

Ebenezer Reformed Church

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Inside This Issue

- Page 2: Letter from the Pastor
- Page 3: News and Events
- Page 5: Calendar
- Page 6: Usher, Greeter, and Nursery Schedules
- Page 7: Birthday and Anniversary List
- Page 8: Flyer from Kishwaukee College (Kish emailed and asked if we would include this – please pass it along if you think someone would be able to use it.)

Newsletter articles are due **SUNDAY January 22**. Items can be emailed to newsletter@ebenezerreformed.com or put in the box in the Narthex. Thank you.

Giving and Getting

Another Christmas season has come and gone, and Americans have spent an estimated \$580 billion on gift giving. Good for the economy, even if a little sketchy for the debt load of consumers. All of this got me to thinking about giving and receiving.

A couple of weeks ago the Wall Street Journal published a column on Christmas gift giving. It seems that economists have been studying the psychology behind giving and receiving gifts for quite some time now. Here are a few things they've discovered.

- * People value gifts 20% less than items they've chosen for themselves. Put another way, when you give a gift worth \$100, the recipient sees it as worth about \$80.
- * Recipients like to get money even more than the items they put on their wish list.
- * The value of the gift has no bearing on the recipient's level of appreciation. In other words, they're just as likely to yawn at a \$50 gift as at a \$100 gift.

In short, economists tend to believe, giving gifts is a crap shoot, plain and simple.

This, in turn, reminded me of another article I saw recently in which the writer argued that it's better to receive than to give. How's that possible, I thought. Doesn't this fly in the face of the Bible? After all, the apostle Paul quoted Christ as once saying that it's more blessed to give than to receive.

But the author's point was that giving, in our culture, is often seen as an act of power and strength. While receiving something is seen as a sign of weakness. I instantly saw her point. A person who is a generous giver can be tremendously awkward when it comes time to receive.

I've lost count of the number of people I've talked with who had a very real need, but didn't want others to know about it. "I don't want to be a bother to people," is what they'd tell me. "Haven't you helped others when they had a need?" I'd ask them. "Sure," they'd say. "And how'd that feel?" "It felt great," they'd tell me. "Then why don't you let someone else experience that same feeling by helping you?" I could see the light turn on in their brains, but they'd shake their heads nonetheless – "I just don't want to burden others." They're lying, of course. More often than not, their reluctance has less to do with saintly concern and more to do with human pride.

Receiving help from others hurts our pride. It reminds us that we really are more dependent on others than we'd like to admit. It reminds us that we aren't as perfect as we'd like to think.

It may be more blessed to give, but it sure is a lot harder to receive.

As another season of giving-on-steroids draws to a close, maybe its time to start practicing the art of receiving. We could begin by: receiving gifts without plotting a way to repay it; receiving help in a spirit of gratitude; receiving constructive criticism with humility.

Maybe it's in practicing the difficult art of receiving that we most bless the giver.

~Pastor Brion

JANUARY

Christmas Decorations

Monday, January 2 at 2:00 PM we will be taking down the Christmas decorations at church. Please come and help us if you are able.

Choir Practice

Weekly choir practice resumes on Tuesday, January 3 at 7:00 PM.

Wednesday Night Activities

Kids' Club, Women's Bible Study, Men's Bible Study and Youth Group resume Wednesday, January 4 at 6:30PM.

A New Year of Giving



Food Pantry Collection

This month's food pantry collection will go to Bread of Life in Stillman Valley. Over the Holidays, the shelves have been swept clean and are in need of restocking. Soups, peanut butter, cereals, canned fruit, pasta, paper goods, cleaning supplies, and/or other basic items are needed and appreciated. Thank you for your generous gifts to our needy neighbors throughout 2011. Please continue to fill our grocery baskets on the first Sunday of each month. Your donations are alternately delivered to the three local food pantries; Bread of Life, Stillman Valley; People Helping People, Byron; and Lifeline in Oregon. The need is continuous.

Congregational Meeting

Sunday, January 15 a Potluck dinner and our annual Congregational meeting will follow the worship service.

Please bring a dish or two to pass (depending on the number in your family) and your own table service.



In addition, Treasurers and Committee Chairmen please have your reports to Bill Welty by January 6.

**CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING**

Elder and Deacon Nominees

Joe Wolf and Ken Haak are the nominees for elder and have accepted to serve as elders if elected. Larry Seabold and Steve Raine are the nominees for deacon and have accepted to serve as deacons if elected.

Missions and Outreach Meeting

The Missions and Outreach council is meeting January 29th immediately after church in the adult Sunday School Classroom. The topics for discussion include Jobe Martin, Creationism vs. Evolution Speaker, Visitor Gift Bags, Saturday Night Child Care, and dates for Ice Cream Social, Soup Supper, and Bazaar. See Tony if you have any questions or cannot attend. Thank you.

Tony Berg would like current e-mail addresses for all Missions and Outreach team members and anyone interested in being on the team. Please see him and give him your most current e-mail address so he can correspond more effectively. Thank you.

Ladies Aid

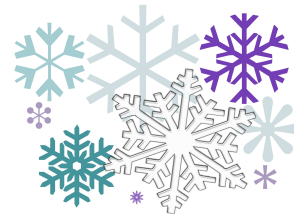
There will be no Ladies Aid meeting in January or February.

Naomi Ruth

There will be no Naomi-Ruth this month.

Christian Fellowshipers

There will be no Christian Fellowshipers this month.

**Sunday School Superintendent**

We are in need of a Sunday School Superintendent. If anyone is interested, please contact Bill Reecher or Leann McNeal.

Snow Removal

There is a sign-up sheet for snow shoveling on the bulletin board before you go into the Family Life Center. Please see Gary McDanel or Bill Welty with any questions.

Mailing Campaign

The Missions and Outreach Committee is formulating an aggressive mailing campaign to send out Christmas and Easter cards, with service times, to those non-Ebenezer attendees of the Bazaar and the Soup Supper. In the future, we will be sending out reminder cards for the Ice Cream Social, Bazaar and Soup Supper to previous attendees. We have compiled the list on an Excel spreadsheet but we need someone with expertise in a mail merge type system to advise us. If you can help, we would appreciate it. Please see Tony. Thank you.

Financial Peace University

We need a couple or two people willing to facilitate Financial Peace University next semester. The new session will begin right after the New Year. A different day than Sunday evening has been discussed (probably Thursday evenings). For more information (or to say yes!), please speak to Joe Wolf or Lynn Jorgenson.

Church Secretary

Thank you so much to Barb Dowd for her 2 years of dedicated service volunteering as the Church Secretary. She did a wonderful job and we really appreciate her willingness to serve!

**A New Year's blessing**

May God make your year a happy one!
 Not by shielding you from all sorrow and pain,
 But by strengthening you to bear it as it comes;
 Not by making your path easy,
 But by making you sturdy to travel any path;
 Not by taking hardships from you,
 But by taking fear from your heart;
 Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,
 But by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows;
 Not by making your life always pleasant,
 But by showing you when people and their causes need you most,
 and by making you anxious to be there to help.
 God's love, peace, hope and joy to you for the year ahead.

~ January 2012 ~																																																	
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat																																											
1 8:30AM Prayer Meeting 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship 	2 8:00 AM Exercise** 2:00 PM Taking down decorations	3 7:00 PM Choir Practice	4 8:00 AM Exercise** 6:30 PM Kid's Club/Women's Bible Study/Men's Bible Study/Youth Group	5	6 Epiphany 8:00 AM Exercise** 9:00 AM Prayer Meeting	7																																											
8 Food Pantry Collection 8:30AM Prayer Meeting 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship	9 8:00 AM Exercise**	10 7:00 PM Choir Practice	11 8:00 AM Exercise** 6:30 PM Kid's Club/Women's Bible Study/Men's Bible Study/Youth Group	12	13 8:00 AM Exercise** 9:00 AM Prayer Meeting	14																																											
15 Congregational Meeting 8:30AM Prayer Meeting 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship Potluck & Congregational meeting following service	16 8:00 AM Exercise** 	17 7:00 PM Choir Practice	18 8:00 AM Exercise** 6:30 PM Kid's Club/Women's Bible Study/Men's Bible Study/Youth Group	19	20 8:00 AM Exercise** 9:00 AM Prayer Meeting *	21																																											
22 Newsletter Articles Due 8:30AM Prayer Meeting 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship	23 8:00 AM Exercise**	24 6:30 PM Elders/Deacons 7:00 PM Consistory 7:00 PM Choir Practice	25 8:00 AM Exercise** 6:30 PM Kid's Club/Women's Bible Study/Men's Bible Study/Youth Group	26	27 8:00 AM Exercise** 9:00 AM Prayer Meeting	28																																											
29 8:30AM Prayer Meeting 9:00 AM Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship Mission and Outreach Meeting	30 8:00 AM Exercise**	31 7:00 PM Choir Practice	Notes:			February 2012 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>T</th> <th>F</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> <td>16</td> <td>17</td> <td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19</td> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		S	M	T	W	T	F	S				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29			
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** If you would like to come, please call Barb (815-988-5982) to make sure that it has not been canceled for that particular day

January 2012 Schedules

- 1st GREETERS: Bill & Judy Welty
Mark & Diane Williams & Family
USHERS: Tony & Kathy Berg & Grace Henley
- 8th GREETERS: Joe & Susan Wolf
Scott & Ceri Woodworth
USHERS: Dale & Deb Boomgarden & Grace Henley
- 15th GREETERS: Lance & Marge Barnes
Richard & Phyllis Cain
USHERS: Leann McNeal & Mary Goerks & Grace
- 22nd GREETERS: Jane Freeman & Becky Griswold
The Mumma Family
USHERS: Harry & Norma Flanagan & Grace Henley
- 29th GREETERS: Lynn Jorgenson & Evelyn Farver
Dave & Jodie Lehne & Family
USHERS: Jean Woodin, Genevieve Sweeney & Grace Henley



Nursery

- 1st Jen Christianson & Kim Carow
8th Kara Schriener & Kaitlyn
15th Stacy Flanagan & Abbie Ring
22nd Diane Williams & Ellie Lehne
29th Ellen Mason & Brittany Bjorklund

- 1st - No Children in Worship on this day
8th - Liz Brooks & Genevieve/Anna
15th - Barb Dowd & Khindra/Kaley
22nd - Marilyn Berg & Brittany/Tracie
29th - Mary Goerks & Leann/Marge



**Children
in Worship**

January Birthdays

- 3 Alex Woodworth
5 Jane Freeman
Gary McDanel
6 Scott Woodworth
Liz Brooks
9 Jackie Schumacher
11 John Ehmen
12 Dan Flanagan
14 Alice Maas
16 Morgan Gale
17 Roger Nordman
18 Jennifer Grygiel
Ginger McDanel
Kaitlyn Smith
20 Paul Chermak
Dave Wolf
21 Shirley Jacobs
Josh Jorgenson
Tracie Raine
Duane Snodgrass
22 Michael Berns
23 Tom Gale
Ellie Lehne
25 MaryAnn Oltmanns
26 Dale Boomgarden
27 Nick Schriener
Jazmine Ahrens
28 Kharisa Chapple
Cian Grygiel

and Anniversaries!!!!

19 Mr. & Mrs. Joe Headley (1991)

We are trying to keep the birthday and anniversary list up to date. If your birthday or anniversary is incorrect or missing, please send an email to newsletter@ebenzerreformed.com or put a note in the newsletter box in the Narthex. Thank you!!!!

What *not* to take into the new year

- Self-help books — Trust in God first; don't turn to him as a last resort. (See Proverbs 3:5-6.)
- Tape measure — Consider only God's standards; don't compare yourself to other people. (See Luke 18:9-14.)
- Rearview mirror — Don't live in the past. You'll miss out on what God is doing in your life now. (See Philippians 3:12-14.)
- Gavel — Stop wasting time judging others. Instead, pray for them, help them and team with them. (See Luke 6:37-38.)
- Life vest — Don't be overly cautious spiritually. Peter experienced Jesus in a real way because he dared to step out of the boat. (See Matthew 14:22-33.)
- Garage-door opener — We think we're networked but often isolate ourselves. God intended for us to live in community with one another. (See Hebrews 10:23-25.)
- Handcuffs — Don't offer excuses about why you can't help out. God can do amazing things through — and despite — us. Just follow him, with no excuses. (See Mark 6:35-44.)
—Gregg McCaslin



Youth Employment & Training Program



Kishwaukee College offers training opportunities for Ogle County youth between the ages of 17-21 to assist in obtaining career-related goals. Students enrolled in the program will receive career-focused support, including career counseling, job shadowing, work experience, and employment readiness training. Tuition, fees, textbooks, and mileage and childcare reimbursement are available for students meeting eligibility.

Eligible students may enroll in courses to obtain training in the following career programs:

- Administrative Assistant
- Dental Assistant
- Information Technology
- PC Technician
- Manufacturing
- Welding Technology
- Automotive Technology
- Diesel Power Technician
- Medical Administrative Assistant
- Pharmacy Technician

For more information, please contact Bridget Buckley, Coordinator, Youth Employment & Training at 815-825-2086, ext. 3120 or email at bridget.buckley@kishwaukeecollege.edu.

Kishwaukee College • Adult Education & Transition Programs
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Funded by the Workforce Investment Act. EEO is the law. Auxiliary aids are available upon request to those with disabilities.