

The Reformer

The Reformed Church of Port Ewen

Reverend Brian Steadman—Pastor



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THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Do you promise to exhibit the joy of new life in Christ; to share fully in the life of the church; to be faithful in worship and service; and to offer your prayers and gifts? – *Liturgy of the RCA*

Supporting the worship and the work of your local church to the best of your ability is a membership vow asked in some form across most denominations.

Church members support their church in its worship and work in myriad ways. If we were to generally categorize them, they would fall into one of three categories: financial support through the freewill offering of money, the investment of one's time and talents in service and ministry, and inviting others to come and encounter Jesus in the context of the faith community.

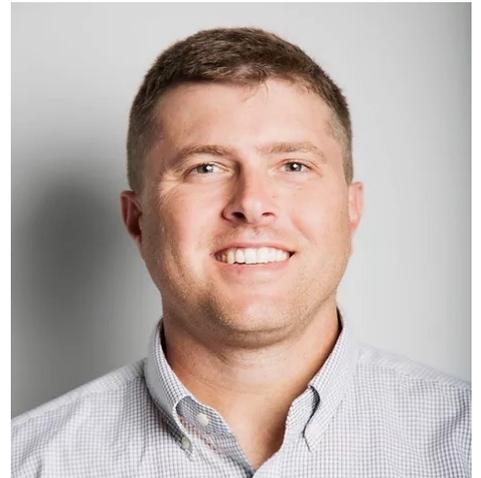
While financial stewardship certainly includes much more than money, it does not include less. Setting aside a portion of your income to support the work of the church is an important exercise of faith. You are asking God to provide for your needs when it may feel like you should keep your money to provide what you need.

There are three basic biblical teachings about giving to the work of the kingdom.

1. Giving must be a joyful response to God's grace. St. Paul asked for money by saying, "I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, he became poor, so that through his poverty you might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:8-9). What a test! St. Paul says that the difference between moralists (those who think God accepts them because of their goodness) and Christians (who know they are sinners saved purely by grace and cannot earn his acceptance) is that a Christian wants to give as generously as he or she has received. Or to put it another way, we always give effortlessly to those people or programs that we believe give our life meaning. The question of course, are you giving joyously and generously to God, or to some other god.

2. Giving must be in significant proportions. The Bible gives three guidelines:

A. The Tithe: In the Old Testament, believers were required to give a tenth of their income to the support of the religious community and for the needs of the poor. While the New Testament does not specifically mention the tithe, since we are far more aware of just how gracious God has been towards us in his Beloved Son our Savior, Jesus Christ, than the Old Testament believers, we assume that we are held more responsible for generosity, not less. Thus, the tithe (10% of gross annual income) is a minimum guideline for giving to support the faith community. The tithe is considered the floor of our faithfulness with our money. It is not, however, the ceiling.



B. Sacrifice: St. Paul says of the Macedonians, “they gave as much as they were able and even beyond their ability” (2 Corinthians 8:3). That means they gave until it meant a sacrifice to their lifestyle. If the tithe is the floor, giving sacrificially, such that our dedication to Christ and His Church costs us something, is moving from the floor of faithfulness towards the ceiling of generosity.

C. Generosity: Christians are called not only to give a regular portion of their income, they are also called to give generously. This is both an attitude and a spiritual gift. All Christians are able to give with gladness and thanksgiving to celebrate Jesus’ sacrifice for us and the riches that await us at his return. Yet Paul also lists generosity as a spiritual gift (Romans 12:3-7). Think about those you recognize as generous. Unfortunately, most of us are not naturally generous. We must work hard at it. And yet some people seem to do so without even thinking about it. That’s the gift of generosity. We are all called to be faithful and sacrificial with our money. And some of us are called to use and enjoy our gift of generosity for the sake of the body. But how would you know that you have the gift of generosity if you are not taking the opportunity to use that gift? Perhaps you are missing out on a spiritual blessing.

3. Therefore, giving must be systematic and thoughtful. St. Paul directed the Corinthians to set aside a portion of their wealth each week until he came and received it, in this case for the relief of famine victims in Palestine. Meaning, it is good and right to have a plan for your giving. Let’s be honest, voluntarily giving your financial resources in a way that is faithful, sacrificial, and generous probably won’t happen by default. It takes intention, discipline, and commitment. Do you have a plan that holds you accountable to the Lord when it comes to your finances? If you currently do not give significantly to the church, do you at least have a plan for how to grow towards that practice? We as a church family can help one another have and hold to a plan of faithful, sacrificial, and generous financial support of our church.

In the coming months, you are going to hear church leadership address financial stewardship and generosity. The main reason for this is because it’s in keeping with what the Scriptures emphasize in terms of Christian discipleship. Jesus talks about our money more than he talks about all the rest combined. The other reason is because our church finances, while stable, are not strong. The math ain’t mathing as my kids like to say. I believe there is a lot of room for growth, and therefore health, for our church family in regard to our financial giving.

If this makes you nervous, you’re not alone. I’m sure Zaccheus was a bit wobbly at the knees when Jesus came to his house, and Zaccheus was an outright crook! Yet Jesus didn’t shame him. Jesus loved him. And out of gratitude for the love he received, Zaccheus demonstrated his love (and repentance) in very tangible ways. Because at the end of the day, Jesus, and his Church, are not after your money. Jesus wants your heart. Because where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. More to come.

Pastor Brian

New Birds to Pastor Brian’s Life List

No new birds, though I did have the delight to watch a group of American Goldfinches at my feeders recently. Spring is coming! (See page 4)

I offer my thanks and blessings to the leaders and members of the Port Ewen Reformed Church, as they ministered to me and my family following the illness and death of my wife, Linda. The church hosted a service celebrating her life, followed by the women hosting a luncheon that was super. You all were gracious hosts and hostess’s, ministering to us in the name of Jesus Christ. Thanks to Pastors Brian and Arlene leading us in worship. You have been an extended family for us and will continue to be for me. Rev. Nick Miles

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 Friday of each month at 11:00 AM Meetings open--call 331-2782 for agenda space. Next meeting March 13, 2026

ELDERS

Beverly Gallagher

Sunny Scherry

Len Falcinelli

DEACONS

Matthew Van Aken

Linda Bresnahan-McCarthy

Colleen Sutton



(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 — Steven Dougherty, Jeb Saracino, Luke Smith, Nina Stein, Christina El-lison, Chris Roscoe & family.

Church Family — Aubrey Stokes, Curt Bradley, Rev. Nick Miles.

Homebound/nursing homes/institutions — Bea Hogan.

Grieving — Family & friends of: Linda Miles, Robert Shelightner.



The **American Goldfinch** is a bright yellow bird that is difficult to miss. Though it is easily found at a feeder, how much do you actually know about the sweet, yellow bird? Check out these 10 fascinating facts about the American Goldfinch!



1. The American Goldfinch is the state bird of New Jersey, Iowa, and Washington
2. It is sometimes referred to as the 'Wild Canary' due to its bright yellow plumage (But keep in mind, these are the male finches only - the female goldfinch is much duller in color in contrast.)
3. Goldfinches are strictly vegetarian - they only eat seeds (sunflower and Nyjer are their favorites!)
4. Mating goldfinches sing virtually identical songs during flight. What is not identical about them is their color - during the spring and summer, males are a bright yellow color, whereas females are much duller in color
5. The male goldfinch always plays a role in raising nestlings. The male goldfinch will bring food to the nest where the mother will feed the young, then they will reach a point where both male and female feed the nestlings. At a point later in the family relationship, this shifts to where the role of the female declines, and the male will provide most food in later stages
6. American Goldfinches are the only type of finch that molt their feathers two times a year - once in late winter and again in late summer
7. Goldfinches are irregular in migration - they commonly travel south if winter conditions in their area get below 30 degrees Fahrenheit, but if temperatures remain above that through winter and there is an abundant food source, they may stick around all year
8. Plant Purple Coneflowers or sunflowers in your flower beds and gardens to attract American Goldfinches, they are some of their favorite snacks
9. Because American Goldfinches are strict seed-eaters, they are very easy to attract to feeders. Any size, shape, or style feeder should work, they are not picky!
10. American Goldfinches LOVE seeds! Fill your feeder with [Lyric Finch Small Songbird Mix](#) that features canary seed, canola seed, small golden millet seed, sunflower kernels, and [Nyjer seed](#), and watch these brightly colored birds pop in for a treat!



Stewardship Moment

Day 25 – None of your stuff is coming with you to eternity

1 Timothy 6:6-8

But, godliness with contentment is great gain.

For we brought nothing into the world,

and we can take nothing out of it.

But, if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

Anyone who has ever moved has had this thought: “Wow, I can’t believe I have this much stuff!” The reason this is especially clear is because you, in some manner or another, will have to pick up and move every single thing you have. Every box or armful means one more trip, one more trip up the stairs, one more trip down the hall; it makes for a lot of trips.

One good thing about moving is it also causes you to evaluate what we really need. We start to see what is important and what is just ‘stuff.’ The important things we keep, the stuff we get rid of. It’s a great process like that.

The Bible teaches us that in light of eternity, and our possessions are really just stuff. Paul notes in 1 Timothy Chapter 6 that we didn’t bring anything into the world. And you know what? We’re not taking anything out of the world either. Once we realize that none of our possessions will last into eternity, we have a new freedom.

If none of our stuff is eternal, then we don’t have to treat it like it is so important. In light of eternity, it becomes insignificant if we have the newest or the nicest things.

And let’s go even further. If we don’t get to keep any of our possessions, it’s a whole lot easier to be generous with them, isn’t it? Just like it is easy to give away an old piece of furniture you were getting rid of anyway, it becomes so much easier to give away things we think “belong” to us because, well, God’s getting rid of them when Christ returns anyway. When we live within the light of eternity, generosity just makes sense.

Today’s Generosity Challenge:

With your family, take a real inventory of everything in your house you haven’t used in the last 18 months. Everything – clothes, furniture, toys, even (or especially) including everything in storage. Now call the paper and announce a yard sale. That’s right; sell it all-be courageous- sell all of it. Then take all the proceeds and first pay off any debt you may have, starting with your credit cards. Then, call your favorite charity and donate everything that did not sell. If by some chance you still have a few dollars left, drop that in the offering box at your church. Be sure to write down how freeing this experience was at <http://GenerousLife.net/Day 25>.

* Michael L. Stickler, *A Journey to Generosity (41 Days to a Generous Life)* the Visiongroup Ltd. 2013. Pages 61-62



Consistory Installation

New consistory members were ordained and installed during the worship service on February 1. Congratulations to Elders Len Falcinelli, Bev Gallagher, and Sonny Scherry, and Deacons Linda Bresnahan-McCarthy and Matt Van Aken.

May God bless you in your ministry.



Baked Soft Pretzel Recipe — Sources :This recipe is adapted from homemade pretzel recipes by Alton Brown and Tasty.

Ingredients

1 ½ cups hot water
 1 tablespoon sugar
 1 tablespoon salt
 1 package active dry yeast
 4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter, melted
 4 ½ cups flour (22 ounces)
 10 cups water
 ⅔ cup baking soda
 1 egg, beaten and mixed with 1 tablespoon of water



Instructions

Mix the water, sugar, salt, and yeast together in a large bowl. Let the mixture sit for five minutes, until the yeast starts to bloom (it should look like a layer of foam on the surface of the water). Add in the butter and flour, and mix until the dough is smooth like satin. Cover the bowl and let it sit until the dough is doubled in size, about 1 hour. Preheat your oven to 450 degrees F and spray baking sheets with oil. Boil water with baking soda in a large saucepan. Divide the dough into eight pieces. Shape each piece of dough into a 24-inch rope and then twist it into pretzel shape. Dip each pretzel in the boiling water for 30 seconds on each side before placing it on the sheet pan. Brush the pretzels with egg wash and sprinkle them with salt. Bake for 12-14 minutes.

The March Mission of the Month will support The Transformation Life Center (TLC), a non-profit, faith based organization in West Park. TLC helps men and women learn how to recover from addiction and manage new lives of hope and freedom in mind, body and soul, through the understanding of rebuilding their true self identity and purpose found only in Jesus Christ. Upon completing their program, many feel called to extend their journey of healing beyond themselves, engaging in missionary work to spread hope and compassion. Visit their website at www.tlcnny.org for more information. If you feel called to donate to this mission, please write checks to The Reformed Church of Port Ewen and write "March M.O.M" on the memo line. Online giving is also available at: TheRCPE.org

Also throughout March, the RCPE will be collecting food and personal care items for the Ascension Holy Trinity Food Pantry in West Park. Baskets will be placed throughout the church. Please check



**TRANSFORMATION
LIFE CENTER**

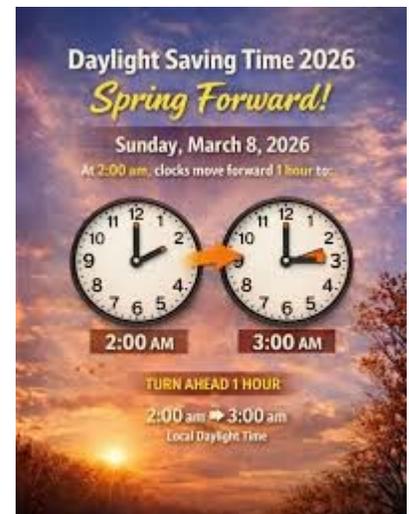
Note : the Mission of the Month for February 2026 collected \$ 462.76 for the St. James Happy to Help Food Pantry

March Birthdays

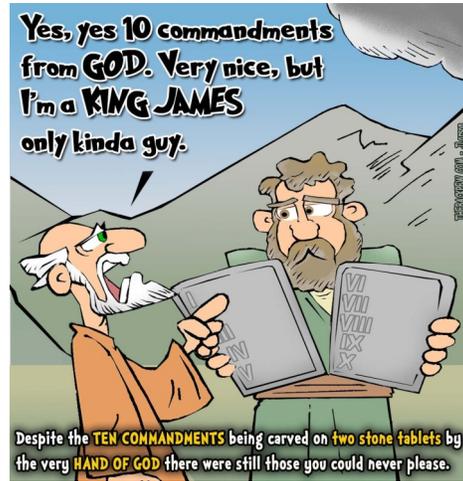
April Birthdays

- 26 Nick Miles
- 30 Johnny Candlin

- 3 Emma Spinnenweber
- 5 Beverly Sickler
- 5 Tom Sutton
- 8 Claire Steadman
- 13 Matt Van Aken
- 18 Elizabeth Finger
- 21 Lori Nichols
- 30 Tim Triscari



The Back Pew Clean Humor & God's Truth



MOVIES WITH SPIRIT

March 21, THE STATION AGENT (2003), Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, 22 Livingston St., Kingston — When reclusive Fin McBride (Peter Dinklage) inherits an abandoned train depot in rural New Jersey, he retreats there seeking solitude — and escape from a world that has often treated him unkindly because of his dwarfism. But his quiet life is interrupted by unexpected friendships with reticent painter Olivia (Patricia Clarkson), relentlessly friendly food truck owner Joe (Bobby Cannavale) and shy but curious librarian Emily (Michelle Williams). As these connections slowly deepen, Fin and the others begin to let their guards down. What starts out as cautious interactions grows into a transformative bond. With understated humor and emotional honesty, this gentle, deeply human film about loneliness, trust and the quiet grace of being seen affirms how friendship — no matter how unexpected — can restore our sense of belonging. *“A quiet joy with breathtaking performances.”* — Nell Minow, Common Sense Media. *“A delicate, thoughtful and often hilarious take on loneliness.”* — Elvis Mitchell. The New York Times. *“Invites you into its warm heart without offending your cynical*



The Station Agent

Holy Week Schedule

Maundy Thursday Service—April 2—6pm—at RCPE

Good Friday Service— April 3—7pm—at TBD

Easter Sunday Sunrise Service—George Freer Park—TBD

Easter Sunday Breakfast—RCPE—after sunrise service

Easter Sunday Worship Service—RCPE—10am

Celebrating Colleen Sutton's Tireless Service

At the Reformed Church of Port Ewen, we're incredibly grateful for the dedication and warmhearted care that Colleen Sutton brings to our church family. As chair of the Family Care Committee, Colleen truly lives out the spirit of kindness and service. She makes sure everyone feels supported, included, and loved — and she somehow does it all with a cheerful smile and endless energy.

Colleen's leadership shines through in everything she does. She keeps the care of our entire congregation running smoothly, coordinating countless details without missing a beat. Whether she's reaching out to someone in need, organizing meals and visits, or simply lending a listening ear, Colleen does it all with positivity and grace. Much of her work happens quietly behind the scenes, but we all feel the difference her efforts make every single week.

It's hard to put into words just how much time and heart Colleen pours into the Family Care Committee. She's always finding new ways to lift people up — whether through a kind message, a helping hand, or a thoughtful gesture. Her steady presence and generous spirit make our church not just a place of worship, but a true home for everyone who walks through our doors.

When our church was searching for a new pastor, Colleen's leadership as Vice President was truly a blessing. She guided us through that time of transition with patience, wisdom, and compassion. Colleen has a special gift for bringing people together and helping us stay focused on what matters most — our shared faith and mission as a church family.

On top of all that, Colleen has faithfully served as our Treasurer for many years. It's a big job — making sure bills are paid, staff are compensated, and every detail is handled with care — but Colleen takes it on with steady diligence and a sense of calm that keeps everything running smoothly.

From all of us at the Reformed Church of Port Ewen, thank you, Colleen, for everything you do. Your kindness, leadership, and positive spirit inspire us all. You remind us every day what it means to serve with love — and our church is a better, warmer place because of you.

Honoring a Pillar: Ray Wells

Today we take a moment to express our collective gratitude to Ray Wells, a man whose dedication to the Reformed Church of Port Ewen spans decades and touches every corner of our ministry. For many years, Ray has been a cornerstone of our congregation, serving in almost every leadership capacity possible—from the pastoral care and governance of the Elder and Deacon roles to his vital, meticulous work as our Financial Officer.

Ray's financial expertise has seen our Endowment Fund prosper, providing the vital resources that secure our church's physical home and our ongoing ministerial future. His stewardship is a masterclass in combining professional skill with a servant's heart. Yet, perhaps his greatest gift to us is his temperament. Ray's quiet, steady, and comforting manner has guided us through many seasons of change. We have found reassurance in his calm counsel and strength in his humble devotion. We are a stronger, more secure, and more peaceful church because of his dedicated stewardship. Thank you, Ray, for your life of service!



Lectionary Scripture Readings for March 2026



First reading and Psalm	Alternate first reading	Second reading	Gospel
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March 1, 2026	Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5,13-17; John 3:1-17		
March 8, 2026	Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42		
March 15, 2026	1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41		
March 22, 2026	Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45		
March 29, 2026	Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philemon @:5-11; Matthew 26:14-27		

What Did Jesus Eat and Drink? A One-Page Summary *The Everyday and Sacred Meals of First-Century Galilee*

The Last Supper, central to Christian tradition and the institution of Communion, invites us to look closer at the foods of Jesus’s everyday life. Understanding his daily meals sheds light on the cultural and spiritual context of the time—and on the continuing importance of sharing bread and wine.

Jesus’s meals reflected the agricultural landscape and Jewish customs of first-century Galilee. Food choices were humble yet nourishing, relying on what was locally available and permitted by dietary laws. Meals were shared and often began with prayers of gratitude.

Bread was the mainstay of every meal, commonly made from barley or wheat and baked in clay ovens. Sometimes it was enriched with olive oil, salt, or honey. Bread was frequently dipped in oil or eaten with legumes, cheese, dates, or honey.



With the Sea of Galilee nearby, fish was a frequent protein, caught and eaten fresh or salted. Legumes like lentils and beans were also common. Meat—such as lamb or goat—was reserved for festivals or special occasions due to its cost and religious significance.

A variety of fruits (figs, dates, grapes, pomegranates) and vegetables (onions, cucumbers, leeks) were part of the Galilean diet. Olives, both as food and as oil, were especially important, while honey and nuts provided occasional treats. Water and wine were the typical beverages. Because water could be unsafe, wine was often diluted before drinking—a practice in Jewish, Greek, and Roman cultures. Wine held religious meaning, especially in rituals like the Last Supper.

Jesus observed the Jewish laws of kashrut, which prohibited certain foods (like pork and shellfish) and required specific preparation for others. Food practices were deeply woven into both daily life and religious ceremonies.

The Last Supper, a Passover meal, included unleavened bread and wine that Jesus used as symbols of his sacrifice. This meal inspired the Christian practice of Communion, where bread and wine still represent Christ’s body and blood.

Jesus’s diet was shaped by the land, local customs, and Jewish law. Bread, fish, fruit, and wine were more than daily sustenance—they became lasting symbols within Christianity. Today, these simple foods connect believers to ancient tradition and to the meaning of shared meals.

March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am Children's	2	3	4 12:30 pm Bible Study (Lib) 4-9:30 pm SCA (FH) 7-7:45 pm Contemplative	5	6	7 6:30-10:30 pm Hudson Valley Comm Dance (FH)
8 THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am Children's Church	9 1:00 pm Mystery Book Club (Lib)	10 9 am—3 pm Woodstock Weavers 5-8 pm AA (FH)	11 12:30 pm Bible Study (Lib) 4-9:30 pm SCA (FH) 7-7:45 pm Contemplative	12	13 11:00 am Consistory Mtg. (Lib)	14
15 FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am Children's Church	16	17 5-8 pm AA (FH)	18 12:30 pm Bible Study (Lib) 4-9:30 pm SCA (FH) 7-7:45 pm Contemplative Prayer	19	20 REFORMER DEADLINE	21
22 FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am Children's Church	23	24 5-8 pm AA (FH)	25 12:30 pm Bible Study (Lib) 4-9:30 pm SCA (FH) 7-7:45 pm Contemplative Prayer	26	27	28
29 PALM SUNDAY 10:00 am Worship 10:00 am Children's Church 5-8 pm AA (FH)	30	31 5-8 pm AA (FH)				



March 2026 Reformer

Our facilities are handicapped accessible

We're on the net!
Therpcpe.org

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