

The Reformer

The Reformed Church of Port Ewen
Reverend Brian Steadman—Pastor



Volume 24 Issue 1

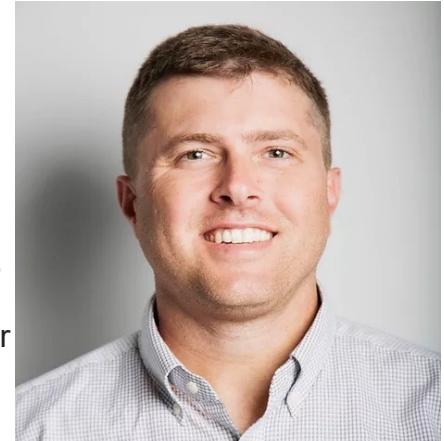
January 2026

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RCPE Family,

The 12-day Christmas season starts on December 25 and ends the evening of January 5. Celebrated on January 6, Epiphany Day commemorates the visitation of Jesus Christ by the three Magi. The season of Epiphany begins on January 6 and ends on the eve of Ash Wednesday, also known as Mardi Gras or Fat Tuesday. The moment of the Magi's visitation is recorded in Matthew 2:1-12. The Church has long observed the Epiphany, and different Christian traditions and cultures influenced by them celebrate the day with great fanfare; it is sometimes called Three Kings Day or Little Christmas.



Matthew tells us that the Magi made their way to Jerusalem in search of Jesus after he was born. They were led by the light of a miraculous star to a house, not the manger recorded in Luke 2 (so yes, the Magi should not be included in your nativity and there were also likely way more than just three of them #kiddingnotkidding). Scripture does not tell us how old Jesus was at the time of the visit, but context tells us Jesus could have been as old as two at the time of the visit. The liturgical calendar takes all of this into account and places the Epiphany well after Christmas Day. More important than the timing of the Epiphany is its meaning and significance. The word means revelation, manifestation, or showing. When the Magi visit Jesus and worship him, Jesus is revealed or manifested or shown as the Messiah of both Israel and the rest of the world. Recall that the Magi are from the East, which means they are Gentiles, or non-Jews. Their visit and adoration of Jesus confirm what we see all throughout the Old Testament: Israel's promised Messiah is also a saving light to the entire world. Isaiah puts it beautifully: "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising." (Isaiah 60:3)

The Epiphany amplifies the Good News of Christmas that Jesus Christ is truly the hope of the nations. In Jesus Christ, the hostilities, or sin, that separate us from God and from one another are made null. In Jesus Christ, Jews and Gentiles come together and are made a new people (Colossians 3:11). In Christ, there is true peace and it is available to all. Not only does the Epiphany amplifies Christmas, it affirms and prepares

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us for Easter: Christ is born to all and dies for all! Indeed, joy to the world! Three important moments in Jesus' life further amplify the season of Epiphany. The baptism of Jesus shows us that we too are beloved sons and daughters of God in whom he is well pleased. The miracle of the wedding feast at Canaan proves to us that Jesus is both fully God and fully man come to fill our emptiness. And the Transfiguration of Jesus confirms for us that in Jesus all the Law (Moses) and Prophets (Elijah) are fulfilled in him as the true Messiah, come to transform all of creation marred by sin.

The only time we tend to use the word "epiphany" is when we have an aha moment where we realize something previously hidden to us. But that kind of misses the point of Jesus being manifested in all these ways as the light of the world (hence Jesus glowed bright as the sun in his Transfiguration). Epiphany is not so much about us being illumined to new knowledge about God and ourselves. It is more about us becoming lights ourselves. Becoming luminaries if you will. That as we deeply embody what it is that Jesus is the light that has come for all nations, we too emit the light of Christ ourselves. That is what it means to practice Epiphany.

Pace e Bene,
Pastor Brian

Credit: Big thanks to a former colleague, Pastor Marc Choi, who provided much of the research for this reflection.

Pastor Brian Steadman
Reformed Church of Port Ewen

Brian's Birding New Additions December
Northern Harrier
Greater White-fronted goose



Reminder about inclement weather.

In the event we cancel church service, a phone chain will be initiated. (Make sure your info is up to date in our system, call Cheri) and we will let you know if we will be able to have church via *Zoom*.

Thank you from the Worship Committee

***In case of
Inclement
Weather***



R.C.P.E. Yellow Pages

Data at your fingertips

Prayer Chain

Proverbs 15:29

"The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous."

We amplify this power of prayer when we pray together.

To activate the chain for you or someone else, call Katherine Kinsch at 338-6378. That day, a team will be praying for you. Confidentiality pledged.

Consistory Meets

*The 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM
Meetings open--call 331-2782 for agenda space.*

ELDERS

Matt Van Aken

Ray Wells

Linda McCarthy

DEACONS

Colleen Sutton

Tom Gallagher



(Prayers will stay on for one month unless notified otherwise)

World — Prayers for our country, troubled areas of our world, Israel's conflict, the Middle East, the innocent Palestinians, all of the people attacked in Israel, people of Ukraine, world peace, political leaders, a solution for the refugee crisis, for all the homeless.

Church Worldwide — Religious persecution in Bangladesh, the persecuted Church (China, Nigeria, North Korea).

RCA — Sudan Mission, Oman Protestant Church and Bode family, Al-Amada Ctr.

Mid-Hudson Classis — Rev. Ann & Ron Rost, Bob Vanderlaan.

Petitions of healing, protection, and deliverance — Berni Hunlock, Carter Roscoe, Irma, Brian Wilson, Angelica Falcinelli.

Church Family — Charlie Harries, Harry McCarthy, Rev. Linda & Nick Miles.

Homebound/nursing homes/institutions — Bea Hogan.

Grieving — Family & friends of: Thomas Rocco.



Happy New Year?



An Open Letter to Ms. Bonnie Lalor

Dear Bonnie,

We are writing this letter to express our deepest and most heartfelt gratitude for your incredible dedication and tireless work for our church community. Your efforts are a true blessing and do not go unnoticed.

Specifically, your leadership of our Sunday school program brings joy and faith to our children every week, and your invaluable work running our Zoom services ensures that our entire church family can stay connected and worship together, regardless of where they are.

What makes your service even more remarkable is the spirit with which you serve, even while facing your own physical challenges. Your ability to consistently give so much of yourself is a testament to your faith and strength, and it is a powerful inspiration to everyone in our congregation. Your commitment exemplifies the spirit of selfless giving, and we are all so grateful for your presence and support.

Thank you for all the ways you have faithfully used your gifts to serve our ministry. You make our church a warmer, more vibrant place.

May God bless you abundantly for your kindness, generosity, and faithful service. Please know that you are cherished and valued.

With deepest appreciation and warm regards,

On behalf of the entire congregation of the Reformed Church of Port Ewen,
Michael and Katherine Kinsch



As we welcome the new year, January is a wonderful time to reflect on God's blessings and renew our commitment to faithful stewardship. Stewardship is not just about financial giving—it's about offering our time, talents, and resources in service to God and our community. Whether you are volunteering, praying for others, or supporting the church with your gifts, each act of generosity helps us fulfill our mission and share Christ's love. Let us start 2026 with hearts full of gratitude and a spirit of giving, trusting that together we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those around us. Thank you for your ongoing commitment and support!



Stewardship Moment

Day 22 – Generosity in the big picture.

Proverbs 11:24-25

*One man gives freely, yet gains even more;
another withholds unduly; but, comes to poverty.
A generous man will prosper:
he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.*

Generosity is a surprising thing. You see, a lot of people think they can't be generous because if they are they won't have enough for themselves. If they give away their money, they won't be able to buy things for themselves. If they give away their time or their energy, there won't be enough left over to take care of themselves. What's surprising is that God's word says just the complete opposite of that!

Proverbs 11:14-25 say that the man who gives freely gains even more. The world often teaches that we have to look out only for ourselves if we are to get by. "Just take care of #1," we hear. But, the Bible says, "Don't do that!" Looking only to yourself will sometimes make you an extra buck; but, all those extra bucks will leave you poorer in the end.

I'm not going to sugar coat it: Being generous isn't always easy and true generosity will cost you something.

If you give freely to God and to people, it will mean you will be giving something you could have kept for yourself. But, the reason the Bible can say you will gain even more is because Christians live in light of eternity. When Christ rose from the grave, believers were given new life. And in that new life, the rules totally changed.

If we want to take care of ourselves, we take care of others. If we want to find our life, we need to first lose it in Christ.

We all know what it's like to shrink back from a chance to be generous. It's not very easy because it doesn't feel natural.

But, know this, when Jesus was on earth teaching, he didn't tell us to expect treasure on earth, he said to expect treasure in heaven. When it comes down to it, God will bless your generosity for all eternity.

Today's Generosity Challenge:

Reflect on the last 22 challenges you have tackled in this journey. Be honest, which one have you shrunk back from or ignored? Write them down at <http://GenerousLife.net/Day23>. And then, through prayer, go before the Lord and ask Him what's holding you back. Write those answers down here, as well.

* Michael L. Stickler, *A Journey to Generosity (41 Days to a Generous Life)* the Visiongroup ltd. 2013. Pages 57-58



On December 21, 2025, the Reformed Church of Port Ewen joyfully welcomed three new members into our church family: **Sonia Scherry, Maryann Falcinelli, and Len Falcinelli**. May God bless Sonia, Maryann, and Len as they become part of our church family. We pray that their time with us will be filled with spiritual growth, meaningful connections, and joyful service.



~ Decorating For Christmas ~

The elves were very busy this year in making the Sanctuary reading for Advent and Christmas. We are thankful for everyone who was able to join in this rewarding event.



The January Mission of the Month will support ***Place of Serenity***

This non-profit organization located in Rifton, NY, was created to serve the needs of women recovering from substance abuse and mental health issues, utilizing a holistic approach. If you feel called to donate to this mission, please write checks to The Reformed Church of Port Ewen and write "January M.O.M." on the memo line. Online giving is also available.

***Note : the Mission of the Month for December collected \$ 315.00 for Kingston Kids plus
The Christmas Eve Service Offering of \$246.00 to the Children's Home of Kingston***

January Birthdays

- 2 Linda Bresnahan-McCarthy
- 4 Rick Whitaker
- 12 Ann Beukelman
- 16 Vera Rubeo
- 24 Landon Harries
- 26 Ray Wells



February Birthdays

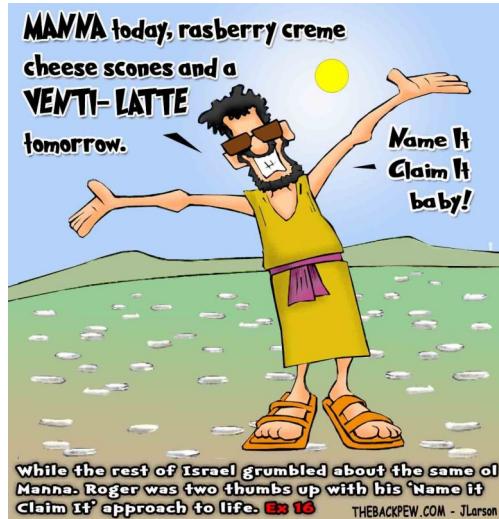
- 3 Arlene Wilhelm
- 4 Joseph Relyea
- 10 Mike Kinsch, Sr.
- 12 Bob Shelightner
- 18 Shannon Goodrich
- 19 Joseph Sutton
- 21 Bev Gallagher
- 24 Cheyenne Candlin
- 25 Marie Klipper
- 27 Paula Van Aken

January Anniversaries

- 1 Kathleen & Michael DeFelice



The Back Pew Clean Humor & God's Truth



MOVIES WITH SPIRIT

Jan. 17, CARMEN (2022), Congregation Emanuel, 243 Albany Ave., Kingston — Set in a picturesque Mediterranean village in Malta, this heartfelt and visually stunning drama is about self-empowerment, humor, discovery and freedom. Inspired by true events, it follows a woman in her 50s named Carmen (Natascha McElhone), who has spent her entire life since age 16 caring for her brother, the local priest. After his sudden death, Carmen is left with nothing — until a twist of fate leads the local villagers to mistake her for the new priest succeeding her brother. Embracing the opportunity, Carmen begins to find her voice and claim her independence after years of being confined to a role dictated by her brother's position in the church. She challenges patriarchal norms, offers unconventional advice in the confessional and brings color and life to the villagers while embracing the joy of reinvention. This story is a celebration of resilience and self-empowerment and the courage to embrace change. *“A delight to watch, able to balance the poignant and comedic elements seamlessly.”* — Ruth Maramis, FlixChatter. *“About a long-overlooked woman who finally comes out of her shell and puts a lifetime of silent observations to use.”* — Noel Murray, Los Angeles Times. *“McElhone delights with a charming and slightly loopy performance as the irreverent spiritual leader.”* — Teo Bugbee, The New York Times. *“Winner of three critic and festival awards. Not Rated.”*

Thank You, Choir!

Once again, our choir and instrumentalists, augmented by our alumni choir, provided angelic music during advent and on Christmas Eve.

It was delightful to hear the voices of the Children's Church Choir on the last Sunday of Advent.

Thank you to all for adding joy as we welcomed the Christ Child.

Christmas Blessings, Linda



Christian Reflections for the New Year

Spiritual Considerations and Intentions for a Fresh Start

Introduction

The beginning of a new year is a meaningful time for Christians to reflect on their faith, renew their commitments, and seek God's guidance for the months ahead. It's an opportunity to set spiritual goals, deepen relationships, and live out Christian values in everyday life.

1. Renewing Faith and Commitment

Christians may consider recommitting themselves to their relationship with God. This can involve spending more time in prayer, studying the Bible, and participating in worship. Reflecting on spiritual growth during the past year and seeking ways to strengthen faith is a valuable practice as the new year begins.

2. Setting Spiritual Goals

Deepening Prayer Life: Setting aside regular, intentional time for prayer and meditation.

Bible Study: Developing a plan to read Scripture consistently, whether alone or with a group.

Service and Outreach: Looking for opportunities to serve others in the community, following Christ's example.

Personal Growth: Identifying areas for growth such as patience, forgiveness, humility, or generosity.

3. Practicing Gratitude and Reflection

The new year is a time to thank God for His blessings over the past year and to reflect on challenges faced. Practicing gratitude helps foster a positive spiritual outlook and reminds Christians of God's faithfulness, even in difficult times.

4. Seeking God's Guidance

As plans and resolutions are made, Christians are encouraged to seek God's will in all things. This means inviting God into decisions, asking for wisdom, and trusting in His plan for the future. Proverbs 3:5-6 encourages believers to "trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."

5. Building and Strengthening Relationships

The new year is a good time to work on relationships—with family, friends, church members, and the wider community. Forgiving past hurts, reconciling differences, and showing Christ-like love can lead to stronger, more meaningful connections.

6. Embracing Hope and Joy

Christians are called to live with hope and joy, trusting that God is at work in their lives. The new year brings fresh possibilities and a reminder that, through faith, all things are possible.

Conclusion

As the calendar turns, Christians can approach the new year with intentional reflection, renewed faith, and a desire to grow closer to God and others. By setting spiritual goals, practicing gratitude, and seeking God's guidance, believers can make the new year a time of meaningful growth and transformation.

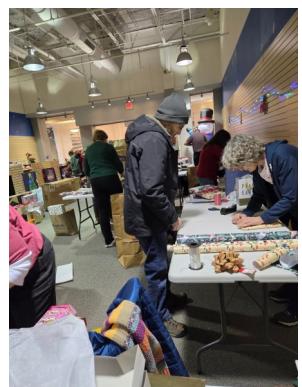
*Lectio*nary Scripture Readings for January 2026



First reading and Psalm	Alternate first reading	Second reading	Gospel
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January 4, 2026	Jeremiah 31:7-17; Psalm 147:12-20; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9),10-18
January 11, 2026	Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17
January 18, 2026	Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42
January 25, 2026	Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23

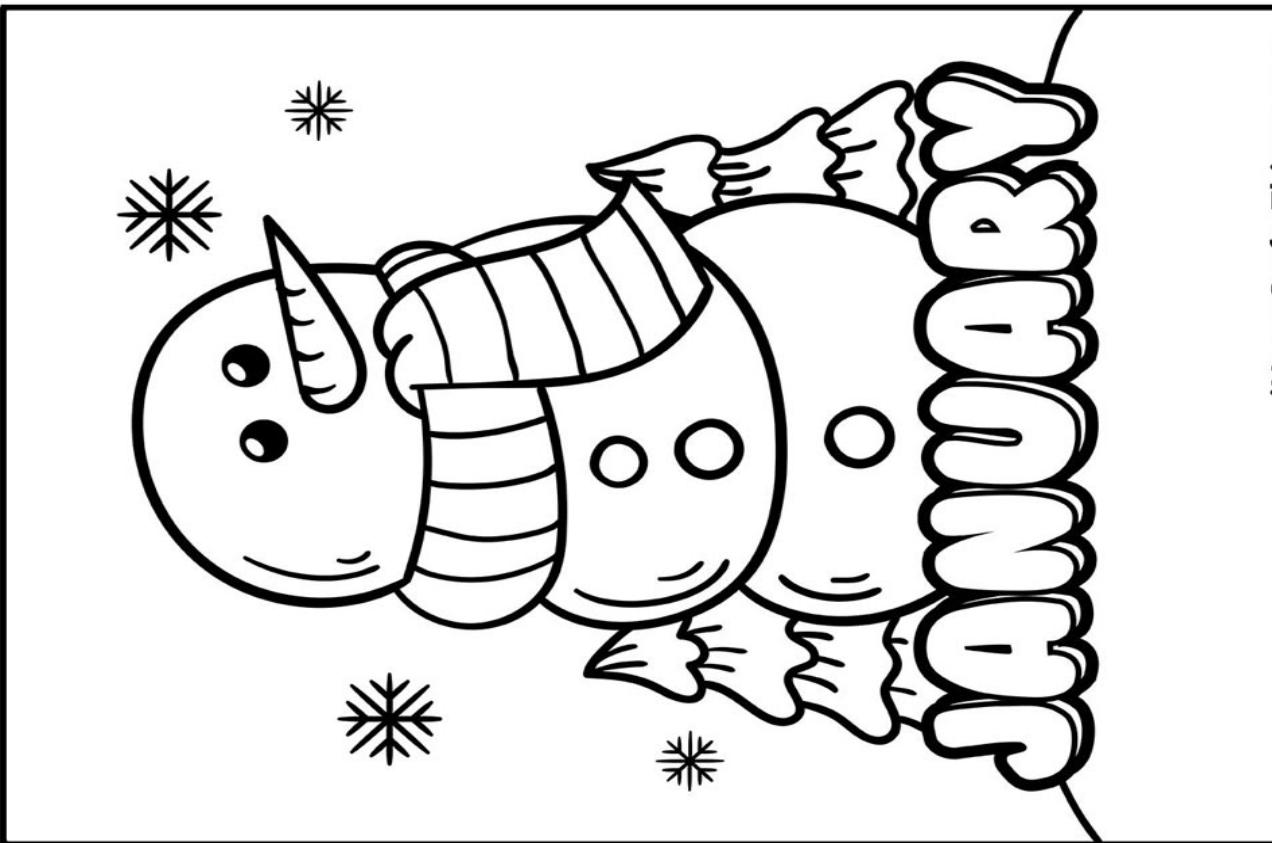
On December 6 the RCPE elves helped wrap gifts for Christmas Wishes of Ulster County.



On Sunday evening, December 21st, we joined our neighbor, the Flicks, for a memorable night of caroling through town. The air was crisp and festive, filled with the cheerful melodies of classic holiday songs. Bundled up in coats and scarves, we strolled through the streets together, stopping at homes to share our favorite carols and spread holiday cheer.



January 2026



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Our facilities are handicapped accessible

We're on the net!
TheRCPe.org

E-mail: office@rcpe.info
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(845) 331-2782 Church Hall

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