com and request to be put on their email list!

My Sweet Mom

I've tried so many times, dear Mom,
To write my thanks to you
For all your love and tender care,
Your prayers and blessings, too;
But seems the words would never come --
The ones that had to be,
To tell you just the way I feel
And what you mean to me.

Your life has been a sacrifice
In serving young and old;
In sorrows, heartaches and hardships
You came forth pure as gold.
The memories that I have today
On this dear Mother's Day
That your true love and faith in God,
Though tested, did not sway.

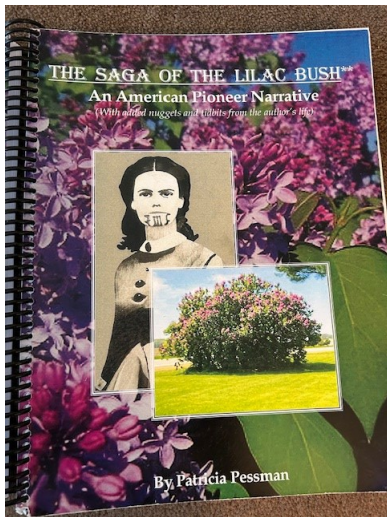
I am so grateful to my God
And I shall ever be,
For giving me so very much
By giving you to me.
I have one goal I hope to reach
Before my time is through,
And this, my precious darling Mom,
is to be as sweet as you.

-Mary Rice Monroe



May 18th will be the final Heaven's Express of the school year. We will take a break for the summer months and resume with a big kick-off again in September! Until then, kids will remain with parents in the worship service. Pre-schoolers can be taken the nursery.

NEW BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY



Pat Pessman has donated another copy of her book entitled "The Saga of the Lilac Bush" to our library. (The first copy given in 2023 has not been returned). In her book Pat shares the true story of Olive Oatman Fairchild, a descendent of Whiteside County resident Ed Abbott. Her story began with a pioneer journey of 1,500 miles and tragically ended with her family being killed in an Indian massacre. Olive was taken into slavery and endured 5 years of captivity. In 1856 she experienced a sudden and amazing rescue, followed by fame and fortune as she became a celebrity and national sensation, largely because of her famous blue tattoo!

It's a story you will enjoy and it began at a lilac bush that was planted in 1850 and still thrives today in the front yard of the former Ed Abbott farmstead on Route 30. The book ends with an interesting spiritual twist that gives God glory. If you enjoy Wild West history, check this book out!

Pat has also donated a copy of her poem booklet written last summer to honor the memory of Sharon Appel. It also has an interesting story line and theme, plus over 30 poems written over the years. If you enjoy poetry—and inspirational poetry in particular—check out this 40-page booklet.

Finally she has given a copy of a book written by Christian author David Jeremiah, entitled "Revealing the Mysteries of Heaven."

All 3 of these books are located on the mantle above the fireplace in the Library. Stop by and take a look at them and check one or more out if interested. All books are free to borrow on the "honor system". But please remember to return within a reasonable timeframe of 2 to 3 weeks.

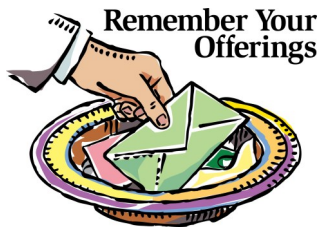
Giving & Attendance

Here's an update on our numbers
for the month of April

Date	Attendance	Offering
April 6	123	\$2,787
April 13	129	\$3,434
April 20	139	\$4,842
April 27	103	\$11,067
	Avg. 124	Total: \$22,130

April Breakdown:

General Fund: \$22,130
Camp Fund: \$50
Chosen People: \$474
Victory Center: \$1,813
Easter: \$1,965
Tithe.ly (online giving): \$2,281.⁵⁰



Total: \$28,713.⁵⁰

Join the E-mail List

Stay informed of everything that's going on at Ebenezer: J.T. sends out a weekly **"Note From the Pastor"** as well as regular prayer chain emails as they come in to him. To get on the list, simply email Pastor J.T. and request to be added: pastorjt@ercmorrison.com

Note & Disclaimer

All *Ebenezer Happenings* article submissions need to be received by the 21st day of each month to guarantee inclusion in the next edition. We apologize for any missing or inaccurate information within this newsletter. If there are additions or corrections to be made, please call the church office at (815) 772-2472 or e-mail Sue Bond at office@ercmorrison.com



👍 Keep up with current happenings, watch videos, and browse through photos and new posts.

👍 Be sure to **"Like"** the Ebenezer Reformed Church Facebook page.

👍 **"Share"** our posts to help spread the word about what's happening here.

👍 Watch the Sunday morning Live-stream and post a comment to let us know who's watching and where you're watching from!

This newsletter is a publication of:
Ebenezer Reformed Church

309 E. Park St. | Morrison, IL 61270

Phone: (815) 772-2472

♦ **Rev. J.T. Bean, Lead Pastor**
pastorjt@ercmorrison.com

♦ **Sue Bond, Office Manager**
office@ercmorrison.com

Office hours: M-F 9:00 a.m.-1p.m.

Sunday Morning Worship:

Worship Celebration - 9:30 a.m.

Fellowship Hour - 10:45 a.m.

Youth Bible Study Hour - 10:45 a.m.

**Helping people
find and follow Jesus**

2025 Consistory

Elders: J. T. Bean, Ken Jansma, Phil Ardapple, Martha Kophamer, Jan Renkes, Barney Habben, Keith Hamstra

Deacons: Marcia Blean, Pat Pessman, Jenny Patton, Darlene Schipper, Brian Tichler, Dave Weber

2025 Executive Team

J.T. Bean (Pastor)
Ken Jansma (Vice President)
Marcia Blean (Deacon Chair)
Dave Weber (Treasurer)
Martha Kophamer (Clerk)

Elders Meeting Minutes - April 14, 2025

Attendance: All were present.

Devotions and Prayer: Pastor J.T. opened the meeting at 6:05pm with scripture Hebrews 10: 19-25 and prayer. (Discussion will occur during consistory due to the late start.)

Constitutional Questions: The constitutional question was answered in the negative.

Grieving Members: Discussion occurred.

Membership Request: Many of those who have been attending regularly have requested to join ERC. This will occur on 5/18.

Member Transfer Request: Jenna Hook Landherr has requested to have her membership transferred to Emmanuel. MC.

Sacraments Update: Communion will be served during the Maudy Thursday service as well during the community services at the nursing homes on Good Friday. Home communion will also be done this week. Hannah Daniel has requested to be baptized. This is scheduled for May 25.

Elder Prayer Room: We were reminded to find someone to fill in if we are not able to cover the room on our assigned week.

Elder Prayer Groups: Reminder to keep in touch with those in your group having special needs.

Minutes: M/S to approve the March minutes. MC.

Motion to Adjourn: M/S to adjourn after closing prayer. MC.

Closing Prayer: Phil closed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted, *Martha Kophamer*, Clerk

Consistory Minutes - April 14, 2025

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 6:34. Jenny Patton was absent.

Devotions and Prayer: Pastor J.T. read Hebrews 10: 19-25 followed by discussion.

God at Work: Pastor J.T. acknowledging our missionaries weekly on a rotating basis. Our new song we are singing during Lent, attendance has been good, the Father-Son Banquet went well. William Patton as IT coordinator and 6 men attended Iron Sharpens Iron.

Levson Organ Company: The owners were present to go over the previous bids we had received on what needs to be done to the organ to keep it in working order. The leathers are starting to leak (have holes). Right now, we are not noticing it because Deb knows how to work around the ones that are not working. They will continue to wear out and the organ will become inoperable. He stated we have the largest organ in Morrison and we were very fortunate to have the organ and Deb! (Thank you, Deb!) Both bids are a little over \$200,000. One to replace the leathers and one to replace it with electric valves. The electric valves are a much longer fix. We will continue to discuss this issue.

Pastor's Report: Sue had made a graph showing the trends in the comments that were made during our brainstorming Congregational meeting in April. Contemporary Music was the largest area noted as being wanted. We will start incorporating some into our services. Because we do not have a band at this time, videos will need to be used. Much discussion occurred with all other areas. The graph will be distributed to the congregation for their information. The Consistory will continue to work on the other areas.

Deacons report: Deacons will collect the offering for Maundy Thursday. Ushers have been lined up for both Thursday and Friday evening Easter services.

Elders Report: Martha: (See Elders minutes.)

Finance: The general fund balance is \$149,841.⁵¹. March operating income was \$53,696.²⁷, the CD balance is \$159,050.³⁰ with total assets of \$358,541.⁷⁴. **M/S to approve the Finance Report. MC.**

Assistance/Memorial: Assistance balance is \$2,611.⁹⁹. Memorial Balance is \$3,861.⁰⁷

Property/Insurance: Blinds have been installed in the Mission's Conference Room. Marcia has bids and a commitment to paint the "Upper Room". She has received a bid of \$76,194 for phase I of redoing the parking lot. Further discussion is needed on this.

Church Life: CL met on April 7. 101 attended the Father Son Banquet. 62 attended the Lenton lunch at ERC. Breakfast will be served between the 2 Easter services in the fellowship hall. The Mother Daughter Banquet is scheduled for May 13th . Goodies will be handed out to the women on Mother's Day. BBQ and Trivia will be on July 20. Hawaiian shirt day will be Sunday August 17.

Worship and Music: Arrangements are being made for the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services. We have started ringing the bell 15 minutes before and at the start of the worship services. Jon Kophamer has solicited a list of volunteers and Sue will make up a schedule. The new sound board is here, but needs installed. Allister White will give a recap of his mission trip at a future service. (He is Marcia Blean's grandson.) The organ will get tuned after the AC is turned on for the summer.

Youth and Education: Jan Renkes reported there are 15 kids registered for camp. The After Shock swim party was held March 19th . The kids enjoyed it and the treats afterwards. May 18 will be the last Heaven's Express session until we start up again in September.

Sacraments and Communion: Barney: We served 123 in March and 6 at home.

O.M.E. Task Force: Korene Sturtz will be the program for the Mother/Daughter banquet with the title of her program being, "Life after Death". Don Beebe will be the speaker at next year's Father/Son banquet. He is a former NFL football player and now the coach at University of Aurora. There will be a chili cookoff in October. This year's Mission budget totals \$19,400. The committee may ask to have that increased for next year's budget. The Mission Conference Room (second floor next to the library) is done being decorated. STOP IN AND LOOK IT OVER!

Approve Minutes: M/S to approve March, 2025 minutes. MC

Old Business: The family is still working on emptying Eloise Bush house. When that is done, legal work will be done to transfer it to ERC.

New Business: The Upper Room will be getting painted. Most of the consistory toured the Jr. High prior to the meeting to see what they have in place for an Arcade Room. It was pretty impressive. Hopes are we will have a smaller/similar set up for our youth. It was suggested a subcommittee of Pastor J.T., Jan Renkes, Marcia Blean, Will Patton and Glenda Jansma work on getting that to come together.

Next meeting: Monday May 12, 2025.

Adjournment: M/S to adjourn post prayer. MC.

Closing Prayer: Brian closed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted: *Martha Kophamer, Clerk*