# EBENEZER HAPPENINGS



# NOVEMBER 2026

**The Monthly Newsletter of Ebenezer Reformed Church Morrison IL**

**Inside this Issue:**


- The Pastor's Note
- Sunday Worship Highlights
- The Welcome Table
- Calendar & Birthdays
- Ladies Aid & Bible Studies
- Prayer Concerns
- Memory Verse of the Month
- Meetings-at-a-Glance
- Volunteer Service Schedules
- Wedding Anniversaries
- Missionary Spotlight
- AfterShock Lessons & Menu
- Heaven's Express
- Annual Chili Cook-Off
- Attendance & Giving
- Veterans Recognition Service
- Elder & Consistory Reports



EBENEZER REFORMED CHURCH

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**Our Mission:** Helping people find & follow Jesus

## Dear Ebenezer Family,

November reminds us just how quickly the year is passing. It seems like we were just enjoying the warm days of summer, and now Thanksgiving is right around the corner. Before we know it, we'll be singing Christmas carols! But before we rush ahead, November gives us some wonderful opportunities to worship, serve, fellowship, and give thanks for God's many blessings.

We begin the month on Sunday, November 1, with Missions Sunday. We are pleased to welcome John Fornelli from *Heart Bible for the Nations* as our guest speaker. Missions Sunday reminds us that the church of Jesus Christ is much bigger than the walls of Ebenezer. We all have a part to play in fulfilling the Great Commission.

On Tuesday, November 3, The Welcome Table will have a temporary change of location. Since the Odell Library will be serving as an Election Day polling place, we'll host our regular Dinner Church gathering here in Ebenezer's Fellowship Hall at 5:30 p.m. The location may be different, but the purpose remains the same: sharing a meal, building relationships, and sharing the love of Jesus.

Our annual Veterans Recognition Sunday will be on November 8th During morning worship; we'll take time to honor the men and women of our congregation who have served in the United States Armed Forces. We are grateful for their sacrifices and willingness to serve our country.

The following Sunday, November 15th, is our Annual Congregational Meeting, immediately following worship, with a potluck luncheon afterward in the Fellowship Hall. This is an opportunity to reflect on God's faithfulness to Ebenezer over the past year and look ahead to what He has in store for us.

Of course, November brings us to Thanksgiving! It's a wonderful opportunity to slow down, gather with family and friends, and remember the goodness of God. But thanksgiving ought to be more than a holiday on the calendar. Paul reminds us in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 to **"give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."** Even when life is difficult, we have a faithful God whose love and promises never change.

One special opportunity to express that gratitude will be our Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service on Wednesday, November 25, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We'll gather for worship, reflection, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Before the busyness of Thanksgiving Day begins, what better way to prepare our hearts than to gather around the Lord's Table and remember God's greatest gift to us—Jesus Christ!

And just like that, Sunday, November 29, marks the First Sunday of Advent! We'll begin preparing our hearts to celebrate Christ's birth while also looking forward to His promised return. What a wonderful hope we have!

As we move through November, don't become so busy counting down the days until Christmas that you forget to count your blessings along the way. God has been good to us, and we have much for which to be thankful!

A Joy to Serve You,

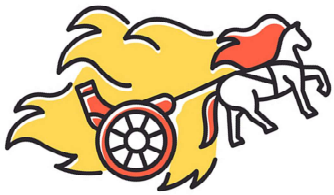


# Sunday Worship – November 2026



**1**

Series: MISSIONS SUNDAY
Sermon: **"Be Still and Know"**
Scripture: Psalm 46
Speaker: John Fornelli



**8**

Series: God's Story in Stained Glass (Part 11)
Sermon: **"The Ascension of Christ"**
Scripture: Acts 1:1-11
Speaker: Pastor J.T. Bean



**15**

Series: God's Story in Stained Glass (Part 12)
Sermon: **"Second Coming and Heaven"**
Scripture: Revelations 19:11-16
Speaker: Pastor J.T. Bean



**22**

Series: God's Story in Stained Glass (Part 13)
Sermon: **"Fountain of Life"**
Scripture: Psalm 36:1-12
Speaker: Pastor J.T. Bean



**29**

Series: Christmas at the Movies
Sermon: **"The Santa Clause"**
Scripture: Ephesians 4:17-24
Speaker: Pastor J.T. Bean





# November 2026



| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 **Missions Sunday** Guest Speaker: John Fornelli | 2 Church Life Cmt 10:30am | 3 **Election Day** WelcomeTable 5:30 in fellowship hall at Ebenezer | 4 Women's Bible Study 1:30pm AfterShock 5:30-7pm | Food Bank 5 9:45am Worship Team Mtg 5:15pm Exec Team 6:30pm | 6 | 7 Men's Bible Study 7:30am |
| 8 **Veterans Day Recognition** during 9:30am worship service | 9 Eld/Deac 6pm Consistory 6:30pm | 10 O.M.E. Task Force 4:30pm All Church Prayer Mtg 6pm | 11 Ladies Aid 1:30 p.m. AfterShock 5:30-7pm | 12 Food Bank 9:45am | 13 | 14 Men's Bible Study 7:30am |
| 15 **Annual Meeting** after worship + luncheon in Fellowship Hall | 16 | 17 | 18 AfterShock 5:30-7pm | 19 Food Bank 9:45am Diner's Night Out 5pm at Forest Inn | 20 | 21 Men's Bible Study 7:30am |
| 22 Mid-High Class 10:45am | 23 Pastor J.T. on vacation | 24 | 25 NO AFTER-SHOCK Thanksgiving Eve Worship 6pm in fellowship hall | 26 Thanksgiving Day | 27 Church office closed today Pastor J.T. on vacation | 28 Men's Bible Study 7:30am |
| First Sunday of Advent 29 | 30 | DEC 1 | DEC 2 | DEC 3 Staff Mtg. 10am | DEC 4 | DEC 5 |

# November Birthdays

1 Adam Behrens
2 Emily Szabo-Camper
3 Doris Bull
4 Emily Brooks
8 Melinda Hamstra
9 Karen Zuidema
9 Sharon Reisenbigler
11 Glenda Jansma
12 Kim Hunter
12 Ruth Rosenow
13 Ryan VanZuiden
14 Scott Allison
15 Deb VanZuiden
16 Marvin Tichler
18 Roger Schipper
20 Jody Bland
21 Cindy Hoogheem
21 Jim Workman
22 Irma Brands
23 Kaylee Renkes
24 Scott Meurs
24 Jennie Gowan
25 Pil Scott
26 Bernita Schaver
27 Brooks Brackemyer
29 Patricia Huisenga
30 Ron Wilkens
30 Kim Schaefer

* = Missionary family

➔ **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, November 11. Linda Dykstra will present the program "Amish Beginnings and Life Today" and Pat Pessman will provide refreshments.

## Women's Bible Study

Please join us for a Bible Study the first Wednesday of the month (November 5th 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 starting a study of the book of Galatians.

## Mid-High Bible Study

The Mid-High class is for Middle School and High School students. We meet most Sundays after worship around 10:45 a.m. in the Upper Room with Pastor J.T.

## Consistory Mtg.

The Consistory will meet on Monday, November 9th. Elders and Deacons meet separately at 6:00 p.m. The Consistory will come together at 6:30 p.m.

## Prayer Concerns

- **This month's All-Church Prayer Meeting is Tues. Nov. 10th at 6pm.**

- Pray for those who need restored health, healing, and encouragement: Vern & Kathy Vanderlaan, Dennis Goossens, Jeg Weets, and Allison Weaver. 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:
  **Gregory Bush** (Air Force)
  **Tyler Haan** (Air Force)
  **Brevin Pruis** (Navy)
  **Jacob Allison** (Army)

- 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, Joel & Seiko Lovestrand in Japan, and the Ryan Karp family with Chosen People Ministries.

- 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.

**VERSE OF THE MONTH: 1 Thessalonians 5:18 - "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."**

## November Meetings At-a-Glance

Mon. 11/2 - Church Life Cmt. 10:30 a.m.
Tues. 11/3 - The Welcome Table 5:30 p.m.
Wed. 11/4 - Women's Bible Study 1:30 p.m.
Thurs. 11/5 - Worship Team 5:15 p.m.
Thurs. 11/5 - Executive Cmt. 6:30 p.m.
Sun. 11/8 - Youth/Education 10:45 a.m.
Mon. 11/9 - Elders & Deacons 6 p.m.
Mon. 11/9 - Consistory 6:30 p.m.
Tues. 11/10 - O.M.E. Task Force 4:30 p.m.
Tues. 11/10 - All-Church Prayer Mtg. 6 p.m.
Wed. 11/11 - Ladies Aid 1:30 p.m.
Sun. 11/15 - Annual Meeting 10:45 a.m.

## NURSERY HELPERS

Nov. 1 – Beth Milnes & Kinlee Prins
Nov. 8 – Shawn & Kevin Soenksen
Nov. 15 – Jackie & Alicen Wiersema
Nov. 22 – Angie Tichler
Nov. 29 – Jackie & Alicen Wiersema

## SUNDAY GREETERS

Nov. 1 – Susan Bland & Pepi Allen
Nov. 8 – Pat Pessman & Doris Bull
Nov. 15 – Alan Meurs & Barb Domdey
Nov. 22 – Morine Family & Pat Zuidema
Nov. 29 – Karen Landheer & Deb Adolph

## WELCOME CENTER

Nov. 1 – Sharon R & Ken Jansma
Nov. 8 – Dave & Darlene Schipper
Nov. 15 – Keith & Joyce Hamstra
Nov. 22 – Jack & Susan Bland
Nov. 29 – Verne & Pat Pessman

## TECH TEAM

Nov. 1 – Jenny & William Patton
Nov. 8 – Scott Meurs & Phil Ardapple
Nov. 15 – Scott Meurs & Gregg Wiersema
Nov. 22 – Jenny & Jovie Patton
Nov. 29 – Scott Meurs & Gregg Wiersema

## FELLOWSHIP HOUR

Nov. 1 – Jack & Susan Bland
Nov. 8 – Schavers & Wiebengas
Nov. 15 – POTLUCK
Nov. 22 – Ken & Glenda Jansma
Nov. 29 – Al & Shelly Meurs

## BELL RINGERS

Nov. 1 – Josh Gowan
Nov. 8 – Jeff Weaver
Nov. 15 – Nicholas Weaver
Nov. 22 – Jefferson Weaver
Nov. 29 – Doug Vanderlaan

## NE DOOR AFTER WORSHIP

Nov. 1 – Phil Ardapple
Nov. 8 – Dave Weber
Nov. 15 – Keith Hamstra
Nov. 22 – Pastor J.T.
Nov. 29 – Pastor J.T.

## ANNIVERSARIES

Nov. 14 – Brian & Angie Tichler
Nov. 20 – Bob & Jan Wiersema
Nov. 27 – Kevin & Shawn Soenksen



# Missionary Spotlight
# Joel & Seiko Lovestrand

JOEL & SEIKO have been serving in Seiko's native land of Japan since early 2025. They serve with a mission organization known as OMF, or Overseas Missionary Fellowship (founded in 1865 by Hudson Taylor, a well-known British missionary who served for 50+ years in China.) Since arriving in the city of Sendai, the Lovestrand's have been kept busy ministering to the locals there and doing various outreaches within an area where there are very few Christians—Buddhism is fully embraced by the locals, including by Seiko's relatives.

AMERICAN TRAVEL — Joel, Seiko and Leo were in the U.S. in July visiting with family and supporting churches. Their son, Leo, who graduated from high school this spring, visited six different colleges that he is looking into attending. Altogether, Leo and his parents drove over 4,000 miles and visited schools in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Missouri and Texas. Leo remains undecided in his decision, but progress was made.

SINCE RETURNING TO JAPAN — Joel has begun his interim role as OMF's Deputy Sector Leader of Tohoku (NE Honshu). He has also had a request to add two new English students to their classes—a 4th grade boy and his sister, a high school senior. Their classes were full, but they decided to squeeze the boy into the Wednesday night class and enrolled his sister in the Saturday adult beginner's class—please pray for wisdom for Joel & Seiko as they proceed forward with this plan.

MORE RECENT OCTOBER UPDATES — Upon returning to Japan, and after experiencing a slight shingles relapse, Joel's symptoms finally have left—except for some lingering fatigue. Also, Leo is currently leaning towards taking a gap year, and starting his college studies in America next year. It is not definite yet, so your prayers for Leo on this important decision are appreciated.

A NEW ROLE FOR JOEL — Joel also learned that the current Sector Leader for Tohoku was chosen to be the Field Director for the country of Japan, which means a replacement for him would be needed—and Joel was asked to take on this responsibility as a more permanent role. This will mean more administrative work for him—and more traveling to attend meetings.

SEIKO'S IMPORTANT ROLE IN OMF COMING UP — Seiko is also discovering what it will mean to be the Hotel Liaison for OMF's National Conference next June. She will be asked to reserve the correct number of rooms as well as the types of rooms needed for all lodging and missionary meetings. She will have some children's ministry responsibilities. As the conference dates draw closer, even more details and duties will be given to her that will need to be handled. Seiko will be a busy liaison—please keep her in your prayers as she begins her duties. These are important responsibilities that make the OMF Conference run smoothly.

ALSO PLEASE PRAY — for Joel & Seiko to have wisdom as they re-arrange their busy schedules. Their desire is to continue the community outreach that they have begun in Hitokita.

IMPORTANT CHURCH MILESTONE — In the month of October the Sendai Evangelical Christian Church will be having a building dedication and celebrating a 50th Anniversary. Since the last Japanese pastor left years ago, it has been a long period of recovery for the church—and a number of people left. Growth has been difficult. As the current colleagues, Rod & Glenda Thomas, get closer to retirement, they are eager to see SECC call a Japanese pastor, but at the current time, it seems difficult.

PLEASE PRAY — that SECC's evangelism efforts will help the church to grow and thrive. ALSO PRAY for wisdom for Joel & Seiko in the use of their time as they continue to teach English and lead Bible study classes in Hitokita, while taking on new roles within OMF.

PLEASE PRAY — that Joel can learn the Sector Leader role well and be ready to take over responsibility in December. And there is a possibility that Pastor J.T. may be visiting the Lovestrand's in Japan next year. AS ALWAYS WE ARE TOGETHER WITH YOU IN THE CAUSE OF THE GOSPEL — JOEL & SEIKO

# AFTER SHOCK

## WEDNESDAYS

### 5:30 to 7 p.m.

**NOVEMBER LESSONS:**
Nov. 4 – David Sinned & Was Restored
Nov. 11 – Solomon Became King
Nov. 18 – Solomon Built a Temple
**NOVEMBER MEALS:**
Nov. 4 – Spaghetti, salad, garlic bread
Nov. 11 – Walking tacos, nachos
Nov. 18 – Chicken nuggets, french fries, corn
** And we always have pb&j and fruit cups!*










This is our Sunday morning children's church for grade-school age kids. It is for grade-school age kids (K-5). Kids will be dismissed after the pastoral prayer half-way through the worship service to go downstairs to the classroom for their own special time of teaching and learning.

## Giving & Attendance

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

| Date | Attendance | Offering |
|---|---|---|
| October 4 | 109 | $3,508 |
| October 11 | 120 | $5,821 |
| October 18 | 138 | $17,293 |
| October 25 | 131 | $3,656 |
| | **Avg. 125** | **Total: $30,278** |

## October Breakdown:




General Fund: $30,278
Assistance Fund: $1,152
Aftershock: $226
Tithe.ly (online giving): $2,734

**Total: $34,390**

### 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!

We also have a YouTube channel where you can view sermons and other video content: @ebenezerreformedchurch2021

This newsletter is a publication of:

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**Sue Bond**, Office Manager
office@ercmorrison.com
Office hours: M-F 9:00 a.m. to 1p.m.

**Sunday Morning Services:**
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**

**2026 Consistory**

**Elders:** J. T. Bean, Phil Ardapple, Keith Hamstra, Melinda Hamstra, Jon Kophamer, Barney Habben, Sandi Wilkens

**Deacons:** Jenny Patton, Randy Renkes, Darlene Schipper, Brian Tichler, Dave Weber, Gregg Wiersema

**2026 Executive Team**

J.T. Bean (Pastor)
Sandi Wilkens (Vice President)
Dave Weber (Deacon Chair)
Gregg Wiersema (Treasurer)
Melinda Hamstra (Clerk)

## Elders Meeting Minutes - October 12, 2026 -

**Attendance:** Keith Hamstra and Melinda Hamstra were absent.
Devotions and Prayer: Pastor JT opened the meeting at 6pm with scripture from Psalm 1 followed by devotions and prayer.

**The constitutional question** was asked and answered in the negative.

**Sacraments update:** The sacrament of baptism was celebrated on September 20 for Ellie Tichler. Communion was served October 4th and elders were reminded to complete at-home communions. The next Sunday communion service will be December 6. Communion will also be served on Thanksgiving Eve. The Communion Checklist has been posted by the communion supply cupboard.

**Assignments:** Elders were reminded to review assigned care groups and make proper contacts as needed. Elders were also reminded to check assigned dates for the Prayer Room.

**M/S** to approve the September Elders Meeting Minutes. M/C

**M/S** to adjourn after the closing prayer. M/C

**Closing Prayer:** Barney Habben

Respectfully submitted, Sandi Wilkens

## Consistory Meeting Minutes - October 12, 2026 -

**Devotions & Prayer:** Pastor J.T. Bean led devotions from Psalm 1, followed by discussion and prayer. Members shared evidence of God's work through growing children's ministries, new members, a recent baptism, congregational unity, and completed church improvements.

**Pastor's Report — J.T. Bean** distributed his written monthly report for review.

**Elders Report — Sandi Wilkens**

**Deacons Report — Dave Weber** The deacons reviewed the financial report and ongoing property projects.

**Finance & Insurance — Dave Weber** presented the September financial figures: income of $24,297.$^{60}$ expenses of $52,116.$^{08}$ and reported current assets of approximately $376,956. Giving remained slightly ahead of the year-to-date budget pace. **Motion:** Approve the financial report. **M/S/C**

**Worship/Music — Jenny Patton** shared that recent services were reviewed without concerns. Upcoming observances include Mission Sunday and All Saints remembrance (November 1), Veterans recognition (November 8), the annual congregational meeting (November 15), and Thanksgiving Eve worship (Nov. 25). Organ replacement is scheduled for October 28–30, with a dedication hymn sing to be set for a future date. Advent readings, candle lighting, and Christmas activities are being planned.

**Building/Property — Jon Kophamer** reported that Bell tower masonry work is progressing; the northeast tower work is complete, with additional brickwork and tuckpointing underway. Replacement louvers are

## Consistory Meeting Minutes (contined) …

being priced. Sanctuary lighting has been upgraded to LED; additional lighting needs may be evaluated. Interior bell tower repairs, porch work, and installation of the new sanctuary cross were also discussed. **Motion:** Authorize up to $2,000 for replacement flooring and related work in the lower-level women's restroom. **M/S/C**.

**Church Life — Phil Ardapple** shared that preparations continue for the October 18 chili cookoff and Halloween candy distribution.

**Youth/Education — Sandi Wilkens** shared that AfterShock and Heaven's Express are operating well, with encouraging participation. Plans for the children's Christmas program remain under consideration. A proposed part-time children's/youth ministry position was deferred to Old Business.

**Assistance/Memorial — Dave Weber** reported one assistance request of $179.[53] was reported; the assistance fund balance was stated as $3,078.[66]. Memorial fund transfers and expenditures supporting masonry work were reviewed.

**Sacraments — Barney Habben** reported October 5th World Communion Sunday we served 93 total (87 at church and 6 at Resthave). Upcoming communion dates were previously reported by the elders.

**O.M.E. Task Force — Darlene Schipper** reported The Welcome Table outreach served approximately ten community guests at its recent meal. Planning continues for the first Tuesday in November.

**Approve Minutes:** **Motion:** Approve the September 2026 Consistory meeting minutes. **M/S/C**

**New Business:** **Consistory nominations:** 39 ballots produced 150 nominations (76 elder and 74 deacon). **Motion:** Recommend Dave Schaver and Mark Holtrust for elder, and James Daniel and Alan Meurs for deacon, for congregational affirmation at the November 15 meeting. **M/S/C**

**Budget and sabbatical funds:** To be considered during the subsequent salary/budget session.

**Organ installation:** Volunteers may be needed October 28 to assist with removal of the old organ.

**Accessible sanctuary seating:** The Property Committee was asked to explore shortening front pews and expanding accessible chairs and wheelchair space, with a goal of completion by Christmas.

**Network conference:** Consistory members were invited to an ARC revitalization conference at Crossview Church in Fulton; interested members should notify the pastor.

**Old Business:** A draft job description for a part-time children's/youth ministry coordinator (proposed at up to 20 hours weekly) was distributed. Compensation, budget provision, duties, and possible recruitment beginning in the new year remain under consideration. No hiring motion was recorded.

**Reminders & Adjournment:** Monthly prayer meeting reminder. Next Consistory meeting: November 9 at 6:00 p.m. **Motion:** Adjourn and reconvene without the pastor for salary and budget discussion. **M/S/C**.
**Closing Prayer:** Phil Ardapple

Respectfully Submitted, Sandi Wilkens