

# Wenatchee Brethren Baptist Quarterly Newsletter

*Representing a Church of the Brethren & American Baptist Church, January / February / March Issue, 2026*

## AS CHRIST FORGIVES

*“Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice.  
Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.”*

—Ephesians 4:31-32

I'm pondering these words today. Of course they are inspired by Paul's understanding of Jesus' commandments. Specifically to “forgive not seven times but seven times seventy”—hyperbole Jesus used to express “keep forgiving,” not an encouragement to keep track so you can stop forgiving at 492, to be clear.

Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians may evoke some version of “Yeah, but--” and “whataboutism” in us.

“Yeah, but what about how they spoke to me? Yeah, but what about how they treated me? What about how hypocritical they always are? Yeah, but they aren't acknowledging what they did to me, and it was *bad!*”

To me, the foundation of our faith is this: God loves us now and we are forgiven and embraced by the love that holds the universe together exactly as we are today. To paraphrase CS Lewis: “We do not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because God loves us; just as the roof of a greenhouse does not attract the sun because it is bright, but becomes bright because the sun shines on it.”

Any ideas we have that we have to forgive, or do anything else “good” to persuade God to love us are not only misguided but really counterproductive. When we try to forgive *so that* God will accept us, we move into a guilt mindset and start to imagine we must forgive “or else...”

I am learning to read Paul's words above not as a list of how to “be better” nor a guilt-inducing reminder of how much my heart needs to change. Instead, I believe Jesus encourages us to set ourselves free from the things that would poison our hearts. What things? Bitterness, wrath, anger, wrangling, slander, malice. Unforgiveness. We aren't given this encouragement to put these things away so that we will become acceptable to God; God loves us and encourages us to put these things away so that we can thrive and be healthy and whole. Modern medicine tells us that these exact things—bitterness, anger, wrath, malice—will kill us. They will sabotage our health and cause us to deteriorate from the inside out.

“As God in Christ has forgiven you.” We are not trying to earn God's love; God loves us. We are not begging God to forgive us; we *are* forgiven. We are loved with an eternal and unconditional love by God, who *is* love, whose very being is love.

We are living in a world where, too often, kindness is seen as weakness, some call compassion and empathy “sins,” while revenge is held up as a value and forgiveness is mocked. Beloved, we could choose to reciprocate. We could take an eye for an eye. But that would imprison us. That would poison us. Jesus came to set us free from precisely these things. Jesus offers us the way of redemption, of love, tender hearts, and forgiveness, because he knows this is the way to life for us. In the economy of God, our choice to live compassionately also becomes the invitation to others to experience God's love.

We don't love others only when they deserve it. We love others because we believe God loves us, Jesus has shown us that love is the way to life, and we deserve what is good for us.

Pastor Mike

## JOY TO THE WORLD!

The Carol Sing and Reader's Theater Christmas program after a festive finger food potluck on December 14 was joyful and heartwarming. Special thanks to Judi Delabarre for her piano leadership in the Carol Sing as well as reading the part of a shepherd and hurrying back to the piano to play the final three carols! And thanks to all the folks who shared delicious food from smoked salmon and healthy vegetables to decadent holiday cookies.

In all we had ten readers - Keith Madsen, Jim Bailey, Jan White, Joe Roy, Judi Delabarre, Carolyn Storme, Merry Roy, Myla Fletcher, Avery Fletcher, and Leanne Ford. The Nativity was enacted by Layla as an angel, Mac and Paxton as shepherds, and a vintage Baby Jesus (a 100 year old Effenbee baby doll).

The spontaneity and flexibility of the cast – just as in the first Christmas – and the participation of everyone in the gathered audience made this program beautiful.

Thank you, all participants, and thank you Jesus!

Merry Roy, Spiritual Nurture Chair

### MARCH 8, DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS!

(Don't forget to set your clocks ahead 1 hour)



### 2 CENTS WORTH OFFERING Sunday, February 22

The 2 Cents Worth Offering is where every person sets aside 2 Cents for every meal every person eats in their home to go toward world hunger and the Heifer Project.



## REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Our Shut-ins:

Mary Kintner  
Carolyn Storme  
Shirley Beck  
Darlene Ball  
Warren & Evelyn Eikenberry  
Jim Hart  
Jay Stockwell

### JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

14<sup>th</sup> Merry Roy  
15<sup>th</sup> Lorie Saucedo  
17<sup>th</sup> Jim Bailey

### FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2<sup>nd</sup> Evelyn Eikenberry  
7<sup>th</sup> Virginia Crowl  
10<sup>th</sup> Barbara Miller  
24<sup>th</sup> Jay Stockwell  
25<sup>th</sup> Lisa Vickery  
27<sup>th</sup> Warren Eikenberry  
28<sup>th</sup> Dan White

### MARCH BIRTHDAYS

15<sup>th</sup> Karen Whitley

### JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

6<sup>th</sup> Dennis & Betty Radke  
31<sup>st</sup> Don & Barbara Miller

### FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

22<sup>nd</sup> Dave & Karen Whitley

### MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

No Anniversaries



Happy Birthday to You  
(sung to the usual tune)

Happy Birthday to you!  
To Jesus stay true!  
May all of God's blessings  
Rain down upon you!



*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the kings and princes are home,  
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
the **work** of Christmas begins:  
to **find** the lost,  
to **heal** the broken,  
to **feed** the hungry,  
to **release** the prisoner,  
to **rebuild** the nations,  
to **bring peace** among people,  
to **make music** in the **heart**.*

—Howard Thurman



### Creation Care Corner

Does it bother you to see a big pile of crumpled up wrapping paper after a Christmas gift gathering? Are you (like me) a person who smooths out the wrapping paper to use for future wrapping?

There are many ways to wrap gifts (and wrapping does make a present special) with little or no waste. The classic waste-free wrapping is with newspapers, especially using the Sunday comic section. And a brown paper bag makes a perfect wrapping that can be decorated if desired with crayons, markers, or stamps. Rescued ribbons can elevate these packages.

Here are some more upscale ways to wrap a gift:

- use a colorful scarf (the Japanese do this)
  - use fabric remnants cut with pinking shears
  - make a reusable fabric bag or purchase one from the grocery store as part of the gift
  - sew small fabric squares into a mini-quilt for wrapping
  - use old maps which can be fascinating in themselves
  - use a tea towel
  - use colorful pages from a magazine
- I'm sure you can think of other creative ways to wrap up the gift. Ribbons can be strips of fabric, string, twine, or long thin strips cut from paper (you can even curl these).

Being creative is a big part of the fun. And I think Jesus smiles along with us. Afterall, he is the Creator.

Creation Care Team

### DEACONS

The Deacons have supported our congregation with someone called a “Crisis Deacon” and later “Comfort Deacon” for a LONG TIME. It has been a valuable tool for supporting each other in times of crisis or joy. We have now decided to discontinue that program because we can no longer sustain it. The dwindling size of the congregation and the many duties each of us has is part of the decision. The bigger part is that greeting cards are expensive and the price of a first-class stamp is now nearly \$1.00 each! That doesn't mean that you can't send a card to someone who is sick or needing comfort and care. It just means that the Deacons, with sadness, will no longer sponsor the program. The last Comfort Deacon will conclude at the end of December.

Deacon Chairs,  
Leanne Ford & Linda Vickery

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### —from THE BRETHREN NEWSLINE



A new video titled “Walking with Our Immigrant Brothers and Sisters” about the Deportation Defense Response and the Legal and Mutual Aid Grant Fund, produced by David Sollenberger, is now available to view online at

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZ4tpVBq8Yw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZ4tpVBq8Yw). The video shares how Church of the Brethren members are being swept up in the deportation crisis in the United States and shares the church's Deportation Defense Response. This video accompanies a request by On Earth Peace to raise another \$150,000 to support those Brethren who are being impacted by the immigration crackdown. The video is meant to be shared widely, with districts and congregations invited to recommend it to their members and to arrange viewing by small groups and Sunday school classes.



**11:00am Adult Bible Study**

**12:00pm Worship Service**

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**Take a few minutes to pray for our Church,  
our country & its leaders  
and the World!**

Pastor  
Office Manager/Bookkeeper  
Minister of Music  
Transportation Ministry  
Jr. Church Teacher

In-Office Hours are flexible & limited.  
Please call the office before coming in.