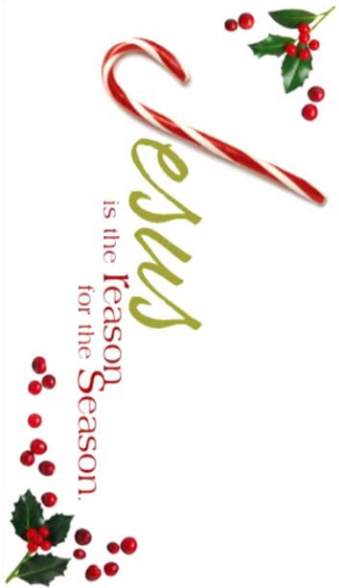


December 2023



*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 2

8:30 am

Meals-on-Wheels Desserts  
December 19



## Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Saturday, December 24

10:00 pm

All items for the February newsletter and calendar must be in the Free Spring Church office by **Monday, December 22**. 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,

I was flooded with angel memories as I awoke on this day before Thanksgiving! My mother loved all things angelic, which her son was not always. From my earliest years, there was always an angel on the top of our Christmas tree, and mom collected all sorts of angel figures and books about angels.

We gear up to sing *Angels We Have Heard on High*, "sweetly singing o'er the plains". We will burst out with *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*, and I think of the little girl who thought that the angel's name must be "Harold". My father-in-law, Harold, liked that story. We like to send the angels across the world as we sing *Angels, from the Realms of Glory*, "wing your flight o'er all the earth". Do you remember how the song ends? It ends with our anticipation of the Lord Jesus' sudden return.

*It Came upon the Midnight Clear* is filled with "angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold: 'Peace on the earth, good-will to men, From heav'n's all gracious King!...'And the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing." The hymns of Christmas are filled with angels and so are our lives.

What a blessing it was to see the donations to the Food Pantry and Bethesda Mission. Thank you for the "Angel Christmas Tree" response! The gifts are piling up for children who need an angelic presence in their lives. You might just be the angelic presence in somebody's life this season as we prepare to celebrate the greatest gift that the world has ever known, Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of all who trust Him.

The season of Advent is a preparation for the blessed Christmas celebration, and the Christmas Eve Candle Lighting service is a wonderful culmination of that season. Join us in body and/or in spirit as we join the angel chorus in worshipping Jesus.

May you be blessed by the presence of angels as you worship the

In Christ's Love,  
*Pastor Terry*



**December Deacons of the Month:  
Warren & Connie Wagner**

## Scriptures and Messages for December

### December 3

Mark 13:24-37 "Learn Its Lesson"

### December 10

Mark 1:1-8 "Beginning the Good News"

### December 17

John 1:6-8, 19-28 "This Is the Testimony"

### December 24

Luke 1:26-38 "How Can This Be?"

### December 31

Luke 2:22-40 "Remembering Back, but Looking Forward"



### Ongoing Prayer Needs:

- |                                |                             |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b><i>Steve Arnold</i></b>     | <b><i>Sherry Black</i></b>  |
| <b><i>Cathy Burris</i></b>     | <b><i>Jeff Fry</i></b>      |
| <b><i>Bentley Fulkroad</i></b> | <b><i>Audrey Peters</i></b> |
| Ellie Ritzman                  | <b><i>Jen Sparks</i></b>    |
| <b><i>Lydia Swartwood</i></b>  | <b><i>Weston Yoder</i></b>  |

### 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

## Free Spring Library News

The following are fiction books.

### The Wish Book Christmas by Lynn Austin

Best friends, Audrey and Eve, are looking forward to celebrating Christmas in postwar America and starting new traditions with their 5-year-old sons. But when the annual Christmas catalog arrives and the boys start obsessing over all the toys, the two friends realize they need to start by teaching their children the true significance of the holiday. (This is a sequel to If I Were You.)

### Lifemark by Chris Fabry

For 18 years, Melissa hoped that someday her son might want to connect with his birth mother. Meanwhile, the Coltons raised a son who openly knew about his adoption. As David approaches adulthood, he feels an unshakable urge to learn the full story. But when a call comes from the adoption agency, will it change everything?

### Dangerous Beauty by Melissa Koslin

Liliana is determined to take back her life after escaping human traffickers in Mexico. Seeking safety in America, she's aided by wealthy Meric. Her pursuers won't stop until she's theirs. What personal risk will the American take to keep her safe?

### The Heirloom by Beverly Lewis

After her widowed father remarries, nineteen-year-old Clara Bender is no longer needed to help run his household. Marriage seems like her best hope of moving out, but there are few young men in her tiny Indiana Amish community. When she comes across letters from her mother's aunt Ella Mae Zook, she sets off to visit Lancaster County's Hickory Hollow to decide where her future lies. (This is a prequel to the author's series *The Heritage of Lancaster County*.)

### The Mercy Tree by Sharlene Maclaren

In 1955, well-respected Pastor Henry Griffin knows scandalous affairs are never talked about and divorce is rare. When a letter arrives that could upend his career and break up his beautiful family, the secret about his time stationed in Japan begins to unravel. Is there room for gentleness, faith, and redemption under the Mercy Tree?

### The Wind Blows in Sleeping Grass by Katie Powner

Pete is content in his simple life in a remote Montana town, but elderly widow Wilma is busy meddling in Pete's life to make up for past wrongs.



When the sister Pete was separated from as a child shows up, Pete must confront a difficult past, and Wilma discovers her long-awaited chance at redemption may come at too high a price.

### The Book of Lost Friends by Lisa Wingate

Louisiana, 1875: In the tumultuous aftermath of Reconstruction, three young women set off as unwilling companions on a perilous quest: Lavinia, the pampered heir to a now-destitute plantation; Juneau Jane, her illegitimate free-born Creole half-sister; and Hannie, Lavinia's former slave. Each carries private wounds and powerful secrets as they head for Texas, following dangerous roads rife with ruthless vigilantes and soldiers still fighting a war lost a decade before.

~ Kathy Bowman, Librarian

## Nurture Commission News

Our Birthday person for December is Alan Naylor. His birthday is on Monday, December 18. Please remember him with your wishes, prayers, and cards.

Greeters for December is Jen Sparks for the first worship service Mike & Jessica Eby. Worship Leader for the second worship service is Mike Eby and Deacons are Warren & Connie Wagner.

December 3 is the first Sunday in Advent and Christmas decorating.

The Christmas Party date is yet to be determined and is coordinated by the Fellowship Committee.

December 24 at 10:00 pm is our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Tom Wert will be the worship leader.

December 31 is Meet-in-the-Middle Sunday and New Year's Eve.

~ Jessica Eby, Ron Gordon, David Moist (Chair), and Art Zug



## December Birthday of the Month

Our Birthday of the month for December is Alan Naylor, whose birthday is on Monday, December 18. Please remember him with your prayers and cards.

Please don't throw away any catalogs you receive that sell Christmas cards. I have a use for the tiny catalog pictures of cards depicting nativity scenes. Please place them in my mailbox at the church. Thank you!

~ Rosalita Leonard





## Christian Education Commission

As mentioned in August's and September's newsletters, Child Protection Clearances must be updated for our insurance. Anyone working with children and youth during Sunday School, Junior Church, VBS, or any other church-sponsored youth event must have Clearances. So far, we've only received 2 sets of Clearances. **This being the case, we'll have to shut down any youth-related activities.** Please go to the following websites and follow the directions within each site. The first one is a police records check for volunteers; the second one is the PA Child Welfare clearance application – it will take about 14 days to process and is good for 5 years. *Both are free as long as you follow the volunteer routes.*

1. <https://epatch.pa.gov/home>
2. <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home/>

Once you've completed the forms, please print the documents and give them to Shari Book or email them to [sharibook56@hotmail.com](mailto:sharibook56@hotmail.com) so the records may be kept on file at the church. If you already have clearances for your workplace or other youth involvement (sports or youth clubs), feel free to provide these. If you have any questions, please see Rich Walters or Shari Book. Additionally, per church/district policy we may need more later or will have to provide training meetings to keep current. This is being reviewed and we will update everyone as soon as possible.

The Fall Bible Study was held each Wednesday in October with a potluck supper in the fellowship hall and concluded November 1 at Pastor Terry's cabin. We used Max Lucado's **God Never Gives Up on You**. It was about encouragement to those of us who mean well, but don't always succeed. It followed Jacob and how God lovingly led the prodigal patriarch despite his failings. We had an average attendance of 15 throughout the Study. The overall thoughts from those who attended was that the study was very good and was better than the one in the spring where DVD videos really did not match the book sessions for the week. Also, most liked how Max Lucado uses his words to explain the Bible in today's terms. We're looking forward to finding something for Spring and we will continue with the Supper & Study format.

We've also been putting together children's Christmas goodies bags, which will be given out to the children within the church sometime in December. Merry Christmas!

~ Shari Book (Chair), Jim Eichman, Alan Naylor, and Mary Zeigler



## Witness Commission

### December Food Pantry Delivery by: Judy Hoffman



Christmas Tree Festival at Camp Eder is December 8 & 9 at 5:00-9:00 pm. The woods will be illuminated with lots and lots of Christmas lights, and warm fires. There will be hay rides, tree decorating contest, turkey dinner and bake sale, music, and a luminary garden. And don't forget – kids' activities and s'mores!!!!

Thank you for the continued donations to the Food Pantry. Judy Hoffman delivered the items from the last two months. Thank you to her! The counts were 68 toothpastes and 121 toothbrushes, WOW!!! There were also groceries that were donated. We are collecting laundry detergent through the end of December. They will especially like smaller bottles or boxes for families of 2 or 3.

From the Pantry's 2023 report...during the year, they served an average of 221 families, 585 individuals, 139 elderly, 278 adults, and 167 children. The average family size is 2.5 members. This year they served 156 new families and 30 families come every month. Through the summer backpack program, 167 kids received 7,980 lunches. The senior boxes serve an average of 53 low-income seniors during the month. This is accomplished with volunteers that worked 6,876 hours during the year!!!!

Cookies, Cookies, Cookies!!!! I hope all our bakers are planning on the kinds of cookies you are bringing to pack for the Carlisle Truckstop Ministry. Can we fill more than 268 bags this year? See you on Saturday, December 2 at **8:30 am**.

There will be a Harshberger's Fund Raiser for Heartbeat on Tuesday, January 9, 2024. Coupons will be provided in the bulletin. The Center is in need of maternity clothes, baby wipes, formula, Bible story books or DVDs, and wash cloths or bath towels. If you have any of these items to donate, you may drop them off at the center in Millerstown.

We would again like to **Thank You!** for your continued support of all of the outreach programs. God is Good!

~ Jen Sparks, Warren Wagner, Becca Walters, and Dina Zug (Chair)



### Free Spring Church's Website

Check out our website for bulletins, newsletters, photos from various activities, the history of our church, forms for updating your Directory information, and so much more at <https://cob-net.org/church/freespring/>

(Click on the "Updates To Our Site" link under MENU to see what has been updated and when!)

**2024 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 2024 offering envelopes until on or after January 1, 2024!** If you have any unused **2023** offering envelopes left over after December 31, 2023, 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



### Reserving the Church or Fellowship Hall **REMINDER!**

**Members of Free Spring** – if you wish to reserve the church or fellowship hall for any reason, you may either check the calendar on the office door first and if the date you want is available, write your reservation in **and** notify Lona by phone, note, or e-mail, **or** you may ask Lona to check the date for you and have her reserve the date if available. Please be sure to include whether you are reserving the church, fellowship hall, or both, and include the start and end time (include set-up and clean-up times) in order to prevent any overlaps!

**Commission Chairpersons** – please note that you are responsible for notifying Lona **and** placing new activities outside of the regular service times on the calendar that were not included in the Church Directory!

**Non-members of Free Spring** – if you wish to reserve the church or fellowship hall for any reason, please reach out to Warren Wagner or Pastor Terry for approval. Thank you.



### Sunday School Classes

The Seekers Class, which meets in the upstairs adult classroom, is studying The New Testament Book of Matthew focusing on one chapter each week. Our teachers are Ron Gordon, Rodney Pry, and Allen Zendt. With their leadership, along with the insightful contributions from class members, it is a lively and active learning experience focusing on scripture. You are welcome to join us any Sunday.

The Explorers Sunday School Class has begun a study on the book of Proverbs.

### Cookie Packing for Carlisle Truck Stop Ministry, Inc Saturday, December 2 at 8:30 am

It is not too early to start baking cookies for the Truck Stop Cookie Bags! So, please get your aprons on and start baking! You could bake them now and freeze them until December 2.

We'll be packing cookies for the Truck Stop Ministry on **Saturday, December 2**. Please have your cookies at the church fellowship hall no later than **8:30 am**.

We hope to have lots of help to bag them up. It's always fun to see all the different kinds of cookies people bake. We hope to see you there for a nice morning of work and fellowship!



### 2023 CHEESE BALLS 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 \$9 for a one-pound cheese ball! They freeze well, so you can freeze them and enjoy them at a summer picnic!

- Order yours, by signing up in the church narthex.
- Please sign up to donate cream cheese or to make a \$ donation toward the sharp cheese (a sign-up sheet for that is also in narthex).
- Please order early or by **December 3**.
- Also, sign up if you are able to help make the cheeseballs on **December 15 at 1:00 pm**.

You may pick up the cheeseballs December 15 after 3:00 pm, or any time after that.

Questions? Ask Sharon Ritzman



**Please remember our shut-ins with your prayers and cards.**



Evelyn Benner  
Brookline Continuing Care  
Retirement Community  
2 Manor Blvd, Rm 225A  
Mifflintown, PA 17059

Wayne & Dot Benson  
389 Raccoon Valley Road  
Millerstown, PA 17062  
(717) 589-3419

Dianne Goshorn  
274 Pine Drive  
Mifflintown, PA 17059  
(717) 436-9447  
(717) 348-9485 (cell)

Bev Oberlin  
North Ridge Center  
Personal Care, Rm 5  
99 North Ridge Drive  
McAlisterville, PA 17049  
(717) 463-2249  
(717) 994-8807 (cell)

Melda Ritchie  
3761 Mountain Road  
McAlisterville, PA 17049

Clair Varner  
145 School Street, Apt 202  
McAlisterville, PA 17049  
(717) 635-0513 (cell)



**Fill out your  
Family Profile  
For the Church  
Directory Update!**

## 2024 Church Directory

It's that time of year again!  
Enclosed in this newsletter is the form  
for updating or adding your information  
in the 2024 Free Spring Church

Directory. You do not need to be a member to be included in the Directory.

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!

Please do not submit the form more than once unless you need to correct your first submission; in which case, please notate that on the form when submitting again. Also, please use a separate form for others not in your household. You may obtain a form from the December newsletter or online on the church website. Also, extra paper forms are on the table in the narthex.

A tentative schedule for completing the 2024 Directory will be provided soon. Watch your bulletins for details.

Please place your completed form in my mailbox as soon as possible.  
Thank you all for your help!

*~ Lona Henry, Church Secretary*