

Creekside Church of the Brethren Connection

February 2026



Random Acts of Kindness

*But when you give to the poor and do acts of kindness,
do not let your left hand know what your right
hand is doing. Matthew 6:3*

Brandom Borem, a member of Creekside's Outreach Team, is a huge fan of random acts of kindness. I'm not sure of all the reasons: it could be because National Random Acts of Kindness Day is February 17, a week after Brandon's birthday; it could be because Brandon has received his share of unkindness; it could be because giving to the poor is an important part of Brandon's faith. Whatever the case, I am grateful for Brandon's reminders at Outreach Team meeting, and also a bit puzzled at how to convert this to a specific activity at Creekside.

As we see in this statement of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount, acts of kindness and charity are not thoughtless. Although many of us try to conduct ourselves regularly with charity toward others, I believe Jesus' words are about intentionally extending ourselves for others, particularly those who are in need. What I believe this text speaks to is not keeping score. Not only should we refrain from holding grudges and keeping track of all the hurts and slights which have come our way, we should also dispense kindness and charity without maintaining a quota. This is good for the receivers, for sure, but it also changes us as givers. Instead of giving being something we *do*—perhaps grudgingly and not any more than we're obligated to—being a giver is something we *are*. It means being generous and kind in thought, word and deed; it means developing the capacity to receive from others; it means that this is who we are for more than one day of the year.

We practice this kindness with each other in the family of faith to prepare us to go into the world—a place which is often unkind. I have been the beneficiary of many acts of kindness from my church family, and that is a lifeline in difficult times. The heart at the top of this page is an image of one of a host of fleece hearts created by Maryann Zerbe and others last year to share with members and friends at Creekside. Baskets of these hearts were available to pick up and hold onto or share with others. I still have one of these hearts in my office, where it reminds me of Maryann and the paradox that the things which we value the most are the things which we should share with other people.

Thank you for sharing kindness and God's love this month. Our church family, our community, and our world need kindness. We all need to receive God's love.

May you be a blessing to someone this month. In Christ—
Pastor Rosanna

PASTOR'S REPORT

Thank you for the prayers, cards, and expressions of sympathy and care following my mother's death on January 13. If you wish to see her obituary, you may find it linked on the front page of Creekside's website: creeksidecob.com. If you received this Connection electronically, the link is also included in the body of that email. The obituary is not posted elsewhere. Her Celebration of Life service will be Saturday, February 14 in La Verne, CA. Thank you for your continued prayers for me and my family as we prepare to travel and have that time of closure. I am blessed to have a caring and supportive family and church family. Thanks to Worship Team and Diane Lund for their planning and leadership as my schedule has evolved.

We have, and continue to have, many members and friends, close to home and farther away, who need healing. Although many are already improving, your support and the care of Creekside's deacons is welcome.

I am grateful for the work and leadership of Creekside ministry teams. The Church Board has re-organized with Mike Kauffman as Board chair and Kurt Vardaman as assistant chair. They are following up on the recommendations from the Pathfinder Team and will be discussing how to implement those recommendations in the next few years; they will be assisted by existing long-term ministry teams, and may also call some short-term teams. Everence staff Colin Saxton has agreed to continue his consulting with us. SAWs volunteers have built two ramps already in 2026; there are already requests for more. Mike Kauffman has been heading up an effort to install a furnace in the home of a ramp recipient. Canned soup is continuing to pile up in the Gathering Area. Good work!

The first day of Lent is February 18, Ash Wednesday. You are invited to observe Shrove Tuesday/Mardi Gras on Tuesday, February 17 with a Pancake Supper at Creekside, *more details to come*. You may pick up the Brethren Press Lenten devotional, "God's Wondrous Creation," by Carol Davis that evening. We will have several guest presenters during Lent, including staff of SAWs (Servants at Work) from Indianapolis, and Bryan Jackson of SonSet Solutions on March 15. We look forward to Bryan's sharing—SonSet Solutions is a non-profit which provides technology-based solutions to advance the gospel worldwide.

With gratitude and blessing—

Pastor Rosanna

FROM THE CHURCH BOARD:

We welcomed new members Julie Birr and Grace Mishler at our meeting this week. We reorganized with Mike Kauffman as the Board Chair and Kurt Vardaman as Vice Chair. Roger shared the treasures report and highlighted the fact that we now owe less than \$60,000 on our mortgage.

We looked at all 7 of the Pathfinders Recommendations and their suggested strategies. We looked at how some of these recommendations may fit with current long term teams, some may be best handled by the board, or we may create ad-hoc groups to work on them.

We reviewed Creekside's By-laws and Constitution, which are over 10 years and 18 years old. We will look at these further at our next meeting which will give the board a chance to see if revisions and corrections are needed to bring them up to date.

We looked at some possible ways and needs to bring our Safety/Security measures up to date. We will try to schedule a professional to meet with us at our next meeting.

Rosanna shared plans for her mother's memorial and her travel to California for that memorial.

For the good of Creekside we heard an update on getting a new furnace for the Boze family that we built a SAWs ramp for.

Mike Kauffman, Church Board Chair

OUTREACH GIVING

Thank you for your giving to Outreach during Advent and into January! The total from the congregation for the 2025 Love Offering was \$11,000; that amount will be matched with designated funds from the Church Board for a total of \$22,000. Each of the following organizations will receive \$5500: SPA Women's Ministry, South Sudan Project of the Church of the Brethren, Servants at Work, and Susanna's Kitchen.

Thanks to the Onward/Overcomers Class for sponsoring the Soup and Baked Potato Lunch on January 18. They raised \$693 to support the Vietnam Project and the work which Grace Mishler began to prevent and treat blindness in infants in Vietnam.

SAWS APPRECIATION DINNER



Creekside is happy to host a dinner for SAWs volunteers from St. Joseph, Elkhart, Marshall, and Kosciusko counties. Volunteers are invited to Creekside on Friday, Feb. 6 at 6:30pm; the dinner will be catered by SAWs. Please let Mike Kauffman know by the end of January if you plan to attend.

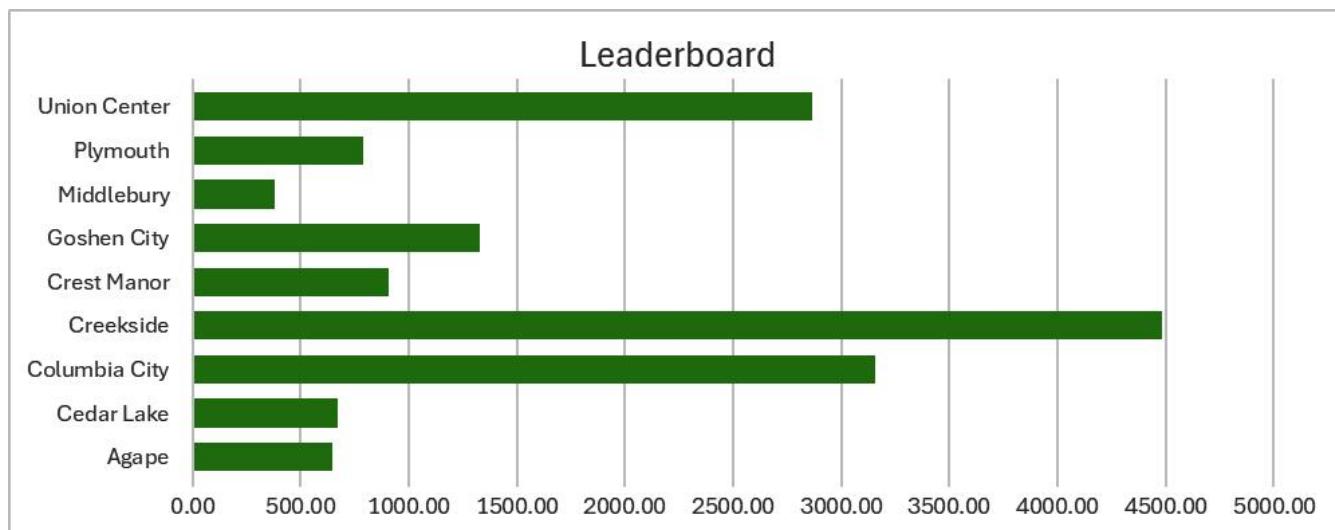
SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER

Tuesday, February 17 is the day before the beginning of Lent. This day is known as Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) or Shrove Tuesday. It was a day to clean out the fat and the eggs from the pantry in preparation for fasting for Lent; pancakes became a traditional meal in some places. You are invited to Creekside for pancakes and sausage on February 17. Come eat between 4:00 and 6:00 pm; gluten- and dairy-free options available. Friends and neighbors are welcome! You may pick up a Lenten devotional after you eat.

SOUPER BOWL STANDINGS

Thank you for your donations to the Souper Bowl! Creekside is collecting canned soup through Feb. 8. Below is the count from N Indiana district.

As of Jan. 16, total donations for the district are 15,238.40 ounces (119.05 gallons). We're getting up there! The standings are:



SOMETHING NEW FOR OUR YOUNGER ADULTS:

A special time to gather at Creekside, after church on Sunday, Feb 1 during the Sunday School time. Meet over a steaming mug with a plate of goodies and talk about what ways you might enjoy spending time as a group, doing something relaxing & fun together in the upcoming months, while the kids are supervised at church in their own fun activities. *Nursery care will be provided on Feb. 1 for those too young for Sunday School.*
Contact Judy De Pue or Jessica Prahl with questions.

A NOTE FROM EVERENCE

When you prepare your taxes this year (or look them over from your preparer) you will notice a new "Senior Deduction". In addition to your standard deduction, those over 65 and/or blind will receive another \$6000 deduction. This deduction will be automatic and will occur each year through 2028. The new senior deduction does phase out based on your income, but the income range is \$75,000 - 175,000 if single and \$150,000 - 250,000 if married filing jointly.

Remember, you may use a Qualified Charitable Deduction (QCD) to make donations to Creekside. A QCD is money taken from your IRA account and may be used to fulfill all or part of your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). Doing that will count as part or all of your RMD, but importantly QCD money won't be taxable. Open up new roads of generosity with gifts of a range of assets, and Everence can help you coordinate, manage and administer those gifts into real and lasting impact. Consider gifts beyond cash – securities, real estate, life insurances, farm commodities, collectibles and more.

Larry Ford, Creekside Everence Advocate

The Bee Line

On behalf of the Bee Team, I again want to thank the members of the congregation who purchased honey in December as well as others who have helped financially toward continuing the Bee Ministry. We had slightly over \$700.00 in sales in December and we also donated jars of honey to the church as well as a few given to volunteers.



It will be a few months before warm weather arrives and there probably won't be much to report until then, but we look forward to seeing more activity at the apiary in the Spring. Speaking of activity, consider becoming a helper and learning more about the bees this year.

In the meantime... stay warm and remember to **Bee Kind.**
Steve Barton, For the Bee Team

FEBRUARY

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

BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Zerbe, John
- 9 Bode, Deb
- 9 Hendricks, Graham
- 10 Borem, Brandon
- 12 Blacka, Barry
- 12 Blacka, Daisy
- 15 Vance, Christi
- 15 Metzler, Becky
- 21 Vance, Cody
- 24 Birr, Julie

ANNIVERSARIES

- 21 Randall, Tim & Shelly

EVENTS

- 3 Outreach Team, 6:00 pm
- 4 Worship Team, 11:00 am
- 6 SAWs dinner, 6:30 pm
- 10 Brunch at Angel's, 10:45 am
- 11 Finance Team, 2:00 pm
- 13 Game Night, 7:00 pm
- 17 Pancake Dinner, 4-6 pm
- 18 Ash Wed.; Lent begins
- 19 Church Board, 6:30 pm
- 25 Christian Ed, 6:00 pm



The Creekside Connection

A publication of Creekside Church of the Brethren



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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.

