

Pastor Pete Kontra

Good News of Great Joy for All the People

The angels came to the shepherds and told them of the Good News of Jesus' birth. The shepherds were naturally terrified. I mean, if I was out in my driveway last night and a host of heavenly beings appeared and started singing and praising God, I would want to say my first reaction would be awe and praise in return. But the reality of it is that I would probably stand wide-eyed and a little scared, not sure what in this world to do.

But the angel said, "Don't be afraid."

Max Lucado has an interesting take. He says:

"Had the angel gone to theologians, they would have first consulted their commentaries. Had he gone to the elite, they would have looked around to see if anyone was watching. Had he gone to the successful, they would have first looked at their calendars. So he went to shepherds—Men who didn't have a reputation to protect or an ax to grind or a ladder to climb. Men who didn't know enough to tell God that angels don't sing to sheep and that messiahs aren't found wrapped in rags and sleeping in a feed trough."

No, the shepherds believed the angel and went to find out. And when they saw Jesus, when they realized that this was really happening, they returned to their lives praising God.

Don't be afraid, but amazed that God actually showed up as one of us that night.

If there is one thing to remember, one way to say what Christmas is all about, it is this: God is with us. As the prophet Isaiah said, in Isaiah 7:14, "*Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.*"

What once seemed hopeless and undesirable, to us God brought hope and grace made the undesirable His own children in Christ. And now we do not have to be afraid—of life, of God, of others.

God is with us. And as the shepherds did that night, we are called, not to go in fear, but to go rejoicing and glorifying God that all might see the power of His love through us.

Because He wants to reach those souls who need Him the most—and that is everyone and anyone. No matter how different we may be, God has welcomed us all in Christ. God bless you! -Pastor Pete

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From Pastor Doug

Fear & Humility

To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. 1 Peter 3:8-9

November has been full. As a church body, we've donated turkeys, participated at the Eastland Alpaca Open House, travelled to Washington D.C. to be the hands and feet of Christ, and held the Friendship Community dinner and service. In the news, we have a presidential race underway with all that that entails, bombings in Paris and Beirut, natural disasters in Mexico and Japan, and an ongoing debate of Syrian refugees spreading all over the world. People at home face increasing healthcare costs, deeper tensions in political parties-both against one another and from within-, as well as ever-so-tight schedules that seem to become fuller by the minute. Seeing everything that is happening around us, we can allow that tension, stress, a lack of control against overwhelming circumstances control how we act and react to the new and often skewed information coming into our lives. But, that is not how we are called to live. Now, more than ever, we need to continually rely on the Spirit given us by God. We must continue to strive to build one another up, walk with one another, and pray for one another. And, most importantly, we must learn to live as God's ambassador to those around us – friend, family, co-worker, and enemy – in order to fulfill the life that Christ first called us to. We are called to bless those around us, for we have been blessed and will continue to be. We must learn to walk in faith and humility to all those who are far from God. It seems easier to do this with brothers and sisters in Christ because we stand on common ground. Our character becomes honed when we learn to do this with those who do not know Christ. Jesus was persecuted, insulted, questioned, betrayed, and physically beaten for his very life. If we truly want to live as he lived, we must not be surprised when the same happens to us. Rather, we must learn to call people to repentance and draw them closer to him. To follow Jesus was never meant to be easy. But anything of great value never is. Do not become afraid or overwhelmed by the world. Rather, in humility, turn to God to seek help and wisdom as we strive toward loving him and our neighbor. I'm grateful for each brother and sister we serve with at Hempfield. I encourage you: continue to pray, continue to grow, continue to go into the world around you. God has done great things, but this is only the beginning!

Mission Possible

Pastor Kent Rice

It's Not Just What You Do, It's How You Do It

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. – Philippians 2:1-2

Several times in the past week God has really impressed upon me that *how* you do what you do is just as important (if not more so) than *what* you do. To make this point, He put some pastors in my path who were involved in lots of Kingdom stuff but had terrible attitudes, at least while I was with them. I got to thinking about pastors I have known and I tend to recall the kind of person they were much more readily than their activities or accomplishments. Going to funerals is much the same—people tend to say things like, “He/she loved to laugh, and would make time for people and react with patience when I would mess up.”

So which is better? To:

1. Give a hungry person a sandwich while having a poor attitude; or
2. Have a pleasant attitude but not make any effort to feed the poor.

I guess I would pick #1...but not by much. It's not enough to “do stuff”—even *good* stuff. We are called to love and serve with the same attitude that Christ had (Philippians 2:5). Everyone has good days and bad days, but people are hungry for the Good News of Jesus Christ. So let's make sure that they see a little Savior in us as we serve!

Praying Attention



Never underestimate the work of the Holy Spirit as you pray. Praying Believers, with the help of the Holy Spirit, tip the scale for victory on God's side in the great war with Satan. The Holy Spirit has power to teach us how to pray and guides the believer in prayer. When we come into God's presence to pray, we can recognize our ignorance of what or how we should pray and cast ourselves on Him to direct our prayers, to lead out our desires, and guide our speaking of them.

HCOB Adult Sunday School

† **THE CHRISTIAN HOMEBUILDERS** classes will meet in the library. We study the International Lesson. We have three or four regular teachers who each teach about one Sunday a month. We have several socials a year with the majority of our class participating. Our offerings are used for special needs within our congregation or community. The contact people are Ruth Johnson and Millie Hoffman.

December 6
December 13
December 20
December 27

Teacher: Denny Bushong
Teacher: Pete Cope
Teacher: Jim Kettering
Teacher: TBA

† **THE SEEKERS**—Please join us for teaching and discussion that will help us to delve deeper into our Christian faith and life. We meet on the second floor, 3rd door on the right from the steps nearest the narthex. We are studying the scripture the pastors are preaching on each week. If you would enjoy discussing the sermon scriptures with others please join us. Rich Bushong is the contact person.

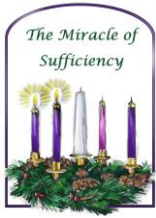
December 6 Exodus 16:2-35
December 13 Ephesians 2:1-10
December 20 Luke 2:1-10
December 27 Ephesians 2:17-22

Teacher: TBA
Teacher: Tom Fritz
Teacher: Pete Kontra
Teacher: Rich Bushong

† **CONVERSATIONS**—Conversations Class meets in the Conversations classroom on the second floor each Sunday during Sunday School hour. All are welcome to come. We are continuing our study of the early church and its formation by studying the book of Acts. December will feature a look at Peter and the formation of the church – the rising persecution, Philip in Samaria, Saul's conversion, the Gentiles included in God's plan, and the persecution that happened in Jerusalem – all found in Acts 8 -12. Geoff Davis is the teacher.

Messages in December

December 6



The Miracle of Sufficiency — *Exodus 16:2-35*

Pastor Kent Rice Preaching

Like the manna with which God fed the Israelites, God miraculously provides us with what we need—no more, no less. Which Messiah are you waiting for this Christmas—the one who obliterates your problems or the one who walks with you through them?

December 13



God's Gift of Life—*Ephesians 2:1-10*

Pastor Geoff Davis Preaching

We often walk through our daily lives, numb to what's actually happening around us. Every day, we see killings in local towns, senseless acts of violence, and stories of corruption. Nothing seems to shock us anymore. We've even become numb to Christmas, commercializing the most significant gift God has ever given to us – the birth of his Son – so the shopping frenzy and the extended season can make the actual birth of Jesus Christ seem anticlimactic – an 'afterthought' – an "Oh, yeah, it's Jesus' birthday, too." Paul reminds us that *we were dead*, living the way we were, before the gift of his Son, before our faith. God's great love, rich mercy, and grace have saved us. How do we respond? How do we 'wake up'? How do we live?

December 20



We Have Heard and Seen—*Luke 2:1-20*

Pastor Pete Kontra Preaching

The shepherds praise God for what they had heard and seen. Jesus was born, just as the Lord told them He would be. They had great joy, just as the angels said they would. Jesus' birth brought salvation, just as God promised—we have heard it and seen it and now must proclaim it!

December 27



Built Together as God's Temple—*Ephesians 2:17-22*

Pastor Doug Hinton Preaching

As followers of Jesus Christ, we come from many paths, life experiences, and backgrounds. It seems strange that people would gather together to worship a God they cannot see. But under One Spirit, we've moved from strangers of one another to friends, family, and fellow workers in the mission of Christ. God has done great things through His body the church! And this is just the beginning...

December Ministry Schedules

December 6
December 13
December 20
December 27

NURSERY—SS

TBA
Colette Root
Doris Wright
TBA

NURSERY—WORSHIP

Laura Myer
Marg Zurin, Diane Garber, Jen Baker
Sue Brubaker, Sallie Hoppert, Kensey Rice
Betty Cox, Sarah Fisher, Libby Rannels



December 6
December 13
December 20
December 27

SOUND TECHNICIANS—8:00

Dick Caldwell
Rich & Jamie Bushong
Dave Schott
Matt Markey

SOUND TECHNICIANS—10:15

Blaine Garber & Rich Bushong
Matt Markey & Rich Bushong
Mitchell Barnes & Rich Bushong
Matt Markey & Rich Bushong

December 6
December 13
December 20
December 27

WORSHIP LEADERS—8:00

One of the pastors
Ray O'Boyle
Joel Kettering
Tom Fritz

WORSHIP LEADERS—10:15

TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA

SPECIAL MUSIC



December 6
December 13
December 20
December 27

CHOIRS/SPECIAL MUSIC

Sanctuary Choir
Sanctuary Choir
Sanctuary Choir
TBA

VIDEO TECHNICIANS—10:15

Christian Layman
Dave Bendit
Doug Howard
Ben Johnson

December 6
December 13
December 20
December 27

DEACON GREETERS

Ruth Johnson
Gladys Metzler
Wes Bowers
Tom Connelly

JNH GREETERS

Faye Rohrer
Butch Nachbar
Tom & Carolyn Fritz
Jean & Jerry Barger



OFFERING TABULATORS

Dave Dum, Rick Schaidle



Advent & Christmas@ HCOB



Operation Christmas Blessing

We are ready to begin phase 2 of Operation Christmas Blessing. Beginning November 29, any interested family can take a HOPE ornament from the tree in the narthex and take it to the member of the Evangelism Team who will be in the narthex after the 8:00 service and before and after the 10:15 service. You will receive \$100 to bless someone, a group of people, or an organization in whatever way you wish this Christmas season. Then it will be time for phase 3. On the back of the ornament, describe how you used the money to share blessings and hope. Then bring the ornament back to the church by Christmas Eve and hang it on the tree.

Children's Advent Calendars are available in upstairs near the children's classrooms. Please pick one up to use with your family as you count down the days until Jesus' birthday celebration!



Family Christmas Celebration

Come join us for Christmas in Bethlehem on Sunday, December 6th. We will begin at 3pm with crafts, games, music and snacks in "Bethlehem". We will wrap things up by gathering together in the sanctuary for a story and some caroling. It will be a wonderful way to get the Holiday Season going. Enjoy being with friends and family. Open to ALL ages!!! And it is FREE! Interested in helping with or donating crafts and snacks for Christmas in Bethlehem? Sign up in the narthex!

Christmas Love Offering-- This year's Christmas Love Offering will be equally distributed between the Landisville Food Bank, COBYS, Power Packs and EPFO. Special envelopes will be available on the narthex table starting **December 6**. You can use the envelopes to give your offering on any Sunday in December and on Christmas Eve. Checks can be made out to "Hempfield Church of the Brethren."



Team Gingerbread House Competition!

Join us on **Wednesday, December 9 at 6:30 pm** for our annual Team Gingerbread House Competition! Arrive ready to work as a team to build an all candy Gingerbread "House"... or church, barn, scene, Nutcracker, ... let your mind go wild! It just has to all be made out of candy, graham crackers, and icing with a Christmas theme. Participants are asked to bring some of their favorite candies to share with the group and a box of graham crackers to build your structure. Icing will be provided. Prizes will be awarded!



Free Christmas Concert! Sunday, December 20, 6:00-7:00 PM. Join local pianist, Brad Minnig, for a joyful time of celebrating Christmas music in the sanctuary. Intermission at 6:30.



HCOB Christmas Eve Service—7:00 PM

Our whole church family is invited to worship together on Christmas Eve this year! Please join us for this joyful and family-friendly service as we celebrate Christ's birth with music, choir anthems, candlelighting and more.

HCOB Family News

NEWS REPORTERS WANTED! Are you aware of some news for our NEWSWORTHY bulletin board in the narthex? Please contact Gerrie Hurst or place it in her mailbox. Thank you.

HCOB Kids News



HCOB Kids celebrate Jesus!

We welcome December with a huge hooray!!! Please join us for family activities, such as, Christmas in Bethlehem on December 6th. We will begin at 3pm with crafts, games and other activities in the gym. At 4:30, we will move into the sanctuary for a skit and Christmas carols.

On December 9th, we will have our annual *Gingerbread House Competition*. We will begin at 6:30pm. Bring a team, your favorite candies to share and some fun ideas of what you'd like to build. We are looking for a Christmas theme! Graham crackers and icing will be provided. **THERE WILL BE PRIZES AWARDED!!!**

What a wonderful time of year to think about the greatest gift of all...our dear Savior, Jesus Christ! Be sure to take time out of your crazy days to focus on the true Reason for the Season.

Huge blessings!!!

HCOB Youth News

- January 15-17: Senior High District Retreat
- February 12-15: HCOB Youth Winter Retreat

DECEMBER 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Pastor Doug on vacation 7:00 PM Deacons Meeting	2 Pastor Doug on vacation 6:30 PM Praise Band Practice 6:30 PM Young Adult Fellowship & Study 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	3 Pastor Doug on vacation 9:00 AM Ladies Bible Study 7:00 PM Prayer Experience	4 Pastor Doug on vacation 7:00 PM WORDD Christmas Program	5 Pastor Doug on vacation
6 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 10:15 AM Blended Worship 3:00 PM Family Christmas Celebration 6:30 PM Young Families Fellowship & Study 6:30 PM Youth Cell Group	7 7:00 PM Education Team	8 9:00 AM Sewing Circle 12:00 PM Silver Singles 6:30 PM Fellowship & Hospitality Team 7:00 PM Stewards of Property 7:00 PM Worship Team	9 6:30 PM Gingerbread House Competition 6:30 PM Praise Band Practice 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	10	11	12
13 2-Cent-A-Meal Offering 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 10:15 AM Blended Worship 6:30 PM Youth Cell Group	14	15 6:00 PM Servant Team Social	16 HERALD DEADLINE 6:30 PM Praise Band Practice 6:30 PM Young Adult Fellowship & Study 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	17	18	19
20 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 10:15 AM Blended Worship 6:00 PM Brad Minnig Christmas Concert 6:30 PM Young Families Fellowship & Study 6:30 PM Youth Cell Group	21	22	23 6:30 PM Praise Band Practice 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	24 Office Closed 7:00 PM Christmas Eve Service	25 Office Closed	26 Pastor Pete on Vacation
27 Pastor Pete on Vacation 8:00 AM Traditional Worship 10:15 AM Blended Worship 11:30 AM Youth Grab 'N Go Lunch Fundraiser 6:30 PM Youth Cell Group	28 Pastor Pete on Vacation	29 Pastor Pete on Vacation	30 Pastor Pete on Vacation 6:30 PM Praise Band Practice	31 Office Closed Pastor Pete on Vacation		

For more details about upcoming events and up-to-date calendar information, please visit

<http://www.hempfieldcob.org/whatsup.html>

**Toon of
The Month**



**Toon of
The Month**

December

RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

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