



**Mariners: To be announced**

**Women's Fellowship: The next meeting is Tuesday, December 19, at 8:30am.**

**EVERY MONTH SCHEDULE**

Sunday School	Sunday	9:45 a.m.
Informal Worship	Sunday	10:45 a.m.
Worship Hour	Sunday	11:00 a.m.
Commissions	2nd Thursday	6:00 p.m.
General Board	2nd Thursday	7:00 p.m.
Fellowship Singers	Thursday	4:15 p.m.
Mariners	3rd Friday	1:00 p.m.
Women's Fellowship	3rd Tuesday	9:30 a.m.
Food Bank	1st Sunday	9:30 a.m.

The "Social Group" meets at 1:00 p.m. every Friday (except the 3rd Friday of the month when the Mariners meet) for dinner, which will be a potluck in the Fellowship Hall, including fellowship and games. Everyone is invited to participate. Please join us.

**The Mirror - December 2017**

The Mirror is published once a Month. Information deadline is the 15th of the month.



Empire Church  
of the Brethren

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FROM THE  
PASTOR

# Merry Christmas 2017!

Pastor's who move every few years have an advantage. They can use their stories over again at their new church. After twenty years, soon to be here for me, I have told you most all of my stories. So what is it I can say this year that will inspire you to **have a most blessed Christmas**? How about the best **Christmas Present ever**? What is the best Christmas present you ever received? For me it was a Roy Roger's Outfit. Hat, shirt, pants, chaps, and two six shooters. I hopped on my pony, after my sister out grew him and got a real horse, and off I went chasing the bad guys. It was wonderful!

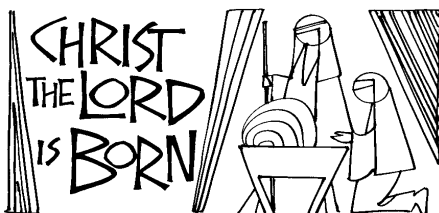
But I do know a better Christmas Present. **God and I as one**. Or, being one with **The One**. There is nothing better than that. I read a book about a singer who started out in Rock and Roll then got saved and then had a breakthrough to a oneness with God. The title of the book was *No Compromise*. The point being, one has to **give God 100%** then **God gives His 100% back**. And what a place that is. Every Sunday I pray that the service will inspire you to seek that closeness with God.

**That** is what Christmas is all about. Closeness with **God the Father, Jesus the Son, and God's Holy Presence** in our lives. *"I bring you good news of great joy"*. The angels knew just how wonderful the news was. The creator of the universe was coming to earth to live and love, as does the **Father Himself**. Bringing with him the gift of eternal life. But even more than that, **Jesus brought The Father** with him. For he and the Father are one. Jesus bridged the gap that had developed between creator and creation. He came to show the love of the Father, then to pay the price in order that there be no separation between God and us.

What could be better than that? A free gift that unites the forces of the universe with us, guides our thinking, and directs our path to righteousness and glory, now and forever. If, and I mean if, and when we ever grasp the full meaning of this gift of God, we will be a new creation.

Obedience will no longer be a task, but it becomes a privilege and an honor. We will desire that we do nothing that will bring the separation between us and God back again. One with God now and forever! How wonderful is that? Oh, that's right unless you're there already you have no idea how wonderful it is. Well, He offers His wonderful gift to each of us continually. Why not take Him up on His offer and see how He can bring you into oneness with Himself? What do you have to lose? Nothing of value that is for sure. It seems like it might be but that is the lie of our adversary. God trades bondage for freedom. Death for life. Misery for peace and happiness. And it all began and begins in the acceptance of His wonderful gift that we celebrate each December 25<sup>th</sup>. Is your heart and life open to what Father God has for you this year? He alone is the giver of perfect gifts. Don't you want your perfect gift for 2017? It is waiting for you.

*Father I thank you for your perfect gift which can be new and exciting each time we open ourselves to receive it into our lives. Bless us with the blessing of the Son and your precious presence. Take our lives and make them yours. Give us the gift of life that you have for each of us this Christmas season.*



*Amen*  
*Pastor John*



## NEW YEAR'S EVE

After church on Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>, join the Mariners for soup, salad, and games.

### 'T WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE JESUS CAME



'Twas the night before Jesus came and all thru the house,  
Not a creature was praying, not one in the house.  
Their Bibles were lain on the shelf without care  
In hopes that Jesus would not come there.

The children were dressing to crawl into bed,  
Not once ever kneeling or bowing a head.  
And Mom in her rocker with baby on her lap,  
Was watching the Late Show while I took a nap.

When out of the East there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash!



When what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here.  
With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray,  
I knew in a moment this must be THE DAY!



The light of His face made me cover my head.  
It was Jesus! Returning just like He had said.  
And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth,  
I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.

In the Book of Life which He held in his hand,  
Was written the name of every saved man.  
He spoke not a word as He searched for my name;  
When He said, "It's not here," my head hung in shame.



The people whose names had been written with love,  
He gathered to take to His Father above.  
With those who were ready He rose without a sound.  
While all the rest were left standing around.



I fell to my knees, but it was too late;  
I had waited too long and this sealed my fate.  
I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight;  
Oh, if only I had been ready tonight!

In the words of this poem the meaning is clear,  
The coming of Jesus is drawing near.  
There's only one life and when comes the last call,  
We'll find that the Bible was true after all.

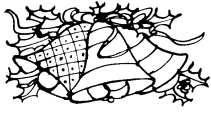


### OCTOBER 2017 STATISTICS

Average Attendance: 38	
Giving	
Local:	\$6,951.00
Sunday School:	83.00
Youth:	0
Messenger:	39.50
Mariners:	105.00
Other:	149.80
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$7,328.30</b>

### PRAYER CONCERNS

- Pat Benton** – Back Pain 
- Jean Davisson** – Loss Of Glen
- Lindy & Lois Frantz** – Loss Of Their Home
- Marilyn Snider** – Nerve Pain
- Glenn Stanford** – Infection
- Larry Ward** – Mobility & Health Issues



## A TABLECLOTH emailed to us many years ago

The brand new pastor and his wife, newly assigned to their first ministry, to reopen a church in urban Brooklyn, arrived in early October excited about their opportunities. When they saw their church, it was very run down and needed much work. They set a goal to have everything done in time to have their first service on Christmas Eve.

They worked hard, repairing pews, plastering walls, painting, etc. and on December 18 were ahead of schedule and just about finished. On December 19 a terrible tempest - a driving rainstorm hit the area and lasted for two days. On the 21st, the pastor went over to the church. His heart sunk when he saw that the roof had leaked, causing a large area of plaster about 6 feet by 8 feet to fall of the front wall of the sanctuary just behind the pulpit, beginning about head high. The pastor cleaned up the mess on the floor, and not knowing what else to do but postpone the Christmas Eve service, headed home. On the way he noticed that a local business was having a flea market type sale for charity, so he stopped in.

One of the items was a beautiful, handmade, ivory colored, crochet tablecloth with exquisite work, fine colors and a cross embroidered right in the center. It was just the right size to cover up the hole in the front wall. He bought it and headed back to the church.

By this time it had started to snow. An older woman, running from the opposite direction, was trying to catch the bus. She missed it. The pastor invited her to wait in the warm church for the next bus 45 minutes later. She sat in a pew and paid no attention to the pastor while he got a ladder, hangers, etc., to put up the tablecloth as a wall tapestry. The pastor could hardly believe how beautiful it looked and it covered up the entire problem area.

Then he noticed the woman walking down the center aisle. Her face was like a sheet. "Pastor," she asked, "where did you get that tablecloth?" The pastor explained. The woman asked him to check the lower right corner to see if the initials, EBG were crocheted into it there. They were. These were the initials of the woman, and she had made this tablecloth 35 years before, in Austria.

The woman could hardly believe it as the pastor told how he had just gotten the tablecloth. The woman explained that before the war she and her husband were well-to-do people in Austria. When the Nazis came, she was forced to leave. Her husband was going to follow her the next week. She was captured, sent to prison and never saw her husband or her home again.

The pastor wanted to give her the tablecloth; but she made the pastor keep it for the church. The pastor insisted on driving her home, that was the least he could do. She lived on the other side of Staten Island and was only in Brooklyn for the day for a housecleaning job.

What a wonderful service they had on Christmas Eve. The church was almost full. The music and the spirit were great. At the end of the service the pastor and his wife greeted everyone at the door and many said that they would return. One older man, whom the pastor recognized from the neighborhood, continued to sit in one of the pews and stare, and the pastor wondered why he wasn't leaving. The man asked him where he got the tablecloth on the front wall because it was identical to one that his wife had made years ago when they lived in Austria before the war and how could there be two tablecloths so much alike?

He told the pastor how the Nazis, came, how he forced his wife to flee for her safety, and he was supposed to follow her, but he was arrested and put in a concentration camp. He never saw his wife or his home again for all the 35 years in between.

The pastor asked him if he would allow him to take him for a little ride. They drove to Staten Island and to the same house where the pastor had taken the woman three days earlier. He helped the man climb the three flights of stairs to the woman's apartment, knocked on the door and he saw the greatest Christmas reunion he could ever imagine. True Story

## **DATES TO REMEMBER IN DECEMBER**

### **ANNIVERSARIES**

17<sup>th</sup> – Travis & Candice Sheldon  
30<sup>th</sup> – David & Cheryl Leib

19<sup>th</sup> – Marvin Hilkey  
Milton Young

22<sup>nd</sup> – Skip Powell  
25<sup>th</sup> – Jesus

### **BIRTHDAYS**

06<sup>th</sup> – Marilyn Snider  
08<sup>th</sup> – Kylie Welch  
10<sup>th</sup> – Donnie Wyatt  
17<sup>th</sup> – Bev Welch

27<sup>th</sup> – Derek Wyatt  
28<sup>th</sup> – Thomas Guthrie  
30<sup>th</sup> – Richard Ward  
Rochelle Slaybaugh



*If we have missed wishing you a happy birthday or a happy anniversary, we may not have your dates.  
Please turn in your name and dates to the church secretary.  
You are important to us!*



# DECEMBER 2017 PRAYER CALENDAR



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1] Mark 4:35-41	2] 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
					Sarah Adams Gerald Allinson Alex & Cathy Arellano Molly Arellano Donna Ayres	Elaine Azevedo Ben Baker Ken Barklow Shirley Beekley Don & Pat Benton
3] Matthew 1:18-25	4] 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15	5] Isaiah 9:2-7	6] John 17:15-19	7] Ephesians 1:3-7	8] Isaiah 40:1-5	9] Matthew 6:25-34
Pastor & Teachers Wanda Bollinger Pauline Bert Michael Best	Earleen Cadruvi & Family Ron Cadruvi & Family Helen Campbell	Phyllis Caudle Linda Carter & Ivy Ashley Cooksey & Family Naomi Covey	Arlene Cupp Karen Davis & Family Gary & Charlotte DeHart	Chuck & Wendla Dyer & Family Jim & Sue Eikenberry Zack Fear	Pam Franklin & Cherith Franklin Kerby & Heather Frantz	Lyndall & Lois Frantz Lloyd Fullmer Jerry Goodman Thomas & Patricia Guthrie
10] John 1:1-14	11] Luke 18:1-8	12] Isaiah 61:8-11	13] Matthew 14:22-33	14] 1 Corinthians 1:26-29	15] Ecclesiastes 5:13-20	16] Luke 2:1-20
Pastor & Teachers Betty Harms & Family Clark & Melanie Hartman	Jack & Rosetta Hartsfield Marvene Hilkey Ryan & Kelly Heiny & Family	David & Evelyn Hurlbut Kevin & Deborah Hurlbut & Family Norman Johnson	Randy & Teri Johnson & Family Darlene Kennard Sheryle Knott & Family Eunice Lasater	Mary Lou Lee David & Cheryl Leib JoAnn Lusk Norma Lutes Gerri Masellis	Ric Mason Edna May Miller Josephine Moore Stacy Nelson Suzanne Neptune	Kelly Olsson Clifford Parker Brad Parrish & Family Tommie Parrish
17] Luke 2:36-38	18] 1 John 4:7-12	19] Galatians 6:7-10	20] Luke 22:39-46	21] Job 42:1-4	22] 1 John 1:5-9	23] Isaiah 49:8-16
Pastor & Teachers Daymon & Sarah Peterson Dennis Peterson Marge Peterson	Eileene Petros Oscar Phan Jason & Kirsten Piazza & Family	Skip & Kathleen Powell Jeff Price Jeremy & Erica Price & Family	Joel & Susan Price & Family John & Kathy Price Nathan Price & Family Kay Qualls	Mike & Laura Radcliffe & Family Mary Rariden Charlotte Rice & Family	Lana Royer Vance Shafer Vern & Patty Shafer Troy & Joy Slaybaugh & Family	Marilyn Snider Tony & Laura Snyder & Family Gayle Stanfill Glen Stanford
24] / 31] Matthew 5:14-16 Genesis 1:26-31	25] Matthew 5:43-48	26] Psalm 16:7-11	27] Psalm 107:1-8	28] Colossians 3:12-17	29] Jeremiah 29:10-14	30] Philippians 1:20-22
Pastor & Teachers Loretta Stein & David Jerry & Amy Stokes & Family Jerry & Judeen Stokes	J.J. & Soleena Stome & Family Veronica Sudeman & Family Arthur Syverson	Mark & Amber Syverson & Family Mike Syverson Natasha Towe	Carolyn Trent John & Sue Vacca Tim & Catherine Vaughn & Family	Linda Ward & Family Bev Welch Roger & Cynthia Welch & Family	Josh & Heather Winchester & Family	Derek & Laura Wyatt & Family Don & Susan Wyatt Donny Wyatt



**PRAYER**  
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# DECEMBER 2017 ACTIVITIES CALENDAR



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1]  Social Group  <b>NO MEETING</b>	2] <b>FIRST SATURDAY</b>  9:00am - 2:00pm
3]  Yearly Council Meeting   Coffee Hour	4]	5]   EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY  9:00am-Noon	6]   7:00 am Government Commodities Distribution	7]   4:15pm Christmas Choir	8]   1:00pm Social Group at Huckleberry's 3191 Geer Rd. Turlock	9]
10]   Love Feast in Fellowship Hall following Worship	11]	12]   EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY  9:00am-Noon	13]	14]   4:15pm Christmas Choir 6:00pm Board Meeting	15]   1:00pm Mariners Potluck at the Church	16]
17]   Christmas Coffee Hour	18]	19] EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY 9:00am-Noon  8:30am Women's Fellowship Meeting at the Fruit Yard	20]	21]   4:15pm Fellowship Singers	22]   1:00pm Social Group at Su Casita Waterford	23]
24]/31]  Christmas Eve Service 6:00pm  New Year's Eve Party following church	25]   <i>Christmas Day</i>	26]   EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY  9:00am-Noon	27]	28]   4:15pm Fellowship Singers	29]   1:00pm Social Group at Velvet Creamery McHenry Ave.	30]

## EVERY SUNDAY

9:45am Sunday School  
10:45am Informal Worship  
11:00am Worship Hour