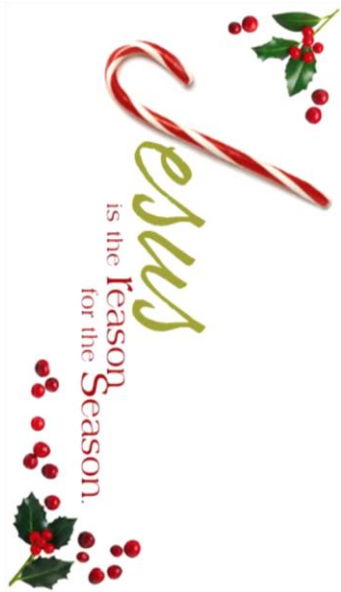


December 2024



Free Spring Church of the Brethren
670 Free Spring Church Road
Mifflintown, PA 17059

Free Spring Fountain



The water I give will become a spring of water
welling up to eternal life. – John 4:14



Free Spring Church of the Brethren

670 Free Spring Church Road
Mifflintown, PA 17059
(717) 463-3192
FreeSpringCOB@yahoo.com
Terry Smith, Pastor
Eugene Jones, Moderator
Lona Henry, Church Secretary

Office Hours:

Thursdays

10:00 am – 12:00 noon

Sunday Services:

Early Worship – 8:30 am

Sunday School – 9:30 am

Worship Service – 10:30



Truck Stop Ministry Cookie Packing

Saturday, December 7

8:30 am

Meals-on-Wheels Desserts December 17



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Tuesday, December 24

10:00 pm

All items for the January newsletter and calendar must be in the Free Spring Church office by **Monday, December 23**. If we do not receive these items by then, we WILL NOT be able to put them in the newsletter.



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This is a special time of the year when bright lights, wonderful music, festive gatherings, and a giving nature spill into our lives abundantly. What is most fulfilling is the celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus. God has made His best effort to connect with humanity in the personal presence of His Son, Emmanuel, **"God with us."**

Albert Edward Day, in The Captivating Presence, speaks to the effort God puts forth to reach us:

"But God is present in reality no matter what unreality our practices and our ponderings imply. He is forever trying to establish communication, forever aware of the wrong directions we are taking, and wishing to warn us; forever offering solutions for the problems that baffle us; forever standing at the door of our loneliness, eager to bring us such comradeship as the most intelligent living mortal could not supply; forever clinging to our indifference in the hope that someday our needs, or at least our tragedies, will waken us to respond to His advances." The Real Presence is "just that, real and life transforming. Nor are the conditions for the manifestation of His splendors out of the reach of any of us! Here they are; otherness, openness, obedience, obsession."

As we celebrate our Savior's birth let's be open to the other way of living Jesus showed us, *obedient* to His command to love one another, and *obsessed* with serving in His name. He has blessed us with the gift of eternal life; may we honor Him by giving graciously of ourselves and our resources. May the Holy Spirit fill your Christmas season with glad hearts and good cheer.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Terry



**December Deacons of the Month:
Eric & Ginger Alexander**

Scriptures and Messages for December

1st Sunday in Advent, December 1

Luke 21:25-36

"Be Alert at All Times"

Consecration of Deacons and Church Board Members

2nd Sunday in Advent, December 8

Luke 1:68-79

"There Will Be Peace"

3rd Sunday, in Advent, December 15

Luke 3:7-18

"What Should We Do?"

4th Sunday in Advent, December 22

Luke 1:39-55

"My Spirit Rejoices!"

Christmas Eve, Tuesday, December 24

Candlelight Service, 10:00 pm

5th Sunday of Christmas, December 29

Luke 2:41-52

"Be Alert at All Times"



Free Spring Choir forming for Christmas ALL are invited!

Come join us! We invite ALL who would like to participate in a choir to sing at Free Spring for Christmas on **Sunday, December 22.**

We are thinking that one or two practices prior to then should be sufficient. Dates and times for practice will be announced later.



Free Spring Library News

The following are fiction books; all are part of a series.



Cape Cod Creamery Series by Suzanne Woods Fisher

Love on a Whim – Brynn Haywood's impulsive marriage to a man she'd known less than 24 hours leaves her with deep regret. She flees to Cape Cod, finding refuge with her loyal friend, Dawn Dixon. As Brynn grapples with her emotions, Dawn acts swiftly, eager to help secure a lawyer for her through her mother Marnie's good friend, Lincoln Hayes. However, Lincoln's preoccupation with his daughter's lavish wedding brings unexpected challenges. (This is the third book in the series; the other books are The Sweet Life and The Secret to Happiness.)

Amish Candy Shop Mysteries Series by Amanda Flower

Premeditated Peppermint – Bailey King's ex-boyfriend, celebrity chef Eric Sharp, shows up to film an authentic Amish Christmas at Bailey's candy shop, but ends up asking for her help clearing his name after his executive producer is murdered and he is blamed. (This is the third book in the series; the other books are Assaulted Caramel and Lethal Licorice.)

Red Glove Series by Karen Kingsbury

Gideon's Gift – Holiday tale of a man who has lost all hope, an irrepressible child suffering from a terrible illness, and the one small act of love and faith that will give them both the greatest gift of all. (Book 1)

Maggie's Miracle – Megan Wright spent one unforgettable summer week with a boy when they were both teens. And despite a lifetime of heartache and bad choices, she has never let go of his magical definition of love, even if she has trouble believing in it. After college, Megan settled for a relationship of convenience. Now she's a high-powered attorney and, after the death of her husband two years ago, has been looking for help with her lonely young son. (Book 2)

Sarah's Song – Every year, Sarah Lindeman celebrates Christmas the same way: placing one special ornament on her tiny tree on each of the twelve days of Christmas. It is her time to remember where she came from, who she is today, and how, long ago, a song gave her another chance at love. But this year the ritual is different. This year, a desperate young woman is listening – a nurse who cares for Sarah at the Greer Retirement Village. (Book 3)

Hannah's Hope – Fifteen-year-old Hannah feels lonely, with wealthy parents who have little time for her, until she learns that Jack is not her biological father and she begins the search for the man who is. (Book 4)

Tree of Life Series by Olivia Newport

What You Said to Me – When fifteen-year-old Tisha Crowder gets caught shoplifting, attorney Nolan Duffy tries to protect her from consequences that could rattle her already troubled life. His daughter, Jillian, feels like she's the one being punished instead – by having Tisha assigned to work with her on a backlog of genealogy files. Tisha doesn't seem interested in taking the job seriously, and Jillian's patience wears thin. (This is the fourth book in the series; the other books are: The Inn at Hidden Run, In the Cradle Lies, and When I Meet You.)

Gone to the Dogs Mysteries Series by Janice Thompson

Barking Up the Wrong Tree – Inquisitive, detail-oriented, veterinarian Kristin Keller prides herself on winning over any dog. But has this self-proclaimed dog whisperer finally met her match in a Sheltie named Remington who has just won the Texas state agility course competition? The champion pooch is acting out of sorts – almost as if he is not the same dog. Has he, by chance, been switched out with another dog just before the next big competition? Kristin and the other Lone Star employees will do anything to help the Atkinson family figure out this mystery surrounding their beloved Remington. (This is the third book in the series; the other books are: Off the Chain by Janice Thompson and Dog Days of Summer by Kathleen Y'Barbo)

Alaska Air One Rescue Series by Susan May Warren

One Last Promise – After years as a pilot of a Navy rescue chopper, Arlo "Moose" Mulligan returned home to start Air One Rescue – and made a name for himself. He loves his job, his life, and his routines, which include breakfast at the Skyport Diner, always at one of Tillie Young's tables. She's sweet and pretty, but Moose knows his life has no room for anything more. Until the day Tillie shows up beaten and desperate and needing his help. Tillie Young never thought her ex would track her to Alaska, but somehow, he's found her. When he kidnaps her daughter, she'll do anything to get her back – even enlist help from her favorite grumpy customer. But Moose Mulligan is no match for a former MMA boxer and possible child trafficker, right? (This is the third book in the series; the other books are One Last Shot and One Last Chance.)

~ Kathy Bowman, Librarian



Nurture Commission News

Our Birthday of the Month for December is Judy Burns, who celebrates her birthday on Friday, December 20. Please remember her with your prayers and cards.



We enjoyed having our combined special music Sunday service on November 17 when we welcomed Jeremy Goodling and family to share their talents. Thanks to all who attended as well as all those who prepared food for the fellowship meal that followed.

Please be sure to join us Tuesday, December 24 at 10:00 pm for our Christmas Eve candlelight service. A big "thank you" to the Music & Worship Committee, as well as all who will be lending their talents and make each year's program so special!

Our last Meet-in-the-Middle Sunday for this year will be a special one! The Nurture Committee is planning a Breakfast Birthday Brunch on Sunday, December 29, during the Sunday school hour. This is bringing back a past tradition of celebrating the month/season you were born! More details to come!

~ Jessica Eby (Chair), Karen Logan, Carla Renson, and Nancy Shadel



December Birthday of the Month

Our Birthday of the month for December is Judy Burns, whose birthday is on Friday, December 20. Please remember her with your prayers and cards.



2025 Offering Envelopes have been placed in the narthex. When taking a cartridge, please be sure to write your name on the paper slip included with each cartridge and place it in the designated box to ensure a proper giving statement is provided to you at the end of the year.

Please do not use the new 2025 offering envelopes until on or after January 1, 2025! If you have any unused **2024** offering envelopes left over after December 31, 2024, please place them in my mailbox so they may be recycled by having the dates and numbers masked and envelopes used for special offerings throughout the year.

Thank you!

~ Lona Henry, Church Secretary



Ongoing Prayer Needs:

Stanley Beaver
Keaghan Faulders
Shawn Kepner
Roxie Rickenbaugh Machamer
Rick & Audrey Peters
Richard Rhoads
Mike Ryan
Dawn Sheaffer
Tad Sieber
Ronnie Sparks
Don Walters

Sherry Black
Audrey Helmuth
Lori Leach
Bill Parks
Charlie Price
Ellie Ritzman
John Schlegel
Gisele Russell Shepler
Jen Sparks
Donald Van Horn

Ongoing Prayer List to be Updated!

On the first Sunday in January those listed above in ***bold italics*** on the **Ongoing Prayer Needs** list will be purged and updated so that only those who still need to be on this list will remain.

If you know of any individuals on this list who you know needs to continue to be listed, please put their name(s) in my mailbox, or you may send me an e-mail, during the month of December. Please note that persons may be added to the ongoing list at any time.

Thank you!

~ Lona Henry, Church Secretary



Community Christmas Cantata

A NEW & GLORIOUS MORN!

(Celebrating The Light and Life of Christmas)

Sunday, December 15, 2024

at 2:00 pm

This year's Community Christmas Cantata will be performed on Sunday afternoon, December 15, at 2:00 pm, at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Licking Creek Rd, Mifflintown.

The 60-voice volunteer choir will be directed by Mr. Kevin Cunningham, retired Juniata HS Band & Chorus Director. While admission will be free of charge, a freewill offering will be collected to benefit our local Juniata County Food Pantry.

Snow date (if needed) will be Sunday, December 22.

Witness Commission December Food Pantry Delivery by: Judy Hoffman



Witness Commission has been very busy during the last 30 days.

Thanks to Fina Williams for delivering items to the Food Pantry. There were 5 dish soaps, 14 body washes, 14 shampoos/conditioners, and several food items. Thanks to Carla Renson for delivering items in August. For November and December, we are collecting tissues and Judy Hoffman will be our delivery person.

Thank you to Mary Zeigler for taking care of Operation Christmas Shoeboxes. Mary also attended the workshop in September, and we received 50 boxes to fill. They have been filled and more as we completed 61 boxes! Thanks to all who blessed this activity.

Attention cookie bakers!!!! Packing for Carlisle Truckstop Ministry will be done on Saturday, December 7, at 8:00 am. I am not asking to surpass last year's total, since Nancy requested not to challenge everyone this year! Cindy is providing dog treats to send along with the cookie bags. Looking forward to packing on the 7th! We also need someone to volunteer to deliver them on Monday, December 9 between 10:00 am to noon at the Ministry Trailer at the Petro Truck Stop in Carlisle.

The collection of items for Bethesda Mission was delivered by Dina and Amanda. They were grateful for all of the donations and remarked that the chef will be very happy to see all the food items that were donated.

Thank you to those who participated in the Annual Crop Walk! A special thank you to Judy Burn for being our representative!

Our church has an amazing response to the outreach projects we support! Please take the time to fill out a Time & Talent survey; this provides the main source of volunteers the Witness Commission uses to complete all of our outreaches! Many names appear in the directory, and there are many more who are not listed who volunteer to help. For all, we are grateful!!!! Blank Time & Talent Surveys are available on the table in the narthex or online on the church's website. Please place completed hard copies in Dave Moist's mailbox; he will see that the appropriate Commission chair receives theirs.

Please give the new Commission members help in any way you are able; it makes the transition from past members to new members so much easier! If you have any suggestions for the Witness Commission, please don't hesitate to contact one of them!

~ Barry Hoffman, Becca Walters, Fina Williams, and Dina Zug (Chair)



Fill out your
Family Profile
For the Church
Directory Update!

2025 Church Directory

It's that time of year again! Enclosed in the November newsletter and on the table in the narthex is the form for updating or adding your information in the 2025 Free Spring Church Directory. You may also obtain a form online on the church website. You do not need to be a member to be included in the Directory or to have a mailbox at the church.

For those who were included in last year's Directory, please take a moment to review that information and use the form to make any changes needed or write your name and "no changes" on the form.

This form may also be used to request a mailbox here at the church (for those who do not already have one). The form also includes an option for indicating if you'd like to "go green" and have the monthly newsletter e-mailed to you rather than receiving a hardcopy!

Do not submit the form more than once unless you need to correct your first submission; in which case, please notate "corrected" on the form when submitting again. Also, please use a separate form for others not in your household. Please place your completed form in my mailbox as soon as possible.

A tentative schedule for completing the 2025 Directory will be provided soon. Watch your bulletins for details. Thank you all for your help!

~ Lona Henry, Church Secretary

2024 CHEESEBALLS To Benefit Relay-for-Life



Our Free Spring Cheeseballs are delicious for snacking anytime or for holiday parties. They make great gifts (just add a pack of crackers!) at only \$10 for a one-pound cheese ball! They freeze well, so you can freeze them and enjoy them at a summer picnic!

- Order yours now by signing up in the church narthex.
- Please sign up to donate cream cheese or to make a \$ donation toward the sharp cheese (sign-up sheet for that is also in narthex).
- Please order early or by **December 1.**
- Also, sign up if you are able to help make the cheeseballs on **Friday, December 13 at 1:00 pm.**

You may pick up the cheeseballs on December 13 after 3:00 pm, or any time after that.

Please place your payment in an envelope, write your name and the number of cheeseballs you are paying for on the envelope, and then place it in Judy Burns' mailbox. (Note: there are envelopes on the bottom shelf of the church mailboxes for your convenience.)

Questions? Ask Sharon Ritzman