

The Simeon Spirit

SIMEON UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH

173 North Center Street, Gratz, PA

February 2025

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A Message from your pastor

This Sunday will be our Youth Sunday. Youth Sunday is always a delightful reminder of what wonderful and talented kids we have at Simeon. I recall my youth experiences with great fondness. Our congregation was small, and we only had 8-9 regular kids, but we were faithful and made the most of our time together. While I had many friends at school, my youth group friends were closest and lifelong.

I participated in sports, but back in those days there were clear boundaries between school time, sports time, and church time. Today, life is more complicated for our youth. There are so many things to do, and sports are more demanding on parents and children. I can understand this. I put three boys through years of soccer.

There is nothing wrong with the expectation of dedication to the team and other extra-curriculum activities like band, drama, and chorus. I believe these are all parts of growing up, learning discipline, building character, making friends, and the satisfaction of excelling in competition. I just wish we could have our Sunday's back.

Many churches worry that we are losing our children to the demands and opportunities of the world. Declining membership and worship attendance threaten the future of many congregations, especially in rural and intercity churches. But it is up to us as a church family to choose our own destiny.

In the Book of Joshua, the Israelite people are poised to enter the Promised Land. Joshua knows that in this land there will be many temptations to forsake God and serve other gods. Joshua warns the people about these distractions and the challenges they will pose to their faithfulness.

Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15)

We have a choice. We can participate and enjoy the many opportunities modern society offers. But if we allow them to consume our lives and time, there is little room for God; and God deeply desires a place in our hearts and lives. This is serious business worthy of genuine reflection. Jesus warns us "No slave can serve two

masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other.”

So, the question remains, ‘Who will you serve?’

Faithfully yours in Christ Jesus,

Pastor Greg

CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS FROM JANUARY, 2025

OLD BUSINESS: The MI Foundation has given a donation to the organ fund. Tracy has sent a thank you letter.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. **Worship and Music**- Organ work should begin in February. They are waiting for parts to arrive at the shop before they come and take it apart. Ash Wednesday service is March 5, 2025 at 7p.m.

2. **Parish Education**- Jean Perkins and Sandra Matter will be taking care of the Easter Egg Hunt.

3. **Stewardship and Evangelism** – None

4. **Social Ministry** – Some of the goals this year are to advertise a little more cause people don’t know that it is still a working foodbank. Help with transportation for some of the people. See if any of the shut-ins need any help with food.

5. **Youth** – Youth Sunday is next Sunday, January 26, 2025, during worship. They had a great Christmas/New Year’s party. Fun was had by youth and adults.

6. **Church Property** – Went over some of the goals for the year. Need to try and figure out a way to get rid of the humidity in the summer in the sanctuary since we are having work done on the organ. Thinking maybe mini splits but, not sure yet. Roof over the kitchen entrance. Possibly selling the snow blower that has not been used for several years.

7. **Budget and Finance** – Organ fund will most likely not need to touch any of the memorial money to fund the repairs. Memorials that were given in memory of someone to be used for the organ fund is about \$4200.00. Tracy & Dennis suggested moving that money to the organ fund, so it is there and available when needed. Mike Hartman made a Motion to do as suggested by Tracy and Dennis to move the funds and Darlene Novinger seconded. Approved.

8. **Fellowship** – Had breakfast for lunch for the reorganization meeting after church on January 12, 2025. Had 13 casseroles and 7 crock pots of food with 35 people in attendance. Going to schedule a meeting to plan for the year. Already in the works is the Murder Mystery on Saturday March 29, 2025.

9. **Mutual Ministry** – None

New Business – None

The Pastor's Time – Going to be visiting the shut-ins since feeling better and not sick anymore. Thanked John for being his driver to dentist appointment since he was getting some teeth pulled.

2024 GIVING

\$147,646.04

2024 EXPENSES

\$146,593.76

Difference between YTD Giving & YTD Expenses \$1,052.28

{For General Operating Fund}

SERVING IN FEBRUARY & MARCH

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

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

February 9, 2025
**5th Sunday After
Epiphany**

Greeter: Dave Strohecker
Reader: Mike Hartman

February 16, 2025
**6th Sunday After
Epiphany**

Greeter: Lynn Schadle
Reader: John Novinger

February 23, 2025
**7th Sunday After
Epiphany**

Greeter: Dennis Barge
Reader: Virginia Moore

March 2, 2025
**Transfiguration
Of our Lord w/
Holy Communion**

Greeter: Brooklynn Dively
Reader: Keith Klinger Altar: Lynn Schadle
Usher: Matt Ferster
Glasses: Doris Flynn

March 5, 2025
**Ash Wednesday
w/ Holy
Communion**

Greeter: Barbara & Keith Klinger
Reader: Tracy Bixler Altar: Susan Krause
Usher: Dave Strohecker
Glasses: Linda Koppenhaver

March 9, 2025
**1st Sunday
In Lent**

Greeter: Becky, Max, & Lincoln Hoover
Reader: Nathan Steinbach

March 16, 2025
2nd Sunday In Lent

Greeter: Deb Trautman
Reader: Lynn Schadle

March 23, 2025
3rd Sunday In Lent

Greeter: Mike Hartman
Reader: Sharon Erdman

March 30, 2025
4th Sunday In Lent

Greeter: Doris Flynn
Reader: Jason Dively

SIMEON UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH

173 NORTH CENTER STREET

PO BOX 478

GRATZ, PA 17030

Rev. Gregory B. Lindsey, Pastor

Church Phone: (717)365-3139

Pastor Cell: (717)521-9402

Secretary Email: sulc.angel80@gmail.com

Church Website: www.simeonchurch.org

YouTube channel: Simeon Church, Gratz PA

ELCA Website: www.elca.org

Lower Susquehanna Synod: www.lss-elca.org

“VOICE OF SIMEON” RADIO

MINISTRY SPONSORS

February 2025

February 2 – Buffington/Reed Funeral Home

February 9 – Willing Workers

February 16 – Bellevue Bees

February 23 – Hoffman’s Hatchery

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:



Sunday, February 2 -Worship Service w/Holy Comm. 10:15a.m. /Food Collect /Groundhog 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



Sunday, March 2 -Worship Service w/Holy Comm. 10:15a.m. /Food Collect

Wednesday, March 5- Ash Wednesday Service w/ Holy Communion 7p.m.

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

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

Wednesday, March 12 – Bible Study 7pm

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

Monday, March 17 – Happy St. Patrick’s Day!!

Wednesday, March 19 – Bible Study 7pm

Thursday, March 20 – Council Meeting 7 p.m. /1st Day of Spring

Friday, March 21 – Deadline for April Newsletter!!!!!!

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

Wednesday, March 26 – Bible Study 7pm

Saturday, March 29 – Murder Mystery-Play and Dinner

Sunday, March 30 – Worship Service 10:15a.m



February 2- Ron Romberger Jr. February 4- Tracy Bixler

February 16- Cindy Whitmoyer February 22- Lisa Coleman

February 26- Randy Bellon February 26- Brenda Bellon

February 12- Merle Paul

February 25- Virginia Moore

FELLOWSHIP- SAVE THE DATE - March, 29, 2025

The Fellowship committee is planning an exciting evening of food, fun and mayhem featuring a murder mystery - "Murder at the Pie Auction." More details to follow but tickets are \$20 and must be purchased in advance. Stay tuned for updates including time, menu, and how to buy tickets.

BIBLE STUDY—we will be having Bible Study again during Lent in place of a Wednesday night service. Pastor Greg is working on picking a topic (possibly something from Genesis). Please join us at 7 pm beginning on March 12th.

2025 OFFICERS AND STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Gregory B. Lindsey

Office Secretary: Timothy Ferster

President: John Novinger

Vice-President: Mike Hartman

Recording Secretary: Timothy Ferster

Treasurer: Tracy Bixler

Assistant Treasurer: Dennis Barge

Financial Secretary: Darlene Novinger

Organist/Choir Director: Tim Ferster

Videographers: Bruce Koppenhaver, Bill Reed

Sound Technician's: Bill Reed, John & Darlene Novinger, Tim Daniel, Andrew Romberger

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. If you would like to sponsor them and cant, make it to church please call the church office and leave a message at (717)-365-3139 or Email Tim at sulc.angel80@gmail.com. The price to sponsor the flowers is \$41 for both vases and \$21 for one. The bulletins are \$18 for all or \$9 for half.

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

RADIO SPONSORS ARE STILL NEEDED for the following dates in 2025. 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 contact Tracy Bixler at 1-570-449-3532 or email at bix@epix.net. Cost is \$50.00 a Sunday.

Chefs Corner



Creamy Sausage and Potato Soup

1 lb. sausage, sliced	2 Tbsp. garlic
1 Tbsp. olive oil	1 cup onion, diced
½ cup celery, diced	3 cups carrots, diced
4 cups chicken stock	1½ lbs. potatoes, diced
½ cup Parmesan cheese, shredded	2 cups milk
2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded	¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
Salt and pepper, to taste	

Heat olive oil in a large Dutch oven or soup kettle over medium-high heat. Add the sliced sausage and cook for 5-6 minutes until browned and slightly crispy. Remove the sausage from the pot and set aside. In the same pot, add onion, garlic, carrots, and celery. Sauté for 2 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables soften slightly and release their aroma. Pour in the chicken stock and stir in the diced potatoes. Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low. Cover the pot and simmer for 15 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender. Return the cooked sausage to the pot. Stir in milk, Parmesan cheese, and cheddar cheese. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Continue to cook over medium-low heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the cheese is fully melted, and the soup is creamy. Garnish with chopped parsley and serve.

Banana Muffins

1½ cups flour	1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda	½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon	1½ cups mashed bananas (about 3-4 bananas)
6 Tbsp. butter, melted	⅔ cup packed light brown sugar
1 egg, at room temperature	1 tsp. vanilla extract
2 Tbsp. milk	1 cup chocolate chips (optional)

Preheat oven to 425*. Spray a 12-count muffin pan with nonstick spray or use cupcake liners. Whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon, together in a medium bowl. Set aside. In a large bowl or stand mixer, mash the bananas. On medium speed, beat or whisk in the melted butter, brown sugar, egg, vanilla extract, and milk. Pour the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients, then beat or whisk until combined. If chocolate chips, fold them in now. Batter will be thick. Spoon the batter into liners, filling them all the way to the top. Bake for 5 minutes at 425*, then reduce to 350* and bake for an additional 16-18.

Crockpot French Onion Meatloaf

2 lb. beef	1 cup breadcrumbs
8 slices Swiss cheese	½ cup Parmesan cheese
¼ cup milk	2 eggs
1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce	1 teaspoon salt
½ tsp. pepper	2 large onions
2 Tbsp. butter	1 cup beef broth

In a large bowl, combine the beef, breadcrumbs, Parmesan cheese, milk, eggs, Worcestershire sauce, salt, and pepper. Mix until well combined. Shape the mixture into a loaf and place it in the crockpot. In a pan, melt butter over medium heat and caramelize the onions, stirring occasionally for about 20 minutes until they are golden and soft. Once the onions are caramelized, stir in the broth and allow it to absorb into the onions. Layer the caramelized onions and broth over the meatloaf in the crockpot. Slow cook on low for 6 to 8 hours until the meatloaf is thoroughly cooked through. About 10 minutes before serving, layer the Swiss cheese slices on top of the meatloaf and allow them to melt.

GRATZ UNION CEMETERY ASSOCIATION, INC.
Gratz, PA 17030

December 31, 2023 To December 31, 2024

Balance-December 31, 2023 3,863.20

Income:

Sale of Lots	900.00
Cremation Grave Openings	1,325.00
Grave Up-keep Fee	850.00
Sale of Gravely Mower & Trimmers	616.70
Sale of Spreader	25.00
Ameriprise Transfers	12,000.00
Now Account Interest	14.30

Total Income 15,731.00

Expenses:

Jerry Welker, Lawn Care	1,657.50
Dennis Shaffer, Trimming	802.50
Gas	400.00
Jerry Welker, Appreciation Bonus	300.00
Dennis Shaffer, Appreciation Bonus	300.00
Kris Mattern	105.00
Land Pro-John Deere Mower Purchase	3,985.00
Land Pro-Stihl Trimmer Purchase	239.95
Dave Strohecker, Mowing of Field	50.00
Ray Williard, Painting of Shed	900.00
Church Mutual Insurance	341.00
Stoltzfus Tree Service	1,350.00
Box Rent	15.00
Checkbook	93.00
Link Bank-Paper Statement Fee	10.00
Sandy Kissinger, Secretary Fee	420.00
Simeons Church, Insurance Donation	650.00
Simeons Church, Refuse Removal Donation	150.00
Postage, Copier, Keys, Oil, Marker	87.42

Total Expenses 11,856.37

Balance-December 31. 2024 7,737.83

INVESTMENTS

Ameriprise Financial	454,520.38
ELCA Mission Investment Fund	95,711.94
C J Umholtz Memorial Fund	18,456.29

Music Notes



More Love to Thee

Elizabeth Prentiss, 1856

MORE LOVE TO THEE

William Doane, 1870

1. More love to Thee, O Christ, more love to Thee! Hear Thou the
2. Once earth-ly joy I craved, sought peace and rest; now Thee a -
3. Let sor-row do its work, come grief and pain; sweet are Thy
4. Then shall my lat - est breath whis - per Thy praise; this be the

prayer I make on bend-ed knee. This is my ear - nest plea:
lone I seek; give what is best. This all my prayer shall be:
mes - sen-gers, sweet their re - frain, when they can sing with me:
part - ing cry my heart shall raise; this still its prayer shall be:

more love, O Christ, to Thee; more love to Thee, more love to Thee!

health faltered, and anxiety overwhelmed her. Inspired by the hymn “Nearer My God To Thee,” Elizabeth worked on a poem-prayer to the Lord. The words came easily at first, but by the end her creative energy evaporated, and she left the poem unfinished.

Thirteen years later, while rummaging through a stack of old papers, Elizabeth found this unfinished poem. As she re-read it, it didn’t impress her as being very good. But when George insisted, she finish it, she dutifully scribbled an ending in pencil. He printed a few copies, one of which landed on the desk of musician William Howard Doane in Cincinnati, who set the verses to music and published it in his *Songs of Devotion*.



“To love Christ more,” Elizabeth once said, “is the deepest need, the constant cry of my soul.... Out in the woods and on my bed and out driving, when I am happy and busy, and when I am sad and idle, the whisper keeps going up for more love, more love, more love!”

Taken from the book “Then Sings My Soul” By Robert J. Morgan

More Love to Thee, O Christ 1856

There’s a little-known verse about sickness in the Bible, found in Isaiah 38:17. King Hezekiah, after the terrible illness that nearly cost his life, said, “Indeed it was for my own peace that I had great bitterness.” Other translations put it:

- It was for my own good that I had such hard times—CEV
- Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish—NIV
- It was for my welfare that I had great bitterness—NRSV

Elizabeth Payson was born in Portland, Maine, on October 26, 1818. Her father, Edward Payson, was a famous Congregational minister, so revered that a thousand children were reportedly named for him. His writings and sermons are popular to this day.

In 1845, Elisabeth, a schoolteacher at the time, married a Presbyterian minister, George Lewis Prentiss, and the couple moved to New York where George began teaching at Union Theological Seminary. Elizabeth enjoyed writing, and her books, *Stepping Heavenward* and *The Flower of the Family*, became best-sellers.

Her health, however, was frail, and she suffered chronic insomnia. One day in 1856, following the deaths of two of her children, her

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 E C N A M O R V D T L B X I F T G F S E G B U T D

Valentine Word Search

ADMIRER	ENAMORED
ADORE	ENDEARMENT
AFFECTION	ENVELOPE
AMOROUS	FEBRUARY
ANGEL	FLAME
BALLOONS	FLIRT
BELOVED	FLOWERS
BOUQUET	FONDNESS
CANDY	FRIEND
CARD	GIFT
CARNATION	HEART
CHARMED	HEARTHROB
CHERISH	HOLIDAY
CHERUB	HONEY
CHOCOLATE	HUG
COURTING	KISS
COURTSHIP	LIKE
CRAZY	LOVE
CRUSH	LOVEBIRDS
CUPID	PINK
DARLING	POEM
DATE	RED
DEAR	ROMANCE
DECORATE	SWEETHEART
DESIRE	SWEETS
DEVOTION	TENDERNESS
DOVES	VALENTINE
EMBRACE	