

# The Simeon Spirit

SIMEON UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH

173 North Center Street, Gratz, PA

*January 2025*

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## **We Belong Together**

One of my favorite episodes from the old Andy Griffith Television show was when the Women's Historical Society discovered that a living descendant of a Revolutionary War hero was living right there in Mayberry. The news generated excitement and curiosity throughout the town as people made plans for recognizing the hero's relative. Barney Fife, of course, twisted his own family tree to the point that he put himself in line for the honor. The rest of the townspeople felt special just because someone among them was related to a hero.

However, everyone was shocked when the person was finally revealed. A careful analysis of the genealogical records determined that the hero's descendent was none other than, Otis Campbell, the town drunk. Despite suggestions to find a "substitute Otis" for the presentation, the real Otis showed up for the ceremony true to form. When the ladies finally give him the plaque, Otis holds it in his hands for a moment, and then decides instead to give the plaque to the town. He tells them, "Just because you're the descendent of a hero doesn't make you one too. So, I would like to present this plaque to the town of Mayberry, to which I am just proud to belong."

Good for Otis. Perhaps his lifestyle needs improvement. Yet to recognize that which makes his life good is not his drinking, or being a descendant of some war hero, but belonging to a community of people who care for their own. Perhaps taken at heart, this event could be the beginning of a new chapter in the life of a town drunk.

Everybody wants to feel like they belong somewhere. Without a loving family and friends, life can be very lonely and meaningless. When we are alone, with whom can we share our joys and sorrows? When we are afraid or plagued with worry, who will be there to comfort us and tell us everything will be alright?

On January 12 this year, we will celebrate the Baptism of our Lord. This might not have been evident at the time, but Jesus' baptism was more than an initiation into ministry. It was the beginning of a new family in which Jesus would be head of the household. With each baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, another member joins. Today, there are about 2.4 billion members of this family.

Yet, our most intimate Christian experience revolves around the church in which we belong. When we baptize a new child of God, we make them kin to each and every member of that congregation. It is by the wisdom of God that the individual congregation has become the center point of the Christian experience. Saint Paul wrote that each congregation is a microcosm of the

body of Christ, and each person is an essential member of that body. By this structure, relationships of love and respect develop between its members. You belong in a complex web of family and friendship.

I am reminded of the imagery of a jig saw puzzle. When you pour the pieces on the floor, all you can see is a pile of mixed colors and shapes without form. But put the puzzle together and you discover a beautiful scene of snowcapped mountains reflected in a bright blue lake surrounded by trees and grass so green it seems like you could reach in pluck a blade.

Sometimes we might feel like we are a part of a zig saw puzzle all mixed up. Yet we know the beauty of a church on the hill named Simeon United Luther Church and inside beautiful people living in the Spirit of the Beloved One, Jesus Christ. A place we can all say we are proud to belong to.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

*Pastor Greg*

### **CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS FROM, DECEMBER 2024**

**OLD BUSINESS:** (MI Foundation)- nothing new other than assuming no decision will be made till in the new year.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

1. **Worship and Music**- December 22, Sunday School Christmas program, - December 24, Christmas Eve Service, - December 29, Service of Christmas Carols, - January 5, Installation of council members, - January 11, Undecorate the church at 9 am.
2. **Parish Education**- Program practice Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> at 9:30am.
3. **Stewardship and Evangelism** – None
4. **Social Ministry** – – Had 12 families for November foodbank. Lisa also delivered to people that did not have a ride to get to the foodbank. The Link Bank donated turkeys for the foodbank.
5. **Youth** – Youth group Holiday party is on Monday December 30 at 5:30 at the church.
6. **Church Property** – None
7. **Budget and Finance** – Got another \$700.00 in donations for the organ fund.
8. **Fellowship** – On Sunday January 12, 2025 will be a breakfast for lunch covered dish after worship. The reorganization of the committee's will follow the covered dish lunch.
9. **Mutual Ministry** – None

**New Business** – Discussion was had on the children's bulletin insert. It was decided to only put a few copies in the narthex every week for those that would like one instead of every bulletin. Matt thanked everyone for their service as council members.

**The Pastor's Time** – Has ordered gifts for thew kids for the children's sermon, but Amazon has not yet shipped them. Going to find something else for the gift to give them.

**2024 GIVING**

\$129,774.20

**2024 EXPENSES**

\$135,329.52

**Difference between YTD Giving & YTD Expenses \$-5,555.32**

**{For General Operating Fund}**

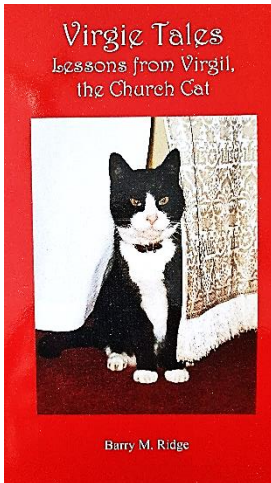
**FOOD COLLECTION** is the first Sunday of every month. The Food Bank is open on the second Saturday of every month, from 9 to 11 a.m.

**ITEMS NEEDED FOR THE FOOD BANK** are instant mashed potatoes, cereal, canned fruit, ketchup, & soup. Thanks for your continued support.

### **DAILY DEVOTIONALS**

The Daily Devotionals for (January - March, 2025) are available in the narthex.

Pick yours up or have someone get them for you.



### **NEW BOOK FEATURES VIRGIL, THE CHURCH CAT**

Many of you will remember Virgil, the cat who lived at Simeon from 2007-2011. Pastor Barry Ridge has recently published a collection of the newsletter articles that appeared monthly during that time, entitled *Virgie Tales: Lessons from Virgil, the Church Cat*. The book includes many color photos of our beloved, diminutive, cross-eyed, tuxedo feline friend.

A copy of the book is available in the library located in the Sunday School hallway.

Virgie Tales is also available for purchase from Amazon



**Members** – Aspen Keys, Brian Mace, Tim Daniel, Julie Ferster, Janet Rumfelt, Barbara Klinger, Marie Lahr, Clair & Vivian Engle

**Northern Dauphin Nursing & Rehab.** - Kenneth Mace

**Polk Apartments** - Martha Koppenhaver, *Charles Schoffstall*

**Friends & Family** – *Dean Harner, Ester Stoltzfus, Scott Klinger, Jon Bower, Sherry Johns, Jeff Latsha, Linda Sitlinger, Randy Rebeck, Dorothy Deitrich, Kathie Dresel, Dorothy Lettich Martin, Steve Dagen, Jim Troutman*

### **FELLOWSHIP ON JANUARY 12**

It's time to kickstart the New Year with a Fellowship dinner held during the committee reorganizational meeting on January 12th. The food theme is breakfast for lunch. Dust off those overnight casserole recipes you've been wanting to try and bring it for all to share. (The good news is, if it's good it'll be all eaten and if it isn't good, by the time everyone takes a taste it will be all eaten!). The dinner is for all, not just those on committees but you're more than welcome to join one. I know the Fellowship committee is always looking for workers. Hope you consider joining!

# SERVING IN JANUARY & FEBRUARY

January 5, 2025  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after  
Christmas w/ *Holy*  
*Communion*

Greeter: Lisa Perkins  
Reader: Doris Flynn  
Usher: Lynn Schadle  
Glasses: Sharon Erdman

Altar: Dennis Barge

January 12, 2025  
Baptism of  
Our Lord

Greeter: Sandra Matter  
Reader: Becky Hoover

January 19, 2025  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday After  
Epiphany

Greeter: Anna Coleman  
Reader: Barbara Klinger

January 26, 2025  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday After  
Epiphany /*Youth Sunday*

Greeter: Youth  
Reader: Youth

February 2, 2025  
Presentation of  
Our Lord w/ *Holy*  
*Communion*

Greeter: Darlene Novinger  
Reader: Dennis Barge  
Usher: Mike Hartman  
Glasses: Lisa Perkins

Altar: Doris Flynn

February 9, 2025  
5<sup>th</sup> Sunday After  
Epiphany

Greeter: Dave Strohecker  
Reader: Mike Hartman

February 16, 2025  
6<sup>th</sup> Sunday After  
Epiphany

Greeter: Lynn Schadle  
Reader: John Novinger

February 23, 2025  
7<sup>th</sup> Sunday After  
Epiphany

Greeter: Dennis Barge  
Reader: Virginia Moore

## SIMEON UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH

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YouTube channel: Simeon Church, Gratz PA

ELCA Website: [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)

Lower Susquehanna Synod: [www.lss-elca.org](http://www.lss-elca.org)

## “VOICE OF SIMEON” RADIO MINISTRY SPONSORS

### January 2025

January 5 – Buffington/Reed Funeral Home

January 12 – Willing Workers

January 19 – James A. Reed Funeral Home

January 26 – The Erdman Family

We thank our local businesses and individuals that sponsor our “Voice of Simeon” Radio Ministry. It can be heard each Sunday morning at 7:30 a.m. on WQLV-98.9 FM.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:



**Wednesday, January 1 – Happy New Year**

**Monday & Tuesday, January 6 & 7 – Little Hands first days back to School**

**Sunday January 5 –Worship Service w/Holy Comm. 10:15a.m. /Food Collection /Installation of new council members**

**Monday, January 6 – Epiphany of our Lord**

**Saturday January 11 - Food Bank Open 9-11 a.m.**

**Sunday January 12 - Worship Service 10:15a.m. /Fellowship Time with a covered dish after worship; Committee Reorganization.**

**Thursday, January 16 - Council Meeting 7 p.m.**

**Friday, January 17 - Deadline for February Newsletter!!!!**

**Sunday January 19 - Worship Service 10:15a.m.**

**Monday January 20 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

**Sunday January 26 – Youth Sunday Worship Service 10:15a.m.**



**Sunday, February 2 -Worship Service w/Holy Comm. 10:15a.m. /Food Collect /Ground Hog Day**

**Saturday, February 8 - Food Bank Open 9-11 a.m.**

**Sunday, February 9 - Worship Service 10:15a.m.**

**Wednesday, February 12 – Abraham Lincoln’s Birthday!!**

**\*\*\*\*\*Little Hands Valentine’s Day parties Wed. & Thurs Feb. 12 & 13\*\*\*\*\***

**Friday, February 14 - Happy Valentine’s Day!!**

**Sunday, February 16 – Worship Service 10:15a.m**

**Monday, February 17 – Happy President’s Day!!**

**Thursday, February 20 – Council Meeting 7 p.m.**

**Friday, February 21 – Deadline for March Newsletter!!!!!!**

**Saturday, February 22 – George Washington’s Birthday!!**

**Sunday, February 23 – Worship Service 10:15a.m**



January 2- Sandra Matter

January 4- Kristy Daniel

January 9- Dave Strohecker

January 10- Sharon Erdman

January 11- Matthew Ferster

January 14- Becky Hoover

January 15- Jeff Erdman

January 17- Barb Williard

January 17- Anna Coleman

January 18- Nathen Steinbach

January 26- Braxton Barge

January 27- Julie Ferster

January 29- Marlin Erdman

January 30- Charles Mazur

# Music Notes



## Another Year Is Dawning 560

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Psa. 90:12

Frances R. Havergal, 1874

AURELIA 7 6 7 6 D.  
Samuel S. Wesley, 1864

1. An - oth - er year is dawn - ing! Dear Fa - ther, let it be,  
2. An - oth - er year of mer - cies, Of faith - ful - ness and grace,  
3. An - oth - er year of serv - ice, Of wit - ness for Thy love,

In work - ing or in wait - ing, An - oth - er year with Thee;  
An - oth - er year of glad - ness, In the shin - ing of Thy face;  
An - oth - er year of train - ing For ho - lier work a - bove;

An - oth - er year of prog - ress, An - oth - er year of praise,  
An - oth - er year of lean - ing Up - on Thy lov - ing breast,  
An - oth - er year is dawn - ing! Dear Fa - ther, let it be,

An - oth - er year of prov - ing Thy pres - ence all the days.  
An - oth - er year of trust - ing, Of qui - et, hap - py rest.  
On earth, or else in heav - en, An - oth - er year for Thee. A - men.

## Another Year Is Dawning

1874

In many churches, the first Sunday of the year wouldn't be complete without singing Frances Ridley Havergal's great "Another Year Is Dawning." Its words reflect the deep consecration that marked her poems. Frances considered every New Year's Day a never-to-be-missed opportunity of rededication to Christ, and several New Year's hymns came from her pen.

This particular poem, "Another Year is Dawning," was written as a prayer for the beginning of 1874. Frances composed it near the end of the old year and had it printed on a specially designed greeting card to send to friends. The caption said, "A Happy New Year! Ever Such It Maybe!"

As it turned out, Frances herself needed that prayer, because just a few days later she suffered a stunning disappointment. She was hoping to be launched as an author in America, and her agent in New York had made reassuring promises. Then came a letter she thought would bear the first of many royalty checks. Instead, it reported that her publisher had gone bankrupt in the Stock Market crash of 1873.

But as Frances had only recently turned all her

affairs over to the Lord, she bore the crisis with peace, writing to a friend:

I have just had such a blessing in the shape of what would have been only two months ago a really bitter blow to me...I was expecting a letter from America, enclosing thirty-five pounds now due me, and possibly news that [my book] was going on like steam. The letter has come, and, instead of all this, my publisher has failed in the universal crash. He holds my written promise to publish only with him as the condition of his launching me, so this is not simply a little loss, but an end of all my American prospects....

I really had not expected that He would do for me so much above all I asked, as not merely to help me to acquiesce in this, but positively not to feel it at all, and only to rejoice in it as a clear test of the reality of victorious faith which I do find brightening almost daily. Two months ago this would have been a real trial to me, for I had built a good deal on my American prospects; now "Thy will be done" is not a sigh but only a song.

**Taken from the book "Then Sings My Soul" By Robert J. Morgan**

# Chefs Corner



## Creamy Beef and Bowtie Pasta

1-12 oz bowtie pasta  
½ cup onion finely chopped  
1 cup heavy cream  
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1 cup frozen peas  
1 lb. ground beef  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 cup beef broth  
1 cup mozzarella cheese  
Salt and pepper, to taste

Cook the bowtie pasta according to package directions until al dente. Drain and set aside. In a large skillet, cook the ground beef over medium heat until browned. Drain any excess fat. Add the chopped onion to the skillet and cook until softened. Add the minced garlic and cook for an additional minute. Pour in the beef broth and bring it to a simmer. Let it reduce slightly.

Stir in the heavy cream and simmer until the sauce thickens. Add the cooked pasta to the skillet and toss to coat. If using, add the frozen peas and cook until heated through. Stir in the grated Parmesan cheese and shredded mozzarella cheese until melted and combined.

## Cheese Danish

2 cans of crescent rolls  
1 cup sugar  
1 egg  
Glaze: ½ cup powdered sugar  
½ tsp. vanilla extract  
2 8-ounce packages of cream cheese  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1 egg white  
2 Tbsp. milk

Preheat oven to 350\* degrees and grease a 13x9-inch baking pan. Lay a pack of crescent rolls in the pan and pinch the openings together. Beat the cream cheese, sugar, vanilla, and egg together until smooth. Spread the mixture over the crescent rolls evenly and then lay the second pack of crescent rolls on top of the cheese mixture and brush with egg white. Bake for 35-45 minutes until the top is golden brown. Top with glaze after cooling for 20 minutes.

## Garlic Ritz Snacks

1 box Ritz crackers  
1 tsp. garlic powder  
¼ tsp. salt  
½ cup butter, melted  
½ tsp. dried parsley  
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat your oven to 300\*. In a small bowl, mix together the melted butter, garlic powder, dried parsley, and salt. Arrange the Ritz crackers on a baking sheet in a single layer. Brush each cracker with the garlic butter mixture, then sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese. Bake in the preheated oven for about 10 minutes, or until the crackers are golden and crispy. Remove from the oven and let cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes before serving. These make a perfect snack or appetizer.

## Asparagus Stuffed Chicken Breast

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts  
1 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded  
1 tsp. paprika  
2 Tbsp. olive oil  
12 asparagus spears, trimmed  
1 tsp. garlic powder  
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat your oven to 375\*. Lay each chicken breast between two sheets of plastic wrap and gently pound them to an even thickness. Season each chicken breast with garlic powder, paprika, salt, and pepper on both sides. Place 3 asparagus spears and a generous sprinkle of mozzarella cheese on one end of each chicken breast. Roll up the chicken breast, securing the filling inside with toothpicks or kitchen twine. Heat olive oil in an oven-safe skillet over medium-high heat. Sear the stuffed chicken breasts for about 2 minutes on each side until they turn golden brown. Transfer the skillet to the preheated oven and bake for 20-25 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through.

## **THE 2025 FLOWER & BULLETIN**

sponsor charts are in the narthex. Please help by sponsoring them. If no one sponsors them the money comes out of the general fund which is not budgeted.

## **THE 2025 OFFERING ENVELOPES**

are now in the narthex. Please pick up yours, your family, and anyone else you might see. *They will not be mailed.*

## **RADIO SPONSORS ARE STILL NEEDED**

for the following dates in 2025. March 23, March 30, May 25, June 22, June 29, July 27, August 31, September 21, September 28, October 19, November 30, & December 21. If you sponsored a Sunday in the past, we did not carry individuals over, only Business's. If you would like to sponsor any of these dates, please see Tracy Bixler. Cost is \$50.00 a Sunday.

## **NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS**

The newly elected council members are: Mike Hartman, Darlene Novinger, John Novinger, Will Rogers & Andrew Romberger. Cemetery Board: William Reed and Kenneth Wiest. David Ferster was also elected to serve the rest of the vacant seat term on the cemetery board. They will be installed on Sunday, January 5, 2025, during worship. There will be a short meeting after worship to reorganize the council and elect new officers.

## **YOUTH SUNDAY**

Youth Sunday will be on Sunday, January 26, 2025 as our youth participate in the worship service. Plan on joining us for this special service. Invite friends and neighbors to join us. Special thanks to the youth advisors, and all who have helped, for their faithfulness in working with our youth. Remember, our youth are the upcoming members who will continue to keep our church going and help it to grow with the help of God. God bless you all!

## **CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**

