



A mailbox is located outside the church office for anyone who has written information for staff, chairpersons, preschool, or other leaders.

**Rev. Michael Ware, Pastor**

Home: 610-875-0015 Office: 610-856-7242

**Office hours:** Wednesday 9-12 and 1:30-3:00; Thurs. 9-12;

Day off: Monday;

Email address: revmikeware@gmail.com

**Susan J. Creed**, Minister of Christian Ed. —Home 610-779-0179

Office Hours: M-TH 1:30-4:00 610-856-7242

Email address: screed@dejazzd.com

**Tyler Werner**, Youth Ministry Leader—610-781-4004

Office Hours: TH 10:00-1:00 610-856-7242 (through December)

Email address: twern9@gmail.com

**Louise Wilson**, Minister of Music—Phone: 610-273-3911

Email address: weeziecow2@yahoo.com

**Debbie DeMarco**, Parish Secretary

Home: 610-856-7386 Office: 610-856-7242

Office Hours: M-TH 9-4; Friday 9-12:00

Email address: ddemarco@dejazzd.com

**Linell McCormick**, Office Assistant, T & Th, 12-4

Home: 610-775-2571 Email: lmr52@aol.com

**Robin Werner**, Sexton—Phone: 610-698-0688

Email: robinbaskets@aol.com

**Julia Bond**, Preschool Manager— Phone: 610-856-7613;

Email: preschool610@dejazzd.com

Council Officers: Chris Gerace, President

Julia Bond, Vice President

Jessica Shepherd, Secretary

Dorothy Martin, Treasurer

Kay Good, Treasurer Special Funds

Lori Sifford, Financial Secretary

Other Council Members:

Amanda Baylor

Ed Haag

Wayne Kercher

Walt Hamilton

Mike Wisniewski

Karen Kercher

Ava Gerace (youth)

*Hope Is The Thing With Feathers*

- by Emily Dickinson

*Hope is the thing with feathers*

*That perches in the soul,*

*And sings the tune without the words,*

*And never stops at all,*

*And sweetest in the gale is heard;*

*And sore must be the storm*

*That could abash the little bird*

*That kept so many warm.*

*I've heard it in the chilliest land,*

*And on the strangest sea;*

*Yet, never, in extremity,*

*It asked a crumb of me.*

COMMUNITY EVENTS

**ALL ABOARD! All ages come and enjoy the Model Railroad Exhibition on Saturdays, December 15 and 22, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at The Heritage of Green Hills, 200 Tranquility Lane, Shillington PA 19607. Our resident model railroading enthusiasts will show off scores of vintage trains. New this year, Reading Fair and Race Track. More push buttons to operate carousel, ferris wheel and other items. Enjoy light refreshments, music and a visit from Santa.

**COMMUNITY BREAKFASTS:**

BREAKFASTS: Geigertown Fire Company—First Sunday; Brecknock Fire Company—Second Sunday; Joanna Furnace—Third Saturday, 7-11 a.m.



# RECYCLING OPPORTUNITIES:

## HELP YOUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY:

Please bring in your used **ink cartridges** (any kind) and we will recycle them at Staples earning \$2 each for the church.

**Cell phones, eyeglasses, and hearing aid batteries** also continue to be collected for local ministries.

**PLEASE NOTE: The Paper Recycling Bins** located at the rear of Hoeffler Hall continue to accept your **newspaper, magazines, office paper, “junk” mail, and cereal type boxes smashed flat.** Please no plastic; take your paper out of the plastic bags before you throw it in the bin. Thanks for your help!

**DID YOU KNOW?** We have wheelchairs, potty chairs, shower chairs, canes, crutches, and walkers to loan out to anyone who might need one for a time. Please call the church office (610-856-7242) to make arrangements for pick-up of items.

## OUR ONGOING FUNDRAISER:

**REDNER'S RECEIPTS.** We continue to collect Redner's receipts as an ongoing fundraiser. Keep up the good work and keep saving those tapes; it's a big help for our church! Marion would like to thank everyone who participates and remind you to always use your gas card when making a purchase at Redners. Receipts without the gas card number printed on them are invalid and will not be accepted by the store. If you don't yet have a card just ask for one—it's free!

## LATE DECEMBER/ JANUARY SERVICES & EVENTS

**Every Sunday:** Children's SCS is held during the worship services. **When there are two services:** Sunday Church School for teens and adults is held at 9:00 a.m.

DECEMBER 16: Third Sunday in Advent

-- **One Service only: 9:00 a.m. - Cantata: “Here We Come a'Caroling”**

--Lighting of the Third Advent Candle

--Special Congregational Meeting following the service to elect new council members and approve the 2019 budget; No SCS

DECEMBER 23: Fourth Sunday in Advent

-- **Praise Service: 9:00 a.m. only; No SCS**

—Joyful Noise offering for Rudy Arceo and children who lost their home and all possessions in a fire on Thanksgiving

--Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle

## DECEMBER 24: CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:

**6:00 p.m.** Family Service with glow sticks instead of candles.

**8:00 p.m.** Candlelight service with Holy Communion will feature special Christmas music and readings.

*There will be no 10:30 Holy Communion Service this year.*

DECEMBER 30: **Service of Lessons & Carols**

**9:00 a.m.** One service only; No SCS

JANUARY 6: **Epiphany of Our Lord**

-- **Holy Communion 9:00 a.m.; No SCS**

**Burning of the Greens** outside after the service; followed by a Luncheon in Hoeffler Hall.

JANUARY 13: **Baptism of Our Lord**

—Holy Communion at 7:45 & 10:15 a.m.

JANUARY 20: **Worship** at 7:45 & 10:15 a.m.

JANUARY 27: **Praise Service** at 7:45 & 10:15 a.m.

Joyful Noise offering

spend, spend, and spend some more. And I know my family and I are not alone in these feelings of holiday frustration.

Indeed, it seems like every year we promise ourselves that **THIS YEAR** Christmas will be time for us to focus around the Christ child and the real meaning of the holiday, and yet by the time Christmas Eve rolls around we have discovered that much of our time has been spent at the altars of Amazon, or Wal-Mart, or the local shopping mall.

Maybe it's a seasonal addiction, or maybe we have simply convinced ourselves that gift giving is a necessity of the holiday season; after all, even baby Jesus got gifts of Frankincense, Gold, and Myrrh.

Now I don't want to throw out the gift-giving-baby with the bathwater and I certainly don't mean to say that gift-giving can't be a part of the holiday celebration. But in reflecting on it all, I would encourage you, my brothers and sisters, to join with me in seeking to practice greater wisdom in our gift giving behavior this Holiday season.

For instance:

Let's not purchase things that we really can't afford and end up putting ourselves into Credit Card debt.

Let's not believe the lie that buying something more expensive always means that the gift is more thoughtful or caring.

Let's not limit your gift giving opportunities with a store-bought only attitude. After all, there are plenty of homemade and creative gifts that can be just as nice, and even more meaningful to our loved ones!

And especially, let us not forget those folks around us who will be struggling with **REAL NEEDS** during this holiday season; dealing with the high costs of heating fuel, grieving over the loss of a job or loved one, or simply not having enough food, adequate shelter, or a loving family to celebrate with.



### MINISTRIES AVAILABLE TO OUR SENIORS, SHUT-INS, SICK, ETC.:

**CD Ministry**—CD's of the weekly services are being mailed out to all those senior, sick or and shut-in members who cannot attend church services.

**Large Print Devotionals**—these are the same as our small, daily devotionals but have larger print for those needing it.

**Prayer Shawls**—These are available for sick, hospitalized, shut-in or senior members who would like one. They are very comforting to those who have received them. Recipients do not need to be a member of Robeson so please take them for others who would like them.

**Robeson Hammers**—Helping members in need with minor repairs at home, mainly small projects that would make their homes safer or more comfortable.

**Home Visits**—Our visitation team now trained to bring Holy Communion is visiting a number of our seniors and shut-ins and would be more than happy to visit others if invited. It is our hope to visit with and bring Holy Communion to each shut-in and homebound member of Robeson up to 6 times a year. If you would like a visit, and have not yet been visited by a member of our team, please feel free to contact Pastor Michael or call the church office 610-856-7242.)

If you have a need or request for any of the above ministries, please call the church office and we will be happy to help you.

The **Berks County Area Agency on Aging** is available to help you over the phone. Please call their office at 610-478-6500 and a staff member will be able to explain available services, answer questions and provide information on programs and community resources for you, family members or anyone you know who is 60 years of age and older. Please don't hesitate to give them a call.

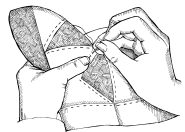
## Men's Group



The men of Robeson Lutheran Church continue to meet for breakfast and fellowship on the second Saturday of each month at 7:30 a.m. (usually here in Hoeffer Hall). This is a great opportunity to get to know your brothers in Christ and learn more about your faith through brief bible study and mutual conversation. Come and see how the men of Robeson live out their discipleship. The next Men's Breakfast is scheduled for **January 12 at 7:30 a.m.** in **Hoeffer Hall.**

## Robeson Robins Senior Group

Members of the Robeson Robins Seniors Group who paid their dues this year will be going to dinner at Yoder's Restaurant on Tuesday, December 11th at noon. The group who attended last month's lunch and program by Pastor Nancy Clark enjoyed the entertainment. We are hoping to have more of these programs next year but nothing has been planned for January and February due to the possibility of bad weather. If you have any ideas for events next year, Billie would love to hear from you; or for more information or to express your interest in the Robeson Robins please speak to Billie at 610-401-8496.



QUILTING GROUP

**QUILT TILL YOU WILT** every first Saturday of the month from 9-2. If you like to "quilt" which includes cutting, sewing, and knotting, (no experience necessary) then maybe Quilt Till You Wilt is for you. More sewers, quilters, knotters are always welcome. If you would like to try this art, please feel free to join the group on the first Saturday in Hoeffer Hall, or call Cindy Stewart for more information (610-856-7041).

Remember, this Christmas season brings us all a lot of opportunity to put the focus back on Christ by being the Christ in the lives of the needy around us. May we therefore seek to share the perfect gift that everyone truly needs in this holy season – the gift of God's love.

Your brother in Christ,  
**PASTOR MICHAEL**



## FOOD BANK DONATIONS:

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU who brought non-perishable food items for our local pantries in honor of Pastor Michael's 15th anniversary of ordination in November. Your generous donations have helped to Fill the Pantries!

## NEW CUSHIONS:

Did you notice the beautiful new cushions on the pews in the new foyer? A big thank you to Dot Gibney for making these replacements for the old, ratty cushions!

**Thank you** to all of you who donated the new and gently used stuffed animals for the Special Olympics/ Special Needs Children's Christmas party. Each year the Reading Elks provides a gift card to each participant but your stuffed animals always bring a smile to their faces. Thank you!

## 2019 Day Trips to New York City by White Star Tours

We are planning two bus trips to New York City and want you to respond on the sheet below or a phone call to the church office if you are interested. We don't need any money at this time, but I need to know interest.

The first trip can be a weekday, for example Wednesday, May 8 for \$139 or Saturday, May 11 for \$149 per person. This trip includes Motorcoach transportation, admission to the 9/11 Memorial Museum and the One World Observatory, dinner at Puglia's as well as taxes & meal gratuities.

The second trip is titled Christmas in New York City. It includes Motorcoach transportation, ticket to the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular featuring the Rockettes, a guided tour of Lower Manhattan, shopping at Macy's Herald Square or Rockefeller Center, dinner as well as taxes and meal gratuities. The cost for a weekday, for example Wednesday, December 11 is \$189 while Saturday, December 7 costs \$215 per person.

For more information, please contact Linell in the church office 610-856-7242. Please invite your family and friends. I would like to get 40 people to run the trip.

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### 2019 New York City Trips

\_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in the trip to the 911 Memorial  
Prefer: \_\_\_\_\_ weekday \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday

\_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in the trip to Radio City Music Hall  
Christmas Spectacular  
Prefer: \_\_\_\_\_ weekday \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



THIS AND THAT AT ROBESON LUTHERAN:  
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!! We have posted volunteer sheets on the bulletin board in the new foyer. If you are willing to help during any of the worship services please sign up on this board.

There are lists for acolytes, lectors, ushers, greeters, sound technicians, worship assistants, and communion servers. We appreciate and need our volunteers!

ALTAR GUILD: Altar care volunteers are always needed. If you are willing to serve on altar care for a month with at least one other volunteer please call Marion Kachel (610-856-1683) or the church office.

### REMINDERS:

Committee reports are due in the church office on the first Thursday of the month for the council meeting which will be held on the 2nd Thursday.

All Property concerns and requests should be brought to the attention of the church office.

PARISH DIGEST DEADLINE: Articles for the February newsletter are due in the office by January 13.

ALTAR FLOWERS and BULLETIN SPONSORS: Altar flower openings: December 23. Bulletins are open for December 23. Please call Linell in the church office (610-856-7242) if you would be interested in sponsoring any of these dates. Reminder: **Altar flowers cost is now \$38** and bulletins are \$25.

### IMPORTANT:

- Any group or individual sponsoring special projects, collections, etc. please contact the church office for coordination purposes and for advertising these events and projects.
- Any committee or group that has events etc. to advertise in the area papers should please copy to Linell at [lmrm52@aol.com](mailto:lmrm52@aol.com).





### LEAVING A LEGACY THAT GOES BEYOND DEATH

When we recall the names of the faithful who have died, our minds are often filled with precious memories. In our thoughts we are reminded that we are their legacy, that is to say, much of what we have – in both material and non-material things – has been handed down to us from them. But what will we hand down to those who follow? How will we be remembered by those who come after us? Will we leave more than an empty spot in a pew?

As you plan for the distribution of your assets at your death, please consider a charitable bequest to Robeson Lutheran Church. This is one way your faith can be transferred to the next generation. This, and other types of planned gifts, can undergird our congregation's ministry in perpetuity, providing resources that will allow future generations of Christians to worship, serve others, and continue the vital ministries of this church.

If you have questions about planned giving, you can talk to your personal financial advisor or speak to our congregational Thrivent representative John Lauer at his Morgantown office (610)-286-5986.

**THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS:** Our thanks to those members/friends of the congregation who have designated Robeson Lutheran Church as the charity of choice for their Thrivent Choice Dollars. If you have received a letter from Thrivent indicating that you are eligible for this plan, please consider our congregation as you help direct Thrivent Financial's charitable funds.

### **Hope for the “No-Hopers”**

by Chris Gerace

“Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words and never stops at all.”

- Emily Dickinson

A new church year is again upon us. We began with the first week of Advent by “watching” and preparing for the coming of the newborn Jesus. This is also about the time of year that I renew my personal efforts in “reaching” my atheist friends and acquaintances, as one of my own personal missions.

In the last decade or so, I have become increasingly more concerned with atheistic viewpoints and lifestyles. I expect that like myself, most Christians at some point interact with atheists in their daily lives. Based on the many atheists I have met over the years, I have personally classified three types of atheist.

First there is the person who has never been raised with or around any religion or religious teachings.

Second, there is the person who does not believe in any organized religion, or in God as our Creator, but may entertain the idea of a “higher power” somewhere in or beyond the universe. I guess that might cross over into agnosticism.

Finally, there is the person who has known religion, or in my personal experience, was raised Christian or learned of Christianity and the Word of Christ Jesus, but in their adulthood has outright rejected it. This third type is the atheist that most concerns me. I know quite a few of these atheists; I have tried and continue to try to reverse their rejection of Christianity.

Anyone who was raised as a Christian can arrive at a cross-roads upon reaching adulthood. Many decide to continue on their faith journey, but there are some who for a variety of

reasons will decide to reject it. While I can understand the atheist's perspective, I personally cannot imagine choosing a life without hope of something more than this world has to offer. Sure, they hope for the best life and may work hard to achieve happiness and security, but they have decided to set their sights only on the finite physical world. I know, it's all they believe in at that point, but how sad that they make no room for hope beyond this physical world. But I don't give up on them!

Throughout the year, I take advantage of timely moments when good things happen to them, to point out that they are "blessings from God." This usually annoys them but we somehow remain friends. My atheist friends are quick to point out the hypocrisies of organized religion – especially Christianity. They point out at how many different branches there are and how no one gets along or wants to work together. I try to cite the ecumenical work that many churches and pastors are engaged in, and they say that it will never be enough to bring all Christians together. Perhaps in that regard, they are correct. Perhaps that is a reminder to all Christians that this world is never going to be right. We Christians ought to renew our focus toward the path of Jesus, which by the way requires *effort* on our part to put aside our differences and walk that path *together*. But I digress.

Christians are like football teams. What!?!? Okay, please indulge me for a moment. We have the national league teams, then we have the amateur league teams, the college teams, and the high school teams. We even have corporate leagues and maybe just a bunch of players playing pick-up games in the park. The main objective in American football is to get to the goal line with a touchdown or a field goal, but basically to reach a "goal." Although Christians are of many types of denominations, sizes, locations, and we may have different playbooks, we are essentially striving for the same goal.

Meanwhile, you have your spectators, some of whom are

## TREASURER'S REPORT:

Balance Forward:	\$12,191.11
Nov. Income:	\$19,171.69
In/Out Account:	\$ 1,098.10
Nov. Expenses:	\$22,724.49
Net Ordinary Income:	-\$3,947.62
Balance 11/30/18	\$ 8,638.31

Unpaid Bills: None

-Dorothy Martin, Treasurer

## SPECIAL FUNDS REPORT:

Income:	
Donations received in November	\$ 970.00
Outflow:	
Bazaar—refund	\$ 25.00
Checking Account balance 11/30/18	\$52,620.78

-Kay Good, Treas. Spec. Funds

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE SIGNED UP FOR E-GIVING. E-giving is an ongoing service offered here at Robeson Lutheran but regretfully the site had been down for most of the summer months. It is now up and running but you will have to sign-up again. (your old password will not work.) You should have received information directly from our envelope company explaining the new process. You can continue to access the new site through our website, **[www.robesonlutheranchurch.org](http://www.robesonlutheranchurch.org) and look for the "Donate Now" button.** Thank you for considering this giving opportunity that allows you to be good stewards of God's gifts even when you are unable to attend services.



### CURRENT PROJECTS:

#### **Storm window protecting stained glass at the front of the church:**

Thank you to everyone who contributed toward the cost of this project. To date, we have received \$1900. The Outreach Committee raised over \$4,000 at the annual bazaar and have designated these funds to pay off the remainder of this bill to B&G Glass equaling \$3,655.50. B&G is in the process of making the new window which is expected to be installed soon.



**“Keep the Light Shining Capital Campaign continues to grow.** Thanks to those who have begun your gifts to the campaign and/or submitted your luminary pledge card. We are blessed by these extra gifts which will keep the light shining here at Robeson Lutheran Church. We remind those of you who wish to participate that it’s never too late to hand in your pledge card and/or begin your giving. In fact, you can join in and support this campaign at any time within the next two years. All gifts are important and will be greatly appreciated and received with thanksgiving to the glory of God. We look forward to the celebration of our 250th anniversary at the closure of this campaign.

**THINK AHEAD:** How can you help organize a fund-raising event and receive \$250 in start up funds? It’s easy if you form a **Thrivent Action Team!** If you would like more information about forming a team for a fundraiser in our church or your community please contact John Lauer (610-286-5986 ) or the church office (610-856-7242).

harsh critics. They happily tell what any given team or player is doing wrong, both during and after the game. My atheist friends like to tell me how messed up Christians are. We Christians do make mistakes, too often disagree, sometimes we have no interest in working together, and sometimes even work (play?) against each other. But at least we are in the game! We have our faith, and it is fortified by a divine hope... ...and *that* Hope is a powerful thing!

Hope allows us to lay our burdens before the Lord. Hope allows us to seek comfort and healing from the Lord. Where does the atheist go for comfort and healing?

Back in the 1990s, one of the security guards at my work place had served as a U.S. Marine in the Pacific theater of WWII. He was present at a number of battles including the epic battle of Tarawa. I’ll never forget when he described to me the somber mood of the marines, aboard their amphibious landing craft as they approached the beach. He told me, “I will say this, there was not an atheist on that boat!”

We Christians have the Lord’s gift of Hope, and may it continue to be strong and lift us up in this new church year. But we can spare a little extra hope for those atheists in our lives. We can pray for them, and continue (gently!) trying to be a positive influence on them. Hopefully, our Christian example might manifest in a change of heart. Amen!



Robeson Preschool



## **PRESCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAMS**

will be held the week before Christmas:

December 19 – 4 year olds; MW Toddler

December 20 – KP, TTh Toddler, 2 day 3's

December 21 – 3 day 3's

### **Preschool Fundraiser:**

Here is an opportunity to participate in and earn CASH for our preschool from the **Giant A+ School Rewards program**. Visit [www.giantfoodstores.com](http://www.giantfoodstores.com) and select Savings and Rewards. Create your online account. You will need your 11 digit BonusCard number and the School ID# 26822. Support our youth by buying gift cards and then designate your school rewards to our preschool! Thank you!!!

### **Play Group at Robeson Lutheran Church & Preschool**

Who: Parents/caregivers and kids of all ages. Spread the word, invite a friend!

What: A casual, open play group to provide a way to get to know other families in the community, while the kids play and make new friends.

When: Every Monday and Wednesday from 11:15am-12:15pm

Where: Hoeffler Hall

Additional Info: If you are interested, please join the [Robeson Township Play Group](#) on Facebook. The group will be following the Twin Valley School District/Robeson Lutheran Preschool schedule so if there is no school, there will be no play group that day! Feel free to contact Julie Alessandrini ([juldem3@gmail.com](mailto:juldem3@gmail.com)) for any questions.

**THE NEXT GAME NIGHTS** will be held on December 14 and January 11, from 6-8 p.m. These evenings of fun and games have been enjoyed by those who have been coming and new people are always appreciated! Everyone is welcome. Bring your family, bring a guest, bring a snack to share, bring your favorite game to play, or just bring yourself!



## **POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE**

Although the poinsettia order has been submitted, we are able to take last minute orders until December 18. As of today, December 12, we have orders for only 30 plants. Stop by the church office or call 610-856-7242 to order your plant. Cost is \$7.50 per plant.

**A BIG THANK YOU** David Frees and David Hill who helped set up the big Christmas trees in the sanctuary, and to Amanda Baylor and Julie Alessandrini who trimmed the trees and decorated the foyers. A special thank you to Amanda for shopping for the beautiful angel tree toppers and tree skirts which really added to the beauty of the trees. Thanks as always to Marion Kachel for coordinating the decorating.

**THE ANGEL TREE GIFTS** have been collected and are in the process of being distributed to the families in time for Christmas. Thank you to everyone who provided gifts, filled stockings, and gift cards in order to make this a brighter Christmas for these families. A special thank you to Sue Besecker and her team, Marie Carpenter, Roseann Jarmoski, and Ruth Kennedy.

