

Creekside Church of the Brethren Connection

December 2025



*“Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”*

The four Sundays before Christmas are the season of the Christian year known as Advent. In Latin, Advent means “coming,” and this is a time of preparation for the coming of Christ—not at the end of time in clouds of glory on the throne of heaven, but coming to earth as God in the flesh, a baby born to human parents in some challenging circumstances.

The theme for Advent services at Creekside is Emmanuel: God With Us. Each Sunday we will consider a different biblical name of Jesus, including Prince of Peace, Messiah, and Light of the World. Many of these names are rooted in the Old Testament and Jewish expectations of a ruler and Savior who would rescue their nation from political occupation and oppression. These names carried specific expectations, and not all of these human expectations were met in the way in which people expected. That is a good lesson for us as we long for Jesus and long for our world to be different.

A resource for me in planning these services has been *Unwrapping the Names of Jesus* by Asheritah Ciuciu. The Advent devotional includes family resources and study guides which we will link for you if you wish to do further study on your own. In her introduction the author writes, “I must remind myself each year who Jesus is and why His birth is so miraculous—not because my mind doesn’t know, but because my heart ceases to be amazed.” Advent is a time to re-visit the wonder of Jesus’ birth, and the reason for all the build-up of this season.

Special thanks to Diane Lund and the Worship Team who have been planning worship and music, and will again be decorating the Gathering Area and Worship Center to usher in this season of Advent. We have ordered Advent devotionals from Brethren Press, *Word Among Us*, by John Fillmore. Copies are available now at Creekside; please take one per household. There are enough to share with an interested friend or neighbor. These devotionals will take us from November 30 through to Epiphany on January 6.

God With Us is nothing new: God was with us yesterday and will be with us tomorrow. But God With Us is nothing to take for granted, either. For those who enter this season feeling sad or lonely or lost, an awareness of God’s presence may be the only thing they can hang on to. It is the gift which will never leave us, whatever our circumstances, whatever the season.

May you be blessed by God’s presence with us this Advent.

Pastor Rosanna

PASTOR'S REPORT

Thank you to Board chair Deana Ward and all of you who expressed your appreciation for me as your pastor at our November 16 congregational meeting. The check from the Ministry Excellence Project is very much appreciated, but your goodwill is what I value the most.

My gratitude to the Gifts and Placement Team for the many calls they made this fall, and to Julie Birr, Eric Houser and Grace Mishler for their willingness to serve on the Church Board. Deana Ward has done a fine job leading the Board in 2025, and Mike Kauffman is inheriting some significant charges to carry forward in 2026. I am grateful to Scott Harney and Tim Morphew for their six years of service on the Board.

Pathfinder Team (see report in this *Connection*) has worked hard and brought a proposal which the Board accepted for ministry in the coming 3-5 years. We have been fortunate to work with consultant Colin Saxton, and may have a continuing relationship with him through Everence.

My past month has been busy with preparations for Advent, with some cookie-baking thrown in. I know that December is a busy month for many people, but the preparation for December is the time when I feel most pressed. I hope to have some days coming up to enjoy time with family for Thanksgiving, and to make Christmas memories with grandchildren. December is a month when I try to visit members of Creekside who cannot attend in person. Many of them watch our livestream (and tell me about it!); I am grateful for that ministry and for our Media Team.

Tim and I do not have plans to travel after Christmas this year. We will be happy to celebrate Christmas with our family and church family, and to look toward the new year at home in Indiana.

Blessings to you and yours this Christmas season—
Pastor Rosanna

FROM THE CHURCH BOARD CHAIR:

Well folks, I'm looking forward to Thanksgiving at my son's house in Indy. All the grandchildren and my three sons, two daughters-in-law and one husband. Sounds like a Christmas song, doesn't it? I hope for all of you that your Thanksgiving is full of love, family, friends, and good food.

I'm sure with the Cookie Walk around the corner many of you are busy making candy, cookies, and goodies for the church to sell. The Followers of Faith team truly appreciates your efforts. This fundraiser helps pay for many outreach projects through the year. This year we have gift certificates for the Cookie Walk available for you to purchase. These make a great gift for your friends or family so they have goodies to share or to lessen their cookie-making load. Contact the office if you're interested in purchasing a gift certificate for the Cookie Walk.

The board would like to welcome our new members Julie Birr and Grace Mishler. The board is updating a job description so that continuing and new board members understand what is expected of a board member. We are also saying goodbye to two seasoned board members. Scott Harney and Tim Morphew, we thank you for your years of service! You brought wisdom, insight, and made a difference to our church. Creekside is better for having had each of you on the board.

Pathfinder Team gave the board their recommendations after 6 months of fact-finding, consulting with experts, and questioning and interviewing the congregation. The board accepted their recommendations and discussed implementing some of the items. Thanks to the Pathfinder Team for their hard work and thoughtful recommendations.

The board also discussed having someone speak to the congregation about responding to an active shooter in our building. We will set this up after the first of the year. We also plan to review other aspects of our existing Safety Protocol.

Many blessings to all—
Deana Ward, Church Board Chair

COOKIE DECORATING



You are invited to stay after Sunday School on November 30 for a light lunch and to decorate sugar cookies for the Cookie Walk. Deana Ward is providing the cookies, icing, colors, and ideas for painting with sugar. These cookies are some of the most sought-after by our Cookie Walk guests. Thank you to Deana, and thanks for your help!

Pastor Rosanna, for Followers of Faith



The Cookie Candy Walk is on Saturday, December 6, 8:00 -11:30 am

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS EVE CHOIR

Singers welcome! We will rehearse at 10:00 am on Friday, December 19 at Creekside to sing on Sunday, December 21 during worship, and for the Christmas Eve service. We'll meet before worship on the 21st and before the Christmas Eve service to run through music.

Please contact Pastor Rosanna if you are planning to sing! We are working on some great music, and it will be available to pick up in the Worship Storage room by Sunday, November 30th.

Pastor Rosanna, for Worship Team

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Christmas Eve is Wednesday, December 24. You, your families, friends, and neighbors are welcome to a service of carols, readings, and candlelighting at 7:00 pm at Creekside. This service is the highlight of the Advent season, and for some of us, a highlight of the church year.

Thanks to our ushers, musicians, and worship leaders who make this service possible, and make it a special time of worship. God bless you.

Pastor Rosanna, for Worship Team

LOVE OFFERING 2025

We will be supporting local, regional, and international ministry with our 2025 Love Offering. 100% of donations will be shared between the following organizations:

- Susanna's Kitchen: hot meals for unhoused people in Elkhart
- South Sudan: disaster relief for civil war through Church of the Brethren
- Servants at Work: accessibility ramps for low income homeowners
- SPA Women's Ministry: recovery for abuse and addiction for women in Elkhart

We will have a representative from each of these organization share with us during worship. SAWs volunteers are hoping to construct one or two more ramps before the end of the year—see Mike Kauffman if you're interested in helping. Deana Ward and Beth Sollenberger are coordinating cookie-baking for SPA ladies at Creekside on Friday, December 19. Come and bake and decorate cookies and hear the choir rehearse!

The Church Board, at the recommendation of Pathfinder Team, is looking for ways to strengthen relationships with ministry partners. The Board will match congregational giving to the Love Offering up to \$16,000! This money will come from funds currently held as bequest or grant money. Thank you for donations over and above your regular giving. Mark "Love Offering" on the memo line of your check or offering envelope, or on the online memo section on the Creekside website.

God bless you! Thank you for your generosity.

Pastor Rosanna for Church Board

WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

Wintry weather is a part of living in N. Indiana—or SW Michigan! We are grateful to our Property Team for making Creekside's parking lot and sidewalks as safe as possible, but depending on the timing of frozen precipitation, we may need to cancel services on a Sunday morning.

If we are canceling services, that decision will be made no later than 8:00 am Sunday morning. We will decide sooner if the forecast allows us to do so. Here's how to get information about a cancellation:

- Check the front page of Creekside's website: creeksidecob.com
- Watch WSBT or check their list of closings online.
- We will send a One Call Now message by phone, text, and email. If you do not currently receive messages through One Call Now, you must opt in to be included on a weather cancellation list. You may do this by contacting the Creekside office and providing the contact information you want us to use. We can create a list which is used only for weather cancellation notifications.
- Call Pastor Rosanna at home. I'd prefer this not be your first option. If we are having worship, I may not be available after 8:30 am.

If we ARE having worship on a snowy day, here are some things to be aware of:

- We will try to provide valet parking; look for the green flag in front of the stone pillars. Pull up to the front doors and someone will park your car for you.
- If conditions do not seem safe in your area, please do not venture out.
- You are always welcome to watch the livestream at [YouTube.com/CreeksideCoB](https://www.youtube.com/CreeksideCoB)—our Media Team does a great job. (If worship is cancelled, there will not be a service to watch).

Please contact the office (before the next snowstorm, if possible!) if you have questions.

Thank you and stay safe! *Pastor Rosanna, for Property Team and office*

THANK YOU

To say Scott and I are looking forward to the end of 2025 would be an understatement.

January started off with our home flooded from a malfunctioning washing machine, which led us to living in a hotel for a month and moving to an apartment for 6 months. In February, my dad was confined to a wheelchair from his excruciating back pain. Watching a loved one in pain is unbearable. After many trips to doctors, we walked with dad through surgery in June. In mid June my Mom was diagnosed with cancer and we spent months going to various doctors trying to navigate the medical industry. In July, Scott's dad started declining in health and we spent most of our time back and forth to Rockville. On August 17th, we lost him. After months of appointments with my mom we lost her on September 18th.

We look back on the year and wonder how we made it through. I'm sure we are not the only people in the world to go through these rough times, in fact I'm positive of it. But while you're in the midst, it sure does feel like you are the only ones. But God is faithful, he places little rays of sunshine in our path. Our new grandson, an epic family vacation, our jobs which allowed us to spend an unlimited amount of time with our passing parents, our children who have been with us through it all. So how did we make it through? It was you! From restaurant gift cards while we were in the hotel, invitations to dinner, prayers, cards of encouragement, a place to stay, text messages at just the right time, visiting us 3½ hours away at Scott's dad's funeral, cards, food, hugs, food, flowers, food... did I say food?

Philippians 2 says, *"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. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."*

Creekside has shown all of these and more to us over the past year. It is with our most humble and heartfelt gratitude that we Thank You for all you have done for us.

Here's to 2026! *Scott & Angi Harney*

PATHFINDER REPORT

The Pathfinder Team would like to thank you, the congregation, for your participation and comments during our “small group” meetings which included a Zoom meeting in October. Coordinating meetings with various participants this summer became a challenge and delayed our progress.

Keeping in mind our mission of **Seek, Celebrate & Share**, one recurring sentiment expressed in all the groups was that outreach and sharing within the community is very important to Creekside. To paraphrase one response, **“Keep doing what we do well.”**

Other issues expressed were:

- Remaining financially strong.
- Utilizing current resources in a way that invites future generosity and possible bequest gifts.
- Adapting the congregation's structure to ensure it aligns with the mission and does not lead to over-dependence on the pastoral staff.

Based on what we heard from you, the team has a proposal for consideration by the Church Board:

- Continue to grow our partnerships with community agencies to meet community needs (e.g. CCS, women's shelters, SAWS, food banks, Seed to Feed gardens, etc.)
- Fund small group opportunities for young adults (20+ in our congregation); childcare provided.
- Provide more family activities for the community. (Family Jamboree, Fall Festival, etc.) Fund the activities and not charge to participate, making it available to all in the community.
- Develop publicity strategies (effective use of new sign and develop a brochure highlighting who we are and the activities we offer).
- Provide small group opportunities to connect (e.g. Bible Study, prayer groups, service projects or collaboration with external groups like AMBS for Bible study).
- Investigate the possibility of hiring someone to assist Pastor Rosanna in communicating with Elim Ministry and working together with the Hispanic community in Elkhart.
- Develop a strategy for future leadership.

Steve Barton for Pathfinder Team: Pauline Arnold, Karen Grant, Anne Griffith, Larry Ford, Tim Morpew

JOIN A CHILDREN'S DISASTER SERVICES VOLUNTEER TRAINING IN SPRING 2026

Learn how to bring comfort and care to children following human-caused and natural disasters. Children's Disaster Services (CDS) is preparing to hold four volunteer training events in February and March next year. Contact Deb Kauffman if you have any questions.

Training dates, locations, and coordinator contact information:

Feb. 20-21—First Presbyterian, **Beaufort, SC** (Chris Appl-Walsh, 404-989-5306, capplwal@gmail.com)

Feb. 20-21—Oakland CoB, **Bradford, OH** (Toni Custer, 937-423-1841, tcuster77@gmail.com)

Feb. 27-28—Dove of the Desert, **Glendale, AZ** (George Cushman, 928-460-2462, gccushman@cox.net)

Mar. 14-15—La Verne CoB, **La Verne, CA** (Kathy Benson, 909-837-7103)

A NOTE FROM EVERENCE

Everence Financial is hosting a **FREE educational Medicare webinar** on Mon., Dec. 8, at 6:30 pm. Register here: www.everence.com/everence-events/michiana/december-medicare-webinar

As you approach retirement, you may have some questions about moving to Medicare and Social Security. During this online workshop, Everence discusses the important details you need to know about retirement income and transitioning to Medicare, including: enrollment details and deadlines; budgeting for health care and income in retirement; your options if you continue to work; Social Security - when do I start?; prescription drug coverage; plans that supplement Medicare.

Larry Ford, Everence Representative for Creekside.

2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN FORT WAYNE

As you may know, next year's Conference, June 28-July 2, will be held just a few miles away in Fort Wayne. Plans are well underway, and much help is needed for the many volunteer positions. These opportunities include age-group helpers (infant/preschool through 5th grade), onsite registration, worship service ushers, hospitality, and silent auction volunteers.



Of all of these, the organizers are most in need of **ushers** – 35-40 for each of the five worship services. This year, with so many local congregations, we hope that the Sunday evening service might be ushered exclusively by Indiana and Northern Ohio folks. Manchester University grads – any and all years – are also being asked to consider ushering at a second service (day to be determined). (If you happen to fall into both of these categories, you are more than welcome to sign up for both!)

If you are interested in ushering or any of the other volunteer opportunities, please contact Joel and Donna Kline, this year's onsite coordinators (from Beacon Heights): *soph_mini@yahoo.com*; 630-337-1926. Let's make a great Indiana showing!

(Please note that if you are interested in attending JUST worship on any day, you do not need to register for Conference. Single day registration is also available for a nominal fee.)

2026 Annual Conference Volunteer Opportunities

June 28 – July 2

Grand Wayne Convention Center, Fort Wayne

Hospitality – This year hospitality efforts will include (1) staffing at several tables (with games, puzzles, etc.) at the Convention Center, (2) greeters at the three conference hotels in downtown Fort Wayne (Sunday only), and (3) meal hosts – a new program where locals will take a group of up to 6 attendees to a meal in a downtown restaurant, providing an opportunity for food and fellowship – everyone will pay for their own meal.

Ushers for Worship – For opening worship on Sunday evening, we would like to have all of the ushers be local. You are also encouraged to sign up to usher during other services, including one for Manchester graduates. Training will be provided.

Age Group Activities – Volunteers are needed to help with our preschool children (including infants), as well as K-2nd grade and 3rd-5th grade. Will include onsite programming as well as field trips.

Children's Lunch Prep – Sack lunches will be provided for multiple age groups; food purchase, preparation, and/or delivery are all options for volunteers.

Onsite Registration – Assist the Coordinator with full-conference and daily registrations, as well as hand out nametags, etc. to pre-registered attendees.

Silent Auction – Provide those interested in bidding on Auction items with a Bidder number; answer questions as needed.

First Aid – Doctors, PAs, and nurses are needed to staff the onsite First Aid room, as well as serve one or more shifts on-call. **A CURRENT MEDICAL LICENSE IS REQUIRED.**

Observers – This is a new position, created for the 2025 Conference. Observers watch for Border Patrol or Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, alerting Conference administrators if Federal agents have entered the building. Each shift will last two hours, and a commitment to three shifts is required. Training will be provided prior to the start of Conference.

Each of these positions will be scheduled in shifts of one or more hours, making it easy for you to contribute just the amount of time you have available. If you are interested in any of these volunteer positions, please contact Joel and Donna Kline at 630-337-1926, *soph_mini@yahoo.com*.

The Bee Line



If you recall, in November's Bee Line I mentioned that the bees were getting anxious. Well, most of them got **too** anxious and left! Fortunately, they left a lot of honey behind. In November, Ron and I helped Tom and George pack up the hive boxes and frames to take to their "processing center." There was one hive left that Tom prepared for winter.

Deana, Irene & I went to Tom's "farm" the next week to help (or more like watch) George uncap and spin the frames that contained honey. (See photo)



(Pictured L-R: Deana, George, Irene & Tom)

We got more honey than we thought we would and we have honey for sale at church for the congregation. We

will have some available for the Cookie Walk, too.

We are indebted to our "rescuers," Tom Keb and George Schafer, for stepping in to help Creekside continue the *Bee Ministry* during our struggles. They are cleaning up all of the boxes and frames this winter, bring them back next spring and stock them with bees to get us off on the right foot to keep the program going until we have more participants from Creekside.

We've recently "adopted" a new member of the Bee Team. **Betty Snyder** has spent a lot of time washing containers and bottles and generally cleaning up after us in the past couple of years. It's time her efforts are recognized.

I'll leave you with an inspiring note for the season. The symbolic *seeds* we planted last spring with the **Teen Growers group** from **CCS** may have germinated. Erica Lint contacted me to say that they were inspired by their visit here and now have access to some land and want to start their own beekeeping program. She asked if we had beekeeping supplies that we might sell or donate. The team will be discussing this soon. I see this as an example of **Seeking** ways to connect with our community and **Sharing** our knowledge and values.

Have a blessed Christmas Season and remember to **Bee Kind**.

Steve Barton, for the Bee Team: Ron Nicodemus, Deana Ward, Irene Rassi, Kurt Vardaman, Scott Harney, Betty Snyder

DECEMBER

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fri	Sat
	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	30	31			

BIRTHDAYS

- 5 Ellis, Donald
- 10 Metcalf, Bryce
- 12 De Pue, Stephen
- 12 Kauffman, Deb
- 13 Ehret, Vicki
- 22 Neal, Roger
- 25 Bollinger, Grace
- 29 Stutsman, Mike

ANNIVERSARIES

- 15 Kauffman, Mike & Deb
- 20 Foland, Ted & Lynne
- 28 Rodgers, Rick & Valerie

EVENTS

- 3 Deacon meeting, 2:00 pm
- 5 Cookie Walk set-up, 9:00 am
- 6 Cookie/Candy Walk, 8:00-11:30 am
- 9 Brunch at Angel's, 10:45 am
- 12 Game Night, 7:00 pm
- 19 Cookie making with SPA
- 24 Christmas Eve service, 7:00 pm



The Creekside Connection

A publication of Creekside Church of the Brethren



Address:
60455 CR 113
Elkhart, IN 46517-9183

Phone:
574-875-7800

Website:
www.CreeksideCoB.com

Pastor:
Rosanna McFadden: CreeksidePastor@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant & Editor:
Marita Barsoda: CreeksideCoB@gmail.com

The Creekside Connection is published monthly to keep members and friends informed of church programs and to report news about the people of Creekside Church.

