



The Monthly Newsletter of  
Ebenezer Reformed Church  
Morrison, IL

*Unto Us  
A Child is Born*

## Inside this Issue:

- ♦ The Pastor's Note
- ♦ December Worship
- ♦ Worship Highlights
- ♦ Dec. Calendar & Birthdays
- ♦ Ladies Aid & Bible Studies
- ♦ Prayer Concerns
- ♦ Meetings-at-a-Glance
- ♦ AfterShock Menu & Lessons
- ♦ Volunteer Service Schedules
- ♦ Memory Verse of the Month
- ♦ Missionary Spotlight
- ♦ Christmas Cards Info
- ♦ Saturday Movie Matinees
- ♦ Ask the Pastor
- ♦ Attendance & Giving
- ♦ Elder & Consistory Reports
- ♦ Annual Meeting Minutes

## 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](http://www.ercmorrison.com)

Our Mission: Helping people  
find & follow Jesus

## Dear Ebenezer Church Family,

As we enter the month of December, our church is invited once again into the celebration of Advent—a season of anticipation, reflection, and celebration. Each week leading up to Christmas, we light candles representing the promises that Jesus' birth brings to our world: hope, peace, joy, and love.

**The Candle of Hope** - Hope is the first light that pierces the darkness. In times of uncertainty or challenge, Advent reminds us that God is faithful and that the story is not yet finished. As the prophets of old awaited the Messiah, so too do we look forward with hope to God's continued work in our lives and in the world.

**The Candle of Peace** - Peace is the gentle assurance that we are held in God's hands, even when storms rage around us. Advent calls us to be peacemakers in our families, our church, and our community, trusting that Christ's peace surpasses all understanding and can heal even the deepest divides.

**The Candle of Joy** - Joy is more than happiness—it is the deep delight that comes from knowing God is with us. Even in difficult seasons, Advent invites us to rejoice in God's presence and faithfulness. This joy strengthens us and inspires us to share good news with those around us.

**The Candle of Love** - Love is the heart of the Christmas story. God's love, made known through Jesus, is unconditional and unending. Advent reminds us that we are called to love one another as God first loved us, offering compassion, kindness, and generosity to everyone we meet.

As we journey through Advent together, may these promises—hope, peace, joy, and love—fill our hearts and overflow into our lives. Let us prepare room for Christ anew and celebrate the coming of our Savior with open hearts and expectant spirits.

Blessings to you and your family this Advent season.

A Joy to Serve You,

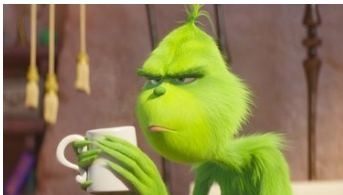
## Sunday Worship - December 2025



7

**Series:** Advent Movie Series (Part 2)**Sermon:** Christmas According to Buddy the Elf**Scripture:** Matthew 1:18-25**Speaker:** Pastor J.T. Bean

14

**Series:** Advent Movie Series (Part 3)**Sermon:** Christmas According to Ralphie Parker**Scripture:** Matthew 2:1-12**Guest Speaker:** Pastor J.T. Bean

21

**Series:** Advent Movie Series (Part 4)**Sermon:** Christmas According to the Grinch**Scripture:** Matthew 2:13-18**Speaker:** Pastor J.T. Bean

28

**Series:** A Message for the New Year**Sermon:** "Used, New and Trade-Ins"**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 5:16-21**Guest Preacher:** Craig Sipes

**December Worship Highlights:** Communion will be served on Sunday, December 7th. And the lighting of the Advent candles will be done by different families each Sunday. The candles represent the HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE that we celebrate at Christ's birth. The final CHRIST candle will be lit at the 6 p.m. Christmas Eve candlelight service.



**Christmas Concert**  
**Sunday, December 7**  
**4:00 pm**

Vocalists, Piano, Organ  
 Violin, Guitar, Drums, etc.



**Children & Youth**  
**Sunday, December 21**

Youth Shadow Play  
 and Children's Bell Choir  
 during morning worship service





# December 2025



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Worship Service Every Sunday 9:30am ↓	1	2	3  Women's Bible Study 1:30pm AfterShock 5:30-7pm	4 Food Bank 9:45am Worship Team Mtg 5:15pm	5	 6 Men's Bible Study 7:30am Movie Matinee: "Elf" 4pm
7 Youth/Ed Cmt. 10:45am Christmas Concert 4pm	8 Consistory/Staff Christmas Dinner 6pm	9 O.M.E. Task Force 3:30pm	10  Christmas Program 5-7pm	11 Food Bank 9:45am	12	 13 Men's Bible Study 7:30am Movie Matinee 4pm "A Christmas Story"
14 Worship Service 9:30am Consistory Mtg. 10:45am	15 Exec Team Mtg. 9:00am	16	17 Ladies' Aid 1:30pm	18 Food Bank 9:45am	19	 20 Men's Bible Study 7:30am Movie Matinee 4pm "The Grinch"
21 Kid's Christmas Program in a.m. service Movie Matinee 4pm "A Christmas Carol"	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 6pm 	 25 Christmas Day 	26	27
28 Worship Service 9:30am	29	30	31 New Years Eve 	Jan 1 New Years Day	Jan 2	Jan 3

## DECEMBER Birthdays

12/1 Mark Heusinkveld  
 12/2 Allan Huizenga  
 12/2 Zander Johnson  
 12/5 John Bielema

12/6 Christine Reedy  
 12/6 Evander Lampen  
 12/7 Deane Patten  
 12/11 LeAnn Schaefer  
 12/12 Jovie Patton  
 12/12 Kohen Blasdel

12/16 Beth Milnes  
 12/18 Diane Wiebenga  
 12/18 Halle Schaefer  
 12/21 Cassidy VanZuiden  
 12/21 Ken Jansma

12/22 John Dickey  
 12/23 Susan Bland  
 12/29 Audrey Geerts  
 12/29 Tyler Renkes  
 12/31 Lorena Lopez

**12/20 - Jon & Martha Kophamer's 50th Wedding Anniversary!**

➔ 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 on Wednesday, December 17th at 1:30. The program and refreshments will be provided by the Officers.

## **Women's Bible Study**

Please join us for a Bible Study the first Wednesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Our leader is Doris Bielema. In December we will meet on the 3rd.

## **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 studying the O.T. book of Judges.

## **Mid-High Bible Study**

The Mid-High class will meet December 7th and December 21st. We will finish up our "Not A Fan" video series.

## **Heaven's Express**

"Children's Church" for grade school kids is will be practicing for the Christmas "shadow play" and bell choir.

## **AfterShock**

This Wednesday Night ministry for pre-school through Middle School includes a meal and Bible lesson each Wednesday from 5:30-7:00 pm. In December we will only meet on the 3rd and the 10th which will be the Christmas program.

## **Consistory Mtg.**

The Elders and Deacons (& staff) will gather for a celebration dinner on 12/8 and the new Consistory (2026) will meet briefly on Sunday, December 14th at 10:45 a.m.

## **Prayer Concerns**

● Pray for those who need restored health, healing, and encouragement: Wally & Joanne Peterson, Sandi Gorzney, Marguerite Clark, Ruth Rosenow, Ron Wiersema, Keith Morine, 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 Prujs** (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 in 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.

● Join us for the annual Christmas Eve Worship service at 6:00 on Wednesday, December 24th in the sanctuary. It is always a special candlelight experience with a special guest appearance this year!



## December Meetings At-a-Glance

Wed. 12/3 - Women's Bible Study, 1:30 p.m.  
 Thu. 12/4 - Worship Team, 5:15 p.m.  
 Sun. 12/7 - Youth/Ed Meeting, 10:45 a.m.  
 Mon. 12/8 - Consistory/Staff Dinner, 6 p.m.  
 Tues. 12/9 - O.M.E. Task Force, 3:30 p.m.  
 Sun. 12/14 - Elders & Deacons, 10:45 a.m.  
 Mon. 12/15 - Executive Committee, 9 a.m.  
 Wed. 12/17 - Ladies Aid, 1:30 p.m.



## Menu for December:

**3rd** Chili, soup, cheese & crackers  
**10th** Potato bar (starting at 5:00 p.m.)

## Bible Lessons for December:

**3rd** The Nativity Story  
**10th** Christmas Program

\* Aftershock will resume January 7, 2026.

## Nursery Schedule

Dec. 7 - Beth Milnes & Kinlee Prins  
 Dec. 14 - Shawn & Kevin Soenksen  
 Dec. 21 - Jackie & Alicen Wiersema  
 Dec. 28 - Beth Milnes & Kinlee Prins



## Sunday Greeters

Dec. 7 - Barb Domdey / Karen Price  
 Dec. 14 - Youth / Havey Zuidema  
 Dec. 21 - Pat Pessman / Doris Bull  
 Dec. 28 - Deb Adolph / Jenny Patton



## Welcome Center

Dec. 7 - Michael & Marcia Blean  
 Dec. 14 - Jon & Martha Kophamer  
 Dec. 21 - Dave & Darlene Schipper  
 Dec. 28 - Keith & Joyce Hamstra



## Tech Team

Dec. 7 - Jenny & William Patton  
 Dec. 14 - Scott Meurs & Phil A.  
 Dec. 21 - Gregg W. & Todd K.  
 Dec. 28 - Scott Meurs & Jovie



## Fellowship Hour

Dec. 7 - Pat Zuidema & Pat Fuller  
 Dec. 14 - Pat Zuidema & Pat Fuller  
 Dec. 21 - Pat Zuidema & Pat Fuller  
 Dec. 28 - Pat Zuidema & Pat Fuller



## Bell Ringers

Dec. 7 - Doug Vanderlaan  
 Dec. 14 - Kim Schaefer  
 Dec. 21 - Adam Schaefer  
 Dec. 28 - Kevin Hook



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

**John 1:14 \* Memory Verse of the Month \* John 1:14**

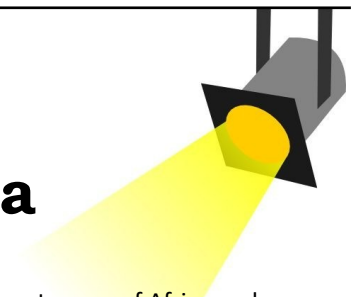
**The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.  
 We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son,  
 who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**





## Missionary Spotlight

### Roger & Sue Scheenstra



This month our newsletter features a couple who have served faithfully with the RCA for many years in a remote area of Africa and we have had the privilege of supporting them with a full share. This update was received just a week ago from Sue— ***Important:** please remember to make no mention of the country they are serving when texting or emailing as there is concern for reprisal from hostile Native anti-Christians.* In this email, Sue states: We are so thankful that rains have been falling, which brought an instant springtime to the region. The area received over 3 inches of rains and meant that the people did not have to make the 7-hour journey to bring water out to the cows. **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for continued rains and for river recharging all through the rainy season—(Nov. & Dec.)

Sue also reports there was a large Mu\$lim convention the 1<sup>st</sup> of November and visits were made home to home, seeking to strengthen I\$lam in the community and to find more who could be enticed to go on *tabliki* with them. (These are Mu\$lim mission trips that last for 1-4 months and are highly subsidized.) **PRaise THE LORD:** We are thankful for one encouraging story from Timothy, as he found 2 friends from a nearby village who had joined the visiting *tabliki* group. Timothy pulled them aside privately and shared the Gospel via the story in the Bible of the two kingdoms of light and darkness. These two men believed and joined the Christian group he meets with for encouragement in the evenings during the time for visitors.

**PRAYER REQUEST:** Pray that Timothy and the believers will stand firm in their faith in Jesus as extra pressures are put on them. Pray that new believers would be protected from enemy attacks and stand firm in God's full armor, growing always in their faith, in their understanding, in their boldness and in love and in grace. Many believers are still fragile in faith and are riddled with fear of persecution—some still are deeply ingrained with deception. **PLEASE PRAY** for God's Holy Spirit to be poured out with power to give hunger and thirst for the truth, to deliver them from roots of sin and to nourish and bless them with the abundant life of Jesus!!

**IMPORTANT AIRPORT UPDATE:** This important location-wide meeting is scheduled for the 19<sup>th</sup> of Nov. (now past). Sue reports that people are standing firm against this airport expansion, which would put all of their AIC housing & buildings in the landing zone. Until a final decision is made AGAINST the airport, there is a chance for bribes and corruption to sway people to change their minds. (As of this writing, word has not reached us on the outcome of this important meeting. We pray that the meeting DID take place and with a favorable outcome—God's Will be done!)

**A BRIEF "TEAM" MEMBERS UPDATE:** The Scheenstra's recently had a great Saturday with Jake & Sadie & Kids, who have sensed spiritual warfare on them and wanted to get together for prayer. **PRAY** for them & other members of the team. Also, **PRAY** for "B" & "R" (they are in a cousin tribe to the "O" tribe) as they intern with Roger & Sue's Team for 4 months & spend time in each of the team's villages!

Sue would close by asking us to remember the following word, **GRAPES**, and the slogan it represents as they continue to minister to this nomadic group of Natives on the continent of Africa.

May **G**od **R**eap **A**bundantly as we **P**ray **E**arnestly for **S**alvation for the "O" people.  
You may email her at [sue.scheenstra@aimint.org](mailto:sue.scheenstra@aimint.org)

#### **UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH:**

- ◆ Zander Johnson will be 15yo on December 3<sup>rd</sup>  
email him at [ben.j](mailto:ben.j) or [kelita.j@cornerstoneinternational.org](mailto:kelita.j@cornerstoneinternational.org)
- ◆ Evander & Sebastian Lampen will be 4yo on December 6<sup>th</sup>  
email them at [jeffery.lampen](mailto:jeffery.lampen) or [chelsea.lampen@gmail.com](mailto:chelsea.lampen@gmail.com)
- ◆ Lorena Lopez will be 16yo on December 31<sup>st</sup>  
email her at [alopez@rca.org](mailto:alopez@rca.org)



## CHRISTMAS CARDS



Time to get your Christmas cards ready for our Shut-ins, Nursing Home residents, and Military.

Drop off your cards by Sunday, December 14 in one of the bins, including at the church office, and we will mail them out for you.



### 4 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

Sat. December 6 - *"Elf"* (2003)

Rated: PG (1 hour, 37 mins.)

Sat. December 13 - *"A Christmas Story"* (1983)

Rated: PG (1 hour, 34 mins.)

Sat. December 20 - *"The Grinch"* (2018)

Rated PG (1 hour, 26 mins.)

Sunday\* Dec. 21 - *"A Christmas Carol"* (2009)

Rated PG (1 hour, 36 mins.)

**FREE ADMISSION, POPCORN, SNACKS & DRINKS!**



## Ask the Pastor:

### Why is Christmas Day on December 25?

The Bible does not specify the exact date of Jesus Christ's birth. Early Christians did not celebrate Jesus's birth, and there is no biblical mandate for commemorating it on December 25th. The earliest recorded celebration of Christmas on December 25th dates to the mid-4th century AD, in Rome. Before this, Christians focused on celebrating Easter, the resurrection of Jesus, rather than his birth. December 25th coincided with several popular pagan festivals in the Roman Empire, particularly the festival of Sol Invictus ("the Unconquered Sun") and Saturnalia, a week-long festival honoring the god Saturn. These festivals were characterized by feasting, gift-giving, and merrymaking. Some historians suggest that early Christian leaders selected December 25th to provide a Christian alternative to these celebrations and to facilitate the spread of Christianity by aligning it with existing traditions. Another rationale is symbolic: December 25th falls shortly after the winter solstice, the darkest time of the year in the Northern Hemisphere, after which the days begin to lengthen. Early Christian writers, such as Augustine, connected the birth of Jesus—the "Light of the World"—with the return of the sun's light, making December 25th a fitting date for the celebration. In summary, Christmas is celebrated on December 25th not because of a biblical directive or historical certainty about Jesus's birth date, but as a result of historical developments, theological symbolism, and the adaptation of existing cultural festivities. The date reflects both the spread of Christianity in the Roman world and the desire to infuse Christian meaning into established traditions.



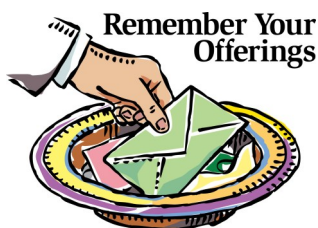
## Giving & Attendance

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

Date	Attendance	Offering
November 2	145	\$7,573
November 9	125	\$2,253
November 16	133	\$3,967
November 23	147	\$17,514
November 30	70	\$3,190
	<b>Avg. 124</b>	<b>Total: \$34,497</b>

### NOV. Breakdown:

General Fund: \$34,497  
Aftershock: \$TBA  
Assistance: \$TBA  
Thanksgiving: \$TBA  
Tithe.ly (online giving): \$TBA



**Total: \$TBA**

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:pastorjt@ercmorrison.com)

♦ **Sue Bond, Office Manager**  
[office@ercmorrison.com](mailto: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 - November 10, 2025**

Elders Meeting Minutes November 10, 2025

Attendance: Barney Habben and Martha Kophamer were absent.

Devotions and Prayer: Pastor JT read Acts 20: 28-31 followed by questions, discussion and prayer.

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

Process for new members: Pastor JT and Sue Bond came up with a plan for new members. The details of the plan were provided to the elders. The plan includes: providing them with a directory info sheet when they meet with elders, making them aware of the elder assigned to their care at the meeting, giving them a certificate at the service, a letter and Time and Talent survey sent by pastor, and elder contact within a week.

Grieving Members: Discussion occurred. Sacraments Update: Communion will be served during the Sunday morning service on November 30. Barney and Phil will serve at Resthove. At home communion will be served the week of December 1.

Nominations for Consistory: The names of the consistory nominees were listed in the agenda. Elder nominees are Melinda Hamstra, Jon Kophamer, and Sandi Wilkins. Deacon nominees are Randy Renkes and Gregg Wiersema. Membership Care Groups: Elders will receive their updated care group assignments in January.

Elder Prayer Room Assignments: We were reminded to be aware of our assigned dates.

Minutes: M/S to approve October minutes. MC. Motion to Adjourn: M/S to adjourn following prayer. MC Closing Prayer: Keith Hamstra closed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted: Jan Renkes

**Consistory Minutes - November 10, 2025**

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 6:30. Barney Habben and Martha Kophamer were absent.

Devotions and Prayer: Pastor JT read Acts 20: 28-31 followed by discussion and prayer.

God at Work: more new members including children, Remembrance of Dearly Departed Members, recognition of veterans, music by Craig and Kathi, increased offering, pastor's message series.

Pastor's Report: Pastor JT will be attending the Exponential Conference in Naperville November 18 - 20. The conference focuses on discipleship and evangelism. He will be in Ohio for Thanksgiving- Thursday, Friday, returning Saturday. Pastor JT shared his plans for his sermon series to begin on Sunday, November 30 titled "Christmas at the Movies." The series includes movie viewings to take place prior to each service.

A draft of the plans for the annual meeting on November 16 was shared.

Elder's Report: Jan: (See Elders Minutes)

Deacon's Report: No report. Property/Insurance: Work on the parking lot will not take place until at least spring. The drinking fountain is working so we will not be purchasing a new one. The boiler installation is finished. Bob will look into inconsistent temperatures on the three levels of the education wing. Presentation:

Consistory broke from the agenda to hear a presentation by Steve Steely from Allen Organ Company. Mr. Steely had previously provided quotes for a new organ that will be looked at by the Worship and Music Committee. The committee will provide a recommendation to consistory in the future.

Church Life: No report. (\$3,861.07) funds were reported.

Endowment: Current balance is \$909,184. Finance: Our current assets are \$456,322.06. It was noted that the proceeds from parsonage 3 of \$78,088.26 have been added. The Aftershock Meals fund has a balance of \$5322.62 thanks to generous donations. The general fund is doing well at \$157,252.95. Assistance/Memorial: The balances of the assistance(\$3,161.99) and memorial (\$3,861.07)funds were reported.

O.M.E. Task Force: Pat talked about the Chili Cookoff / Game Night that took place on October 19. It was well attended. The next event will be Trivia Night in January. We have added Ryan Karp to the list of missionaries ERC supports. The committee will meet on Thursday, November 13.

Sacraments: Communion will be served on Sunday, November 30. This is the first Sunday of the advent season.

Worship/Music: The implementation of the blended music is going well. The recognition of departed members during the service on November 2 and our veterans on November 9 was well received. There will be another hayride to church on November 23. Craig and Kathi Sipes will provide the music for the Thanksgiving Prayer Service on Wednesday, November 26. Sunday, November Pastor JT begins his Advent sermon series. Details were shared in the Pastor's report. The Christmas Concert will be December 7 at 4:00.

Youth/Education: Mary Schaefer will begin working with the bell choir during Heaven's Express on November 30. They will take part in the Christmas Service on December 21. Youth and Education will hand out Traditional ERC Treat Bags after the Aftershock program on December 10 and the Christmas Service on December 21.

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

Old Business: We continue to look at the possibility of starting Dinner Church with Emmanuel. Ken expressed interest in going to Crossview in Fulton with representatives of Emmanuel to see what they are doing.

New Business: The budget for 2026 was viewed and discussed. M/S to increase annual contribution to Resthave from \$1,000 to \$2,000. MC M/S to approve the 2026 budget as shown. MC

The December 8 meeting will be a dinner at 6:00 with new consistory members and ERC Staff in attendance.

Consistory members were given a copy of the Ebenezer Reformed Church By-Laws to read through. The Executive Team has been reviewing these extensively in the past year.

The 2026 Consistory will meet Sunday, December 14 after the service for the purpose of seating the Executive Team and assigning committees. Adjournment: M/S to adjourn after prayer. MC Closing Prayer: Pastor JT closed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted: Jan Renkes

---

## Annual Congregational Meeting - November 16, 2025

The annual meeting was **called to order** by Pastor JT Bean at 10:50am. (62 voting members and 11 non-voting members were in attendance with a total of 73.) He then opened the meeting with prayer.

**Expectations for Church Membership:** This handout was distributed and reviewed.

**Endowment Fund Report:** Ken Jansma announced we had no contributions made this year so far but we did well with our interest income. Our balance as of October 31 is \$910,956.54. There were no questions concerning the Endowment Fund. Sue Bond shared this is about a 16% return on the previous balance.

**Nominations of Elders and Deacons:** Pastor JT thanked the outgoing members: Ken Jansma, Martha Kophamer and Jan Renkes as Elders and Marcia Blean and Pat Pessman as Deacons. New nominated Elders are Jon Kophamer (2-year term), Melinda Hamstra and Sandi Wilkins. And Deacons are Randy Renkes and Gregg Wiersema. **M/S to elect these persons to the Consistory. M/C.**

**Budget:** Pastor JT distributed graphs pertaining to the giving. We are currently above our goal. The proposed budget for 2026 had been distributed at the beginning of the meeting. Nancy went through each section explaining anything that had noticeable changes. A few areas of change are: we will be giving all staff a 3% cost of living raise. A few other line items need to increase because of cost increases in these areas. It was also proposed to increase our giving's to several of our missionaries, add Ryan Karp as a mission project and increase our giving to Resthave from \$1,000 to \$2,000. Total increase to the budget is \$37,021.85. There was no discussion concerning the budget. **M/S to approve the 2026 proposed budget. MC.** Pastor JT also shared a couple of tables on tithing for our information.

**Pastor's Report:** We have 27 new members, 4 baptisms and 7 deaths. Our total membership is 211. He and Sue have initiated a "New Member Welcome" process which will start when the person attends the Elder's meeting requesting to become a member. He shared a lengthy list of "Where we have seen God at work at ERC". He highlighted the following: We moved from the RCA to the ARC. We have become more aware and feel a closer connection to our missionaries that we support. Church camp was well attended and we provided scholarships for some. The re-instating the ringing of the bells has been enjoyed and we hope the neighbors do too. The monthly diner club is enjoyed by many. We hosted the combined service with Emmanuel this year, hosted VBS in August, added monthly prayer meetings and had some hayrack rides for kids on Sunday to bring them to church. We have been very blessed.

From addressing the results from the Brain Storming meeting we had in May, we have hired Craig Sipes to add some contemporary music to our services. There has been a small increase in youth activities, and some discussion about adding a youth minister position. Future goals are adding a fire pit for social and Bible class gatherings, an arcade room and hire a part time youth person.

A couple of future goals are a "Morrison Community Dinner" in conjunction with Emmanuel Church, hiring a youth minister and possibly doing a mission trip.

Pastor JT shared his projected preaching calendar topics that take him through Easter and beyond.

**Building Projects and Fund raising:** The new boiler has been installed. Proceeds from the sale of Eloise Bush house will be used to cover the expense. We need some major fixes to the parking lot. We have a bid for 1 phase of \$76,000. Some tuck-pointing needs done with a verbal estimate of \$5,000-6,000. There have been several meetings concerning the organ and different options. Deb and Arlene (organists) have been involved. It has been decided to have the Music and Worship committee make the final decision and bring it to Consistory. There has been an anonymous donor to plant the seed money. Ken Jansma stated we may have a fundraiser for the rest. There were no questions concerning the organ.

Please remember to complete your time and talent surveys and get involved! There are many ways you can.

Pastor JT closed in pray and meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am.

Submitted by: Martha Kophamer, Clerk



*"Everyone who believes that Jesus is  
the Christ has been born of God, and  
everyone who loves the Father loves  
whoever has been born of him."*



**1 John 5:1 ESV**