

EBENEZER HAPPENINGS



JUNE
2026

The Monthly Newsletter of
Ebenezer Reformed Church
Morrison IL

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Ebenezer Reformed Church

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Our Mission: Helping
people find & follow Jesus

Dear Ebenezer Family,

Summer is almost here and the energy at Ebenezer is contagious! As we step into June, I am truly excited about all that God is doing in and through this church. We have so much to look forward to, and I believe the Lord has great things in store for us in the weeks ahead.

This month we will be continuing our journey through the book of Philippians on Sunday mornings, and what a powerful book it is! In chapters 3 and 4, the Apostle Paul challenges us to press forward with purpose and to find our ultimate contentment in Christ. He writes, *"Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 3:13-14). What an incredible reminder that no matter what is in our past, God is always calling us forward!

Paul also reminds us that *"our citizenship is in heaven"* (Philippians 3:20)—we are people of an eternal kingdom, living with an eternal purpose! And then comes one of the most beloved promises in all of Scripture: *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:4-7). Church, that is a promise we can take to the bank!

I am also thrilled to announce the launch of "The Welcome Table," a brand-new dinner church ministry beginning Monday, June 2nd from 5:30–6:30 p.m. at the Morrison Odell Library! This is a cooperative outreach with Emmanuel Church, and the vision is simple: share a meal together, build genuine friendships, and hear a short devotion from God's Word. Jesus did some of His most powerful ministry around the dinner table, and we believe He will do the same through this new venture. Please pray for this ministry and consider inviting a friend, neighbor, or coworker to join us!

On a practical note, I want to say a big thank you for your patience and flexibility as the parking lot reconstruction project continues. I know it can be a bit of an inconvenience, but the end result is going to be worth the wait. Your grace and good humor through it all is much appreciated!

Finally, I just want you to know how much I love being your pastor. This congregation is such a gift from God. Your faithfulness, your generosity, your love for one another and for this community—it inspires me more than you know. I thank God for each and every one of you. Let's keep pressing on together toward the prize!

A Joy to Serve You,

Sunday Worship – June 2026



7

Series: Joy in Christ Always (Philippians) Pt. 8
Sermon: **“Pressing On to Know Christ”**
Scripture: Philippians 3:12-14
Speaker: Pastor J.T. Bean



14

Series: Joy in Christ Always (Philippians) Pt. 9
Sermon: **“Following Paul’s Example”**
Scripture: Philippians 3:15-19
Speaker: Pastor J.T. Bean



21

Series: Joy in Christ Always (Philippians) Pt. 9
Sermon: **“Our Citizenship in Heaven”**
Scripture: Philippians 3:20—4:1
Speaker: Pastor J.T. Bean



28

Series: Joy in Christ Always (Philippians) Pt. 10
Sermon: **“Stand Firm in Unity”**
Scripture: Philippians 4:2-3
Speaker: Pastor J.T. Bean

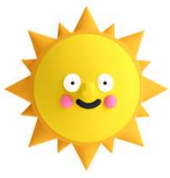
The Welcome TABLE

LAUNCHING
TUESDAY, JUNE 2ND

🕒 5:30 P.M.



CALL THE PASTOR OR CHURCH OFFICE
IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER TO SERVE.



June 2026



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. ↓	1 Church Life Cmt 10:30am Bldg. & Property Cmt. 6:30pm	2  Odell Library 5:30pm	3  Women's Bible Study 1:30pm	4 Food Bank 9:45am Worship Team 5:15pm Exec Team 6:30pm	5	6  Men's Bible Study 7:30am
7 Grad Sunday  Communion Sun	8 Elders/Deacons 6pm Consistory 6:30pm	9 O.M.E. 3:30pm All-Church Prayer Meeting 6-7pm 	10	11 Food Bank 9:45am	12 → UMV Network Conference →	13  Men's Bible Study 7:30am
14 Father's Day 	15	16	17 LADIES + AID 1:30pm	18 Food Bank 9:45am Diners Night Out 5pm	19	20  Men's Breakfast Event 7:30am
21 Mid-High Youth 10:45am	22	23	24	25 Food Bank 9:45am	26	27  Men's Breakfast w/ Larry VanOosten 7:30am 
28 Mid-High Youth 10:45am	29	30	1 Women's Bible Study 1pm	2 Food Bank 9:45am Worship Team 5:15pm	3	4  Independence Day

June Birthdays

6/4 Deb Swearingen
6/4 Hailey Wiersema
6/5 Pam Gorzney
6/8 Dawn Meurs
6/8 Jeff Brooks
6/9 Brian Tichler

6/10 Austin Edwards
6/10 LaVonne Dykema
6/11 Verne Pessman
6/13 Allison Taylor
6/13 Cambell Buikema
6/14 Marilyn VanOosten
6/16 Garry Seaman
6/18 Pam Grismore

6/23 Martha Kophamer
6/24 Marilyn Tichler
6/25 Jenny Patton
6/25 Ron Buikema
6/26 Roberta Bush
6/27 Brandon Jansma
6/28 Kaleb Damhoff
6/29 Karen Price

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

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



◀ Memory Verse of the Month ▶

Philippians 3:14 - I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.



Ladies Aid

Ladies Aid will meet at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 17th in the Fellowship Hall. Gayle Tegeler will provide the program "Stories and Gifts."

Refreshments will be provided by Deb Adolph.

Women's Bible Study

Please join us for a Bible Study the first Wednesday of the month (June 3rd) 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 1st Corinthians.

Mid-High Bible Study

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

Consistory Mtg.

Monday, June 8th. The Elders and Deacons meet separately at 6 p.m. The Consistory meets together at 6:30.

Prayer Concerns

- Pray for those who need restored health, healing, and encouragement: Neva Baar, Barb Geerts, Elmer Huizenga, Diane Boelkins, Jeg Weets. 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 in Germany, Angel Lopez in Mexico, Joel & Seiko Lovstrand in Japan, and the Ryan Karp family with Chosen People Ministries.

- This month's all-church prayer meeting is on Tuesday, June 9th at 6pm.

- 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.

June Meetings At-a-Glance

Mon. 6/1 - Church Life Cmt. 10:30 a.m.
 Wed. 6/3 - Ladies Bible Study 1:30 p.m.
 Thur. 6/4 - Worship Team 5:15 p.m.
 Thur. 6/4 - Executive Cmt. 6:30 p.m.
 Mon. 6/8 - Elders & Deacons 6:00 p.m.
 Mon. 6/8 - Consistory Mtg. 6:30 p.m.
 Tues. 6/9 - O.M.E. Task Force 3:30 p.m.
 Tues. 6/9 - All-Church Prayer Mtg. 6 p.m.
 Wed. 6/17 - Ladies Aid 1:30 p.m.
 Thur. 6/25 - Church Staff Mtg. 11 a.m.

Nursery Helpers

June 7 – Beth Milnes & Kinlee Prins
 June 14 – Marilyn Tichler & Allison Weaver
 June 21 – Jackie & Alicen Wiersema
 June 28 – Shawn & Kevin Soenksen



Sunday Greeters

June 7 – Susan Bland & Pat Pessman
 June 14 – Bailey Morine & Deb Adolph
 June 21 – Pat Pessman & Doris Bull
 June 28 – Jane Haan & Jenny Patton



Welcome Center

June 7 – Nick & Melinda Hamstra
 June 14 – Jack & Susan Bland
 June 21 – Sharon Reisenbigler & Ken Jansma
 June 28 – Dave & Darlene Schipper



Tech Team

June 7 – Jenny & William Patton
 June 14 – Scott Meurs & Phil Ardapple
 June 21 – Gregg Wiersema & Todd Kullerstrand
 June 28 – Kayla Sipes & Jovie Patton



Fellowship Hour

June 7 – Tim & Patty Bush
 June 14 – Pat Pessman & Barb Prins
 June 21 – Father's Day (no fellowship hour)
 June 28 – Ken & Glenda Jansma



Bell Ringers

June 7 – Kim Schaefer
 June 14 – Kevin Hook
 June 21 – Larry Tichler
 June 28 – Alan Meurs



Wedding Anniversaries

6/3 Michael + Deane Patten
 6/5 Vern + Kathy Vanderlaan
 6/11 Ted + Cindy Bush
 6/12 Gerald + Diane Wiebenga
 6/13 Jack + Susan Bland
 6/18 Randy + Pat Stuart
 6/22 Tyler + Kaylee Renkes
 6/26 Nick + Melinda Hamstra



Missionary Spotlight

Update *from* Andrew & Sophia Pitcher

It's been a while (*last November*) since we've heard from the Pitcher's, who are currently serving via ZOOM from St. Paul, Minnesota, doing Bible translation to the Deaf in South Africa with Wycliffe Bible Translators (*since 2010*). They will keep doing their work from St. Paul until their youngest daughter, Violet, finishes high school. (*Andrew grew up in Morrison & following graduation attended a science & math academy in Aurora, where he met Sophia—they will celebrate their 29th wedding anniversary next month*). Here is their latest update, received just this week—

Greetings from the Pitcher's in Minnesota! We have three exciting bits of recent news to share with you at Ebenezer:

1--"The South African Sign Language (SASL) Bible Translation Project in Cape Town is approaching a milestone of completing the first full book of the Bible in SASL! As we come to the end of May, the translation team is working on the last chapter of Acts. In June, the team will begin to film a final version of the video text that has been approved by Sophia and me and tested for comprehension for the different regions of South Africa."

2--"Our SASL Project marked another milestone in May when it began hosting an internship for a young Deaf man from France, who is training to become a Scripture translation consultant. He is almost finished with a Master's Degree in Hebrew for Translation Consulting, and needs to complete his internship to receive the degree requirements. He will be working with us through the summer months. It is really exciting to be involved in the training and mentoring of a Deaf man to join the ministry of sign language Bible translation! We are only aware of THREE Deaf Bible translation consultants in the entire world, where 400 different Scripture sign languages are still needed! He is not able to travel to South Africa during his internship, so we are doing our work together on ZOOM. We are thankful to God for the experiences we have had to be able to serve in a mentorship role for a Deaf person, communicating entirely in sign language without an interpreter. He signs French Sign Language and Israeli Sign Language, so it's quite a mix. But we are able to understand each other enough to work together proficiently."

3--"FINALLY, after several months of going back and forth, we have reached an agreement with another Bible translation organization that will allow Sophia and me—along with the rest of the SASL Team—to assist sign language translation projects in EIGHT OTHER COUNTRIES on the African continent! This means that your church, and all of the other partners who have invested in our ministry through the years, will have an even greater impact! We will now be able to share our experience and expertise to reach hundreds of thousands of Deaf Africans with God's Word! **THIS IS A BIG PRAISE!** How exactly this will take shape in the months and years to come, we are not sure—but there is so much to be done. None of the other countries have yet published any Scripture. ONE MORE PRAISE: Sophia and I thank God for you and for your partnership with us in spreading the Good News of the Gospel message!"

AND—we in turn are thankful for Andrew and Sophia and consider it a privilege to be a partner with them in their ministry to the Deaf people of South Africa.





Question: **“How do we stay joyful in an anxious world?”**

We live in a world overflowing with stress, bad news, uncertainty, and constant noise. Yet the Bible reminds us that joy is not found in perfect circumstances—it is found in Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote the book of Philippians while sitting in prison, yet he repeatedly spoke about rejoicing. Why? Because his confidence was not in politics, finances, health, or comfort. His confidence was in the Lord. Philippians 4:6-7 gives us the answer: *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”* Joy grows when we bring our worries to God instead of carrying them alone. It grows when we spend more time in God’s Word than in the endless cycle of fear and negativity. And it grows when we remember that our hope is anchored not in this world, but in Jesus Christ, who never changes. One of the great dangers of our modern culture is that we are constantly connected to troubling information. News alerts, social media arguments, and endless opinions can slowly drain our peace and shape our outlook. If we feed our minds a steady diet of fear, frustration, and outrage, anxiety will naturally grow. But when we intentionally fill our hearts with Scripture, prayer, worship, Christian fellowship, and

gratitude, God begins to steady our hearts. Christian joy does not mean pretending life is easy. It means knowing that even in difficult times, God is still sovereign, still good, and still working all things for the good of those who love Him. The world may be anxious—but Christians do not face the future alone.



Saturday, June 27th

7:30 a.m.

Ebenezer Fellowship Hall

A Story of Fear, Faith, and God’s Protection

Men of Ebenezer, you are invited to a special breakfast featuring guest speaker Larry VanOosten. Larry and his wife Connie survived a terrifying kidnapping ordeal that later became the focus of the TV program “FBI True” (Season 7, Episode 3): “Kidnapped in Pleasantville”

Following breakfast, we will watch the TV episode. Then Larry will share the inside story behind the ordeal, and how God’s presence becomes real in moments of crisis.

Coffee. Breakfast. Fellowship.
A powerful testimony of God’s faithfulness. Invite a friend!

Giving & Attendance

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

Date	Attendance	Offering
May 3	129	\$3,195
May 10	124	\$7,051
May 17	123	\$2,538
May 24	147	\$5,216
May 31	TBD	TBD
	Avg. 131	Total: \$18,000

May Breakdown:

General Fund: \$18,000

Organ Fund: \$480

Tithe.ly (online giving): \$2,694



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





Find us on
Facebook



 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

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Sue Bond, Office Manager

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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 - May 11, 2026

Attendance: Jon Kophamer and Phil Ardapple were absent.

Devotions & Prayer: Pastor J.T. opened the meeting at 6pm with scripture from Philippians 2:12-18 followed by questions and prayer.

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

Grieving Members in need of care: Members in need of care were discussed.

Sacraments Update: Sunday June 7th will be the next communion. At-home communion will be the following week.

Baptism: Kayla Renkes will be baptized on Sunday May 24th. Will need help with set up.

Membership Care Groups: Reminder to review assigned care group and make proper contacts as needed.

Elder Prayer Room Assignments: Reminder to review assigned dates for prayer room.

Approve Minutes from April Meeting: M/S to approve minutes M/C

Next meeting: June 8th @ 6pm

Motion to Adjourn: M/S to adjourn after closing in prayer M/C

Closing Prayer: Barney Habben closed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Melinda Hamstra, Clerk

Consistory Meeting Minutes - May 11, 2026

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 6:30pm. Absent were Phil Ardapple, Jon Kophamer, Jenny Patton, Brian Tichler and Gregg Wiersema.

Devotions & Prayer: Pastor J.T. opened the meeting with devotions from Philippians 2:12-18, followed by discussion and prayer.

Pastor's Report: Preaching through the book of Philippians, focusing on the theme of joy, unity, humility, and faithful Christian living in Christ. In addition, Pastor J.T. has incorporated a brief "Signs & Symbols" teaching and their connection to our faith. Pastor J.T. has made several nursing home and home visits this month. There has been a significant focus on continued planning and preparation for the launch of The Welcome Table. Looking forward to the opportunities and outreach ministries this will provide to the community. Weekly devotions are being sent out as a means of encouragement and teaching. We have had steady attendance and faithful giving within the congregation. Our organ fund is continuing to grow.

Consistory Meeting Minutes (Continued)...

Where have we seen God at work at ERC?

- New Membership and Baptism -
- Start up of "The Welcome Table" -
- New Sermon series along with a lesson on Signs & Symbols

Elders Report: Melinda (see Elders minutes)

Deacons Report: No report as they did not meet. It was mentioned we should help Courtney Bruckner and Deb Orlowski with gas money for traveling to and from Sterling to get food for the food bank. **M/S to give gas card to each Courtney and Deb M/C**

Finance: Dave reviewed the finance/budget report as of April 2026 **M/S to Approve Financial Report/Budget MC.** The CD the church currently has will be maturing the end of the week. It was suggested we move the CD into a Money Market Account for easier access to track and pay for parking lot repairs. **M/S to move CD into Money Market Account M/C**

Building/Property: The parking lot work will be starting May 18th. It will be done in phases so that there will not be any interruption with Sunday services. We are still waiting for more information From JB Electric to finish the lights in the sanctuary.

Church Life: no report

Worship/Music: no report

Youth/Education: Water Fun Day is scheduled for July 22 5-7pm. A large blow-up waterslide has been reserved. We will be having kickball on Wednesday's the month of July from 6-7pm. VBS is scheduled for August 3-7 at Emmanuel. Graduates will be honored Sunday June 7th.

Assistance/Memorial: Assistance fund is at \$4811.⁹⁹ and the Memorial fund is currently at \$0. It was discussed possible assistance for an attender.

Sacraments: Next communion will be June 7th. We will also have a baptism on May 24th.

O.M.E. Task Force: June 2nd will be the Startup of "The Welcome Table" 5:30-6:30 at the Morrison Library. We will provide dinner with a small testimonial/devotion to follow. We have applied for and received a grant of \$2,500 from the ARC to help supplement the cost of this mission event. July 19th will be our next BBQ Trivia night at the church.

Approve minutes: M/S to approve April Meeting minutes. MC

New Business: -The Welcome Table **M/S The Welcome Table is officially a new ministry in co-op with Emmanuel Church Starting June 2nd M/S** -NE Door Greeting and departure: will set up a schedule for deacons and elders to alternate greeting after services. -Organ fund: discussion had on how the fundraising is going.

Old Business: -UMV Annual Network Gathering – June 12-13 in Sully, IA.
- ARC Gathering 2026 – Aug 19-21 in Zeeland, MI (For these events go to www.ARC21.org for more information on details and cost.)

Next Meeting: Monday June 8th.

Adjournment: M/S to Adjourn post prayer. MC Closing Prayer: Sandi Wilkens closed in Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Melinda Hamstra, Clerk