

the kind of community we aim to be: living testimonies

Pastor Doug Hinton

Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

Revelation 12:11

The kind of community we aim to be... Jesus following, one another focused, loving God, neighbor, enemy, and self with the love we received in Christ, inviting others into the fold, testifying to the work of the One who called us out of dark and into His marvelous light.

Jesus following: Jesus, taking a form of a servant, not to be served but to serve, washing His disciples' feet at the time all power and authority had been given Him from the Father. Teaching and living truth, setting people free from sin in order to live an abundant life with Him. As His followers, we assess all our decisions, views, and actions against His life, teaching, and work found in the New Testament Scripture.

One another focused: We not only look to our own interest, but the interests of others: Joining together in corporate worship, meeting together through small groups and Bible fellowships – online when not in person, taking meals, sending cards, making calls, praying together and over each other, bearing with one another in trials, rejoicing in victories, and praising God as He moves through His body.

Loving as we have been loved: Do you remember when Christ first encountered your life? ♫ “Oh, how He loves us so...” ♫ Followers of Jesus at HCOB remember how Christ first loved us and continues to love us, empowering us to love our God, neighbor, enemy, and self with the same gift we received. We show this not only to brothers and sisters in Christ – no matter their local affiliation – but to family members, neighbors, coworkers, strangers who may not know Jesus or heard His good news.

Testifying to Christ's Work Among Us: We serve a Living and Resurrected Savior, the Cornerstone of the church upon which the whole structure is being fitted together. We, as living stones, declare and share with those around us the transformation, healing and wholeness only Christ can bring. He not only sacrificed and died for us, but now His Spirit empowers His body to continue the work He began: not holding people's sin and faults against them, but reconciling them through His work on the cross and giving us the ministry of reconciliation. We are His ambassadors, authorized representatives as though God makes His appeal through us to call to others: Be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

Associate Pastor of Discipleship

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.” ~Colossians 3:16

New year! New you! These are words we hear so often at this time of year. We open a fresh new planner, dust of our trusty pens (lots of colors, please!) and determine that this year is going to be different. This is the year we'll lose the weight, run the race, hike the trail, clean the basement, devise a fresh new menu plan, and read the Bible in a year. With excitement and anticipation, we launch ourselves into these new endeavors, only to find them unsustainable, overly ambitious, and sometimes not even grounded in reality. (Where are my running shoes anyway???)

Now hear me, deciding to prioritize health, wellbeing, and organization are important things for God's people to be doing. This is true. But what if rather than creating a “26 in 2026” list, we were to instead look for small ways, small pockets of time, with which to carve out intentional connectedness with Almighty God?

What if we looked for things we might stop *doing* and observe ways we can start *being* with God? How might that impact our spiritual journey?

We know that God is the God of the unexpected. He delights in surprising people as his ultimate plan comes to fruition. Baby in a manger, anyone? God also desires to be in community with his people, with you and me. We know that's he's with us, but do we engage him in practices that remind *us* of his ‘withness’ all with the desire to simply know him better? Maybe not.

If you're nodding along with me, you might also be wondering what practices you might adopt to cultivate a nearness with God. I think we all engage in scripture reading, meditating on God's word and prayer. If you'd like to refresh your spiritual routines, here are some other ideas to consider:

- **Prayer Practices:** Pray for others. Considering a running daily dialogue with God. Thank him for the parking space that was near the store, pray as you wash dishes, etc. Breath prayers such as “Be still and know.../ that I am God.” or “Father I rest.../ in your love.”
- **Worship Practices:** Listen to one worship song daily. Bonus points if it's a new one. Start a gratitude practice—list three things you are grateful for daily. Prioritize weekly worship.
- **Rest Practices:** Designate a specific portion of your week as a Sabbath. It doesn't have to be all day. Could be a morning or and afternoon. Even just an hour set aside. Create space to hear from God and then stop, rest, and delight.
- **Community Practices:** Choose someone from the church directory to encourage. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in this selection. Then send a card, an email or even a text message to encourage them.
- **Service Practices:** Bless others with random acts of kindness. Buy the flowers. Pay for the cup of coffee. Offer to help get something off the top shelf in the grocery store. Consider practicing hospitality. Welcome others in as you learn more about them. Share your gifts and talents. There are many opportunities available to you in this congregation.

- **Self-Examination Practices:** If you've never practiced the Daily Examen, now's a great time to start. Morning and evening asks yourself the following questions: Where did I sense God's presence? Where did I resist him? How will I live differently tomorrow? Confession is also a helpful practice.
- **Creation Practices:** Spend time in nature as you are able. In the colder months, this might simply be a brief pause on your porch, but even in this God reveals his creativity to us. What do you notice day to day or month to month? How does He inspire you?

This is not an exhaustive list, but I hope you might find even one simple pause in your day with which to intentionally connect with our Heavenly Father. As you pay attention to how God is moving around you, I hope you'll record your stories and share them. If you'd like to share them with me, my office door is always open. Connecting with God and telling others about these connections is a powerful witness to the world and an affirmation to other believers.

In Christ,

Pastor Laura



HCOB Children's Ministry Happenings

We welcome the New Year with hope for good things to come, and prayers for a happy and healthy 2026 for all! We are looking forward to making more memories, learning more about God's unending love, and growing in our faith together.

The month of December was full of all things Advent. While the adults completed a Men's and Women's Advent Study, some of our children also gathered to dig a little deeper into what the celebration of Advent means. We made some crafts, had some snacks, and read some books about Advent and Christmas. In Children's Church, our lessons have also centered around the waiting and anticipation for the birth of Jesus. We learned how many prophets told of Jesus' coming birth, and told that Jesus would do great things for all people. In learning about Joseph's life, we enjoyed the reminder to trust God's plan for us, even when that plan seems different from what we expected. We listened to the story of when Jesus was born, as well as when the Magi visited Jesus after his birth. Lastly, we discussed how anyone can worship Jesus- it is fun to share Jesus with our friends and family!

Also in December, we enjoyed our All-Church Fellowship Meal, along with the Gingerbread Competition! We were amazed at the creativity of each gingerbread house! After tallying up the votes, our winners are as follows:

First Place: Dave, Emmy, Penelope, Evelyn, Brynlee (Gummy Bear Village)



Second Place: Dan, Janelle, and Owen Witter



Third Place: Andrew and Richard



Fourth Place: Annabelle, Sabrina, Bethany, McKenna



Thank you to all who stayed for the fellowship meal, participated in the gingerbread competition, and helped with set-up and clean-up. It was a fun-filled day of conversation, fellowship, and competition.

Looking Ahead

- March 22 (Sunday)- Fellowship Meal and Easter Egg Stuffing
- March 28 (Saturday)- Easter Egg Hunt

Your sister in Christ,
Monica

Messages in January

January 4



God, The Storyteller

Genesis 2:1-14; Revelation 22:1-4; 10-21; Psalm 46

Pastor: Doug Hinton

We begin a new year focused on our theme of “Living Testimonies.” Building off of our previous theme of “The Kingdom of God,” taking what we’ve learned as a local body around Spiritual Gifts and the understanding of the giftings we carry, we will begin to work out sharing our stories of faith: what has Christ done in my life? How do I see Jesus moving in, through and around Hempfield Church of the Brethren? How can we recognize Jesus moving in the lives of others? Before sharing our own stories, we acknowledge God as story teller and see ourselves in an overarching plot to bring all things under His authority, His redemption, His peace. Today, we look to the beginning, and the end, to look at God’s story to see how it may shape our own.

January 11



The WORD became flesh among us ...
John 1:14

The Gospel Tells God’s Story

John 1:1-14, Hebrews 1:1-4

Pastor: Laura Meiser

When you think of the word "gospel" what comes to mind? Often times we think of the first four books of the New Testament—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, but the gospel is so much more! The gospel is also the good news news that runs through the entire meta-narrative of Scripture and the person of Jesus Christ is in the middle of it all. Last week, Pastor Doug looked at the beginning and the end. Today, we'll find ourselves in the middle, exploring God's plan for our rescue and our Savior who allowed it all to come to pass.

January 18



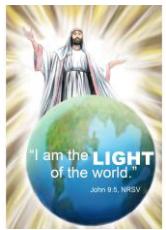
Jesus, the Master Storyteller

Luke 15:1-10

Pastor: Kent Rice

Stories portray ideas and experiences, imagination and teaching that stick with the hearer for hours, days, months and even years. What's one of the earliest stories you can remember hearing? Who was the main character? What was the point or theme of the story? From another angle: what story has changed your life? Shifted your perspective? Reshaped a way of thinking? Today we look at two of the three parables found in Luke 15, told by Jesus, to tax collectors, sinners, Pharisees, and scribes. Stories cross boundaries made be men and can reveal truth previously hidden. What aim did Jesus carry when he shared these stories? How can that help us think and speak today?

January 25



Jesus, Share His Story

John 9:1-12, 35-41

Pastor: Doug Hinton

Sharing our stories of faith can feel intimidating: how will the message be received? How will the hearer respond? What will my long-time friends or even my family members think of me? Will I be rejected, corrected, or threatened with discipline, loss of income or position at work? What if I say the wrong thing or cause a person to stumble? Often, our fears, while sometimes touching Scripture, revolve around the fear of people: their approval or lack thereof. Where did Jesus maintain focus and how did He reveal His story? How did His words and actions align with His vision, mission, and focus? Can you name Jesus's mission? We continue in our series of Living Testimonies as we look to what Jesus modeled.

HCOB Family News

Checks For You

... Blood Pressure Checks that is.

The Deacon Committee, through their Health Ministry Team, is providing monthly blood pressure checks to all participants of our church family.

Next check February 1.

Where: Library

When: After the church service



About the Speaker

Ann Clark Van Hine was born in England but grew up in the United States. Ann is the mom of two grown daughters, the widow of a FDNY firefighter, a retired small business owner, was a docent with

9/11 Tribute Museum from 2006 – 2022, a published writer, Children's Ministries volunteer, and a breast cancer survivor.

Since September 11, 2001, Ann has had numerous opportunities to share the story of God's presence and peace as she navigated "a personal loss in the midst of a national tragedy."



**March 21,
2026**

SAVE THE DATE

ANE District Women's Spring Fellowship

Lancaster Church of the Brethren

Speaker: Ann Van Hine

**Theme: Stillness in a Chaotic World
(Psalm 46:10)**

Come enjoy music, lunch, sessions on being & becoming, Q&A, and fellowship!





tabulator

Offering tabulators for 2026

Cycle A: January, April, July, October

Dan Witter

Deb Bendit

Cycle B: February, May, August, November

Gary Shenk

Darren Meiser

Cycle C: March, June, September, December

Dave Dum

Rick Schaidle

Alternates:

Justin Kleinfelter, Jim Kettering, Tom Connelly, Wes Bowers

We heartily thank these individuals for their willingness to help in this important work of the church. You are a vital part of the ministry of the church. With the accurate nature of the work they do each Sunday, only those scheduled should be present as they count the offerings. If you cannot be available on the weeks that you are scheduled, please make arrangements to obtain coverage for yourself from another tabulator or substitute volunteers. Please don't leave your partner alone with the job. Blessings and thanks to all who volunteered. If you are interested in helping, please see Justin Kleinfelter.



Featured Hymn Writer

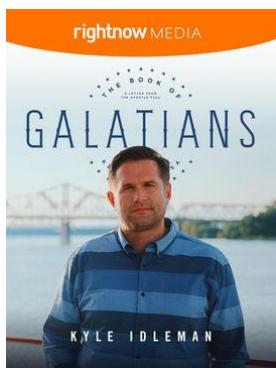
January 2026

John Newton

It is doubtful that any almost anyone anywhere does not know our hymnist's famous hymn, and many of you may also know something about his life story if you happened to see the play "Amazing Grace". His life was truly a tale of amazing grace for him personally. John Newton was born in England in 1725 and died in 1807. The years between those dates were filled with turmoil, misadventure and later God's amazing grace and forgiveness for the evil he had helped perpetuate. He went to sea with his father, a ship captain, at the age of 11, after his mother's passing a few years earlier. He eventually became a well-known slave trader and captained his own ship. Some years later he underwent a dramatic conversion at sea after a terrifying storm in 1748. Not long after that life-changing experience, he became an Anglican minister, hymn writer and a true abolitionist. He was a strong advocate against the slave trade, feeling deep remorse for his involvement in it earlier in his life, and wrote hymns, letters, and messages about the redemption and mercy of God. He was influenced by the Wesley brothers and George Whitfield and became a mentor to William Wilberforce, who eventually put an end to the slave trade in Africa shortly before Newton's death. He became a close friend to William Cowper, the English poet who was also a great influence on his writings. He was curate of his parish church in Olney, England for 16 years as well. His epitaph reads "once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was, by mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he had long labored to destroy". Other famous hymns he wrote include "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken", "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds", and "Safely Through Another Week". He is known for his quote "I Am a Great Sinner, and Christ is a Great Savior", which he whispered to a friend from his deathbed. May we be in awe of his redeemed life and know that God's Amazing Grace is for all.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Current Study...



If someone asked you to explain the gospel, what would you say? What is the good news of the Christian faith? Writing to the Galatians, Paul made it clear how easily we can be tempted to turn toward fraudulent gospels, especially those that teach we can earn God's love through our works. Though they may have the appearance of truth, they're lifeless and leave us empty in the end. In this Book of the Bible series, Kyle Idleman dives into the book of Galatians, one that contains some of the clearest explanations of the gospel in the New Testament. Through biblical study and engaging lessons, Kyle shows that true freedom is found in surrender, not self-dependence. Because our gospel is not one based on our works, but faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

- Jan. 11th – Galatians 1:1-24
- Jan. 18th – Galatians 2:1-23
- Jan. 25th – Galatians 3:1-29
- Feb. 1st – Galatians 4:1-31
- Feb. 8th – Galatians 5:1-26
- Feb. 15th – Galatians 6:1-18



HCOB Youth Ministry exists to be a loving, Christ-centered community that grows together in faith and life.

At HCOB Youth Ministry, we desire to see youth who build bridges between the church and the world through the profession of Christ as Savior, discipling others in their walks of faith, and continuing in communion with church and family.

Upcoming Calendar:

January 4th - 6-8 pm - Youth Group

January 11th - 6-8 pm - Youth Group

January 18th - 6-8 pm - Youth Group



Hempfield Church of the Brethren supports a wide group of outside ministries with the Outreach dollars that you give. Look here each month to read a bit about those ministries – perhaps get involved if the Spirit leads....



TRANSFORMING FOOD SURPLUS INTO COMMUNITY IMPACT

Blessings of Hope is a nonprofit organization committed to addressing today's global food crisis through dedicated food distribution efforts. Large corporations can efficiently donate food through Blessings of Hope to give back to the community and people in need.

Our ability to process and distribute the equivalent of 2 million meals each month empowers regional ministries, churches, disaster relief organizations, and food banks to serve their local communities by feeding the hungry and sharing the love of Jesus.



Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity right here in our community? Blessings of Hope bridges the gap between food surplus and people in need.

They believe no one should go hungry – especially when God has provided such abundance

They need many volunteers (age 10 years and older) to sort and pack fresh produce and staples such as flour, rice, and breads. They also have family friendly shifts several times each week when all ages are welcome. All children age 5 and older must be added to the schedule if they are coming to a family friendly shift. Parents/guardians are responsible for their children's behavior and safety while volunteering.

A representative from Blessing of Hope will be sharing their ministry with the Hempfield COB congregation in January. If you have further questions or are interested in volunteering, see Gary Shenk.

Leola Warehouse – Sorting & Packing Shifts

Monday 8:30 – 11:00 am

Monday 6:30 – 9:00 pm

Thursday 12:30 – 3:00 pm

Friday 6:30 – 9:00 pm



It is our desire to keep you each informed of all the things that you need to know about The Hempfield Church of the Brethren. Below are some things that are always available to you and how to access them quickly and easily. If you have other questions, please feel free to ask. We want you all in the KNOW.



Are you familiar with RightNow Media? It is a wonderful resource for Bible Studies and other materials. The church has a membership for their site and you can have access to it as well. If you'd like the information of how you can access all of this information, see Pastor Doug for login information.



Tithe.ly (formerly Breeze) is our online church management database. You can (and should) have your own login to the system that will allow you to have access to contact information for our church community and to keep your own information active and current. To create your own account, simply visit the church website at www.hempfieldcob.org and click on the Member's Directory link at the top of the page. If you already have an account and password, you can log in from there. At the bottom of that screen you'll see a place to "create an account". Follow that link to set yourself up – easy as that!. Once your account is created, you will see several tabs across the top of the page – go to the one that says "my profile". That will show you what is already loaded into Breeze for you and will give you the place to edit any incorrect information. In addition, if you'd like to have ready access to Tithe.ly from your smart phone, simply go to the App Store on your phone and download the Tythe.ly app and download the church app.. You will then be able to log into information at your fingertips. If you have questions, contact Irene in the church office.

NOTE: If you are using Breeze to send out a mass email to the congregation, please use the "Directory" tag that you'll find in the system. The "HCOB Family" tag no longer exists. Thank you!



www.hempfieldcob.org is the address for our church website. If you haven't visited there lately, you really should! There is a lot of great information to be found there.

- On the front page you will see scrolling pictures of different upcoming events and other fun times in the life of the church.
- You can follow the tabs on the top of the page to all of our social media platforms where things are posted regularly.
- There is basic information about our church.

- The "Events" tab will lead you directly to the church calendar so you can know many of the meetings and events happening in the life of the church. If you have church-wide events that you'd like added to the calendar, contact Irene in the church office.
- The center of the main page gives the church's vision statement and the pane to the left will give you the title of the upcoming service and a place to access the past services.
- If you click on "Our Church" you can find all kinds of information about our ministries and staff. There is also a link under that tab that says "Sermons". There you will find the YouTube videos of past services. The most recent service is typically posted there early in the week following.
- The "Donate" tab takes you directly to screen to be able to give directly online. The dropdown box will allow you to also designate what fund you want that donation to go to.
- The last tab at the top of the page, "This Sunday" takes you to the information and downloadable version of the bulletin for the upcoming service.
- Near the bottom of the page, there are scrolling boxes that highlight other happenings in the life of HCOB. If you click on any of the boxes it will give you update information and registration links. The Herald box will give you links to the most current and previous two issues of the newsletter.
- Basic directions and contact information can be found at the very bottom of the page.

The website is a wonderful resource for much of the information you need to know about what is happening at HCOB!!



ARE YOU ON FACEBOOK???

Help spread the word about events and topics of interest at HCOB – it's simple! When you see a post from either the main HCOB FaceBook page or the HCOB Kids FaceBook page, just take a second and "share" that post. At the bottom of the post there should be a space that says "share" – click on that and it will share that post on YOUR FaceBook page so that it now reaches everyone you know. If we all did that, the good news of HCOB could be spread far and near. Help let the community know of the great opportunities that they can be a part of. Share, share, share.

January Calendar

For more details about upcoming events and up-to-date calendar information, please visit
<http://www.hempfieldcob.org/whatsup.html>

January 2026

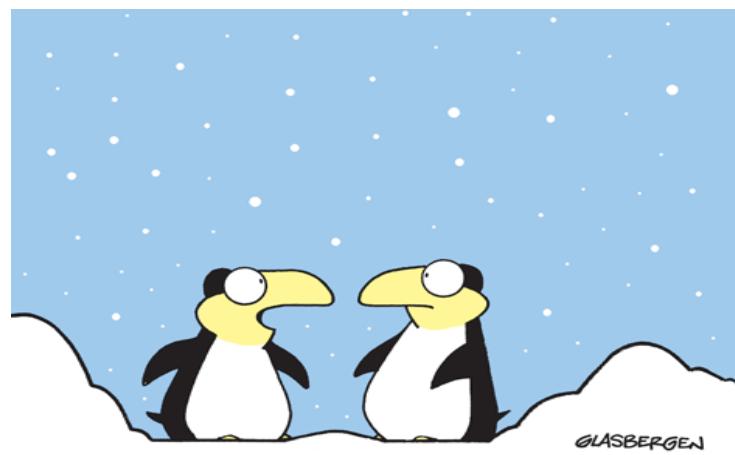
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 NO Youth Group 9:30am - 11:00am Sunday Worship	29 Doug's Day Off	30 6:30pm - 8:30pm TNT	31 8:00am - 11:00am Quilting	1 Office Closed 6:00pm - 7:00pm Praise Band Rehearsal	2 Laura's Day Off	3
4 Ministry Team Commissioning 9:30am - 11:00am Sunday Worship 6:00pm - 8:00pm Youth Group	5 Doug's Day Off	6 6:30pm - 8:30pm TNT 7:00pm - 8:30pm Deacons Meeting	7 8:00am - 11:00am Quilting 7:15pm - 9:00pm Choir Rehearsal	8 6:00pm - 7:00pm Praise Band Rehearsal	9 Laura's Day Off	10 12:30pm - 5:00pm Strite Family Event
11 9:30am - 11:00am Sunday Worship 6:00pm - 8:00pm Youth Group	12 Doug's Day Off 6:30pm Worship Team	13 6:30pm - 8:30pm TNT	14 8:00am - 11:00am Quilting 7:00pm - 8:30pm Stewards of Property 7:15pm - 9:00pm Choir Rehearsal	15 6:00pm - 7:00pm Praise Band Rehearsal	16 Laura's Day Off	17
18 Deacon Commissioning 9:30am - 11:00am Sunday Worship 6:00pm - 8:00pm Youth Sunday Funday	19 Doug's Day Off Martin Luther King Day, (Church Office Closed)	20 6:30pm - 7:30pm Education Team 6:30pm - 8:00pm Outreach Team Meeting (via Zoom) 6:30pm - 8:30pm TNT	21 HERALD DEADLINE 8:00am - 11:00am Quilting 7:15pm - 9:00pm Choir Rehearsal	22 6:00pm - 7:00pm Praise Band Rehearsal	23 Laura's Day Off	24
25 9:30am - 11:00am Sunday Worship 6:00pm - 8:00pm Youth Group	26 Doug's Day Off	27 6:30pm - 8:30pm TNT 7:00pm - 9:00pm Leadership Team	28 8:00am - 11:00am Quilting 7:15pm - 9:00pm Choir Rehearsal	29 6:00pm - 7:00pm Praise Band Rehearsal	30 Laura's Day Off Tabulator Reminder 4:00pm - 9:00pm Rohrer Family Event	31

The Hempfield Herald

Sharing the Good News of God's Work with God's People



January 2026



**“Faith means believing in things
you’ve never seen...like your feet!”**



RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

Hempfield Church of the Brethren
P.O. Box 246
East Petersburg, PA 17520