



# *Manassas Church of the Brethren December 2025*

## *It's Advent Season!*

Greetings, MCOB family and friends! We are delighted to have you join us this Advent season as we celebrate the arrival of Christ.

December is filled with wonderful opportunities to engage, volunteer, and share your gifts. We begin with our Cards & Games Club on Thursday, December 4—the only meeting this month—and note that the Lovina Conner Circle will not meet in December.

On December 6, the Young Adult and Sojourners groups will gather for a Christmas potluck at the Barb household. The Retirees' Luncheon is on December 18 (details on page 3). Our Youth are also invited to join the Northern Virginia Churches of the Brethren Christmas Party on December 14 at 2:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Center. We have the opportunity for Adult Fellowship following the Intentional Property Prayer on December 21st. We will head to Texas Roadhouse after the prayer walk (see page 11).

Throughout the month, we are offering several ways to give. The Cards & Caring Hands Class is collecting warm winter items (see page 6), and we are once again participating in the Un-Trim-A-Tree program (also page 6). We invite the entire congregation into intentional prayer regarding our property proposal, and our Christmas Eve Service offering will support the Hope & Serenity Farm Sanctuary (see page 5).

Our Blue Christmas Service will be on December 21, see page 5. We are once again hosting the Healthy Families Holiday Party. (see page 11)

Our reading group for January has selected a new book, see page 7, which also includes a wrap-up of the recent Conscience & War workshop.

Looking ahead, our Winter Sunday School curriculum is outlined on page 8. Our Kids & Youth will host a bean and bake sale on December 7 (page 9), and Bible Study will be using the Sanctified Art Advent devotional (page 10).

We are grateful to share this Advent season with you.

Merry Christmas to all!



**Stewardship November 2025**

**Average Attendance per week**

**In Person: 91**

**Online: 41**

**Total Weekly Average offering: \$8,862.00**

# Pastor's Page

This season of Advent, we are exploring the theme from A Sanctified Art "What Do You Fear?: Insisting on Hope This Advent" Here's how they describe this year's theme:

"Luke's Gospel begins the story of Jesus with this opening line: "In the time of Herod..." This detail may seem minor to modern readers, however, it reveals layers of information about the fearful world Jesus entered, one filled with rampant oppression, economic disparity, uncertainty, and instability. A world not so unlike our own. And yet, throughout the stories of Christ's birth, the whispers of angels deliver a surprising message: "Do not fear." In our own time, we might ask: is it even possible to be fearless in a fearful world? When Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the magi are each called into God's redemptive story, they do not deny their fears—they move through them. They ask questions, hold fast to courage, trust in good news, and say, "Here I am, Lord." When we find ourselves in fearful times, can we acknowledge our fears while also insisting on hope?

Every Advent, we light candles, sing carols, and pray for Christ's coming because we believe God entered a frightened world to bring good news. We hold onto hope because we believe that Christ did come—that's the promise of the season. Our hope is not flimsy or fleeting. It's gritty, resilient, and can endure—no matter what we fear or face. This season, let us insist on hope and trust that good news is greater than fear."

May we enter into this season of Advent with open hearts and minds to face our fears and insist on gritty hope together.

~Pastor Mandy



## Worship Themes

### **December 7: 130th Anniversary Sunday**

When we're running out of hope, God is at work

Scripture: Matthew 11:1-11, Isaiah 43:19-21

Preacher: Pastor Jeff Carter

Worship Leader: Pastor Mandy

### **December 14: Cantata Sunday**

Even in our fear, we are called forward

Scripture: Luke 1:26-29, Jeremiah 1:4-10

Preacher: Cantata Sunday

Worship Leader: Pastor Mandy

### **December 21:**

When you're afraid, give me your hand

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25, Isaiah 41:5-10

Preacher: Pastor Mandy, Worship Leader: Sean North

### **December 24: Christmas Eve Service @ 7 pm**

Good news is louder than fear

Scripture: Luke 2:1-20

Preacher: Pastor Mandy

Worship Leader: Pastor Mark

### **December 28: Hymn Sing Sunday**

Let fear fuel a fire for justice

Scripture: Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Preacher: Pastor Mark

Worship Leader: Worship & Music Ministry Team

# Events

THURSDAY  
DECEMBER 4TH  
1:00PM-4:00PM



**MANASSAS CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN**

**CARDS & GAMES!**

ALL ARE INVITED TO JOIN!

**WITH CONTRACT BRIDGE!**



YOUNG ADULT/SOJOURNERS

# Christmas POTLUCK

Hosted by the Barb Family!  
Bring your favorite dish and join us for food,  
fellowship, and fun! Bring the family!



DECEMBER **6** AT 5:00PM

13420 FLEETWOOD DR,  
NOKESVILLE, VA 20181.

**Let's celebrate!**



**Retirees' Luncheon!**  
**All are welcome!**

**Thursday December 18th**  
**1:00pm**

**Great American Buffet**  
**8365 Sudley Rd.**



## Forgetful Friends Chorus

1st and 3rd Tuesdays from 3:30pm - 4:30pm

Manassas Church of the Brethren  
Sanctuary  
10047 Nokesville Road  
Manassas, VA 20110

If you or your loved one has dementia, please join our Forgetful Friends Chorus! Former caregivers are also welcome. Sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association with support from Manassas Church of the Brethren and the Heritage Hunt Women's Club. Please email with any questions.

Email: [forgetfulfriendschorus@gmail.com](mailto:forgetfulfriendschorus@gmail.com)



# Youth News

## Youth Christmas Party Sunday, December 14th

We are hosting a Youth Christmas Party for all the NOVA COBs (Arlington, Oakton, Woodbridge, Manassas, Nokesville, Dranesville, & Midland) on Sunday December 14th from 2-4 pm. We are inviting all youth in Grades 6-12 to attend.

Manassas COB Youth are invited to stay after worship for some pizza and to help decorate and set-up for the party. Then stay for the fun and fellowship!

Please RSVP to Pastor Mark:  
[mark.pickens@manassasbrethren.org](mailto:mark.pickens@manassasbrethren.org)

**NOVA COB**  
*Youth Christmas Party*

DECEMBER  
SUNDAY | 14 | 2:00pm - 4:00pm

Hey, all you fabulous 6th to 12th graders! Get ready for a blast of fun and fellowship!

MANASSAS COB FELLOWSHIP CENTER  
10047 NOKESVILLE ROAD  
MANASSAS, VA 20110

PLEASE RSVP TO  
PASTOR MARK PICKENS:  
[MARK.PICKENS@MANASSASBRETHREN.ORG](mailto:MARK.PICKENS@MANASSASBRETHREN.ORG)

# Winter Retreat

**Weekend Youth Retreat January 9-10, 2026** For the past few years, we have been invited to attend a Winter Retreat with Lancaster Church of the Brethren. The retreat has expanded to include the entire Atlantic Northeast District and their Manassas Church of the Brethren friends! It will be led by Peacefully, Simply, Together student group from Etown College and held at York First COB, 2710 Kingston Rd, York, PA 17402. It's limited to 50 youth participants. Our weekend focus is to bring together youth from around the area for fun and service at an inexpensive retreat for both Jr and Sr High youth. We will spend time in conversation around Brethren values and lifestyle. The cost is \$15 per person (youth and advisors). This cost includes a Friday evening snack and Saturday breakfast and lunch. Here's a link with all the details: <https://files.constantcontact.com/0524495d501/8cf08b16-9708-421e-abf7-bdd6e4689dfa.pdf>

To make this retreat possible, we could use some adult advisors to attend with our youth. So please reach out to Pastor Mark and let him know if you can serve as an advisor and/or if your youth wants to attend.



## District Youth Repeat Retreat

Led by Peacefully, Simply, Together group from Elizabethtown College

Held at York First Church of the Brethren



### Retreat Highlights

- Exploration of Brethren Values & Lifestyle
- Inspiring Worship & Sessions
- Service Project
- Fun Games & Activities
- Meet Other COB Youth!

### Scan QR Code for more information!

Register by January 5

Questions? Contact  
[witkovskyd@gmail.com](mailto:witkovskyd@gmail.com) or  
[lindab@lancob.org](mailto:lindab@lancob.org)

**January 9-11, 2026**

Youth Grades 6-12

Limited to 50 Participants

# *Praise*

## *Property Prayer Walk*

**Wednesday, December 10th @ 5 pm or Sunday, December 21st @ 12 noon**

As we continue this 6-month Discernment for the Property Proposal, we invite everyone into a time of prayer this month. We have spent the last few months hosting Listening Sessions about the Property Proposal. We have listened to each other share our concerns, our questions, and our hopes for our ongoing ministry together as the Manassas Church of the Brethren.

Now, it's time to carve out space and listen for God... how is God calling the Manassas Church of the Brethren forward?

You are invited to join Pastors Mandy and Mark for an intentional time of prayer at one of the dates above. Or you can come to the church any time this month for prayer discerning the property proposal. A Prayer Guide will be available December 10th and accessible throughout the month.



## *Christmas Eve Candlelight Service*

**Join us for this special service on  
Wednesday, December 24th at 7:00 pm**

**In-Person/ Livestream**

*This is a time to worship and celebrate  
Jesus' birth into this world, the great  
Emmanuel, God with us!*

Our traditional Christmas Eve worship service will include the re-telling of the Christmas story from Luke's gospel, singing Christmas hymns, and candle-lighting. During the service, we will take up a special offering to

benefit Hope and Serenity Farm Sanctuary. You can learn more about them here: <https://hopeserenity.org/>

## *Blue Christmas Service*

**Sunday, December 21 at 7:00 pm**



We offer this simple worship as a way to make space for difficult emotions during the holiday season, particularly grief around endings and anxiety around new beginnings. We hope this service will acknowledge the hole that grief leaves in one's heart while simultaneously remembering that we worship a God who is with us, even in the darkest of times.

# Giving

## Keeping Our Neighbors Warm



Each December, the Cards and Caring Hands (CACH) class displays some of the handy work they do all year long in providing for the community in need of comfort and warmth. The Cards and Caring Hands Sunday School class will once again display the plethora of items created by class members and generous donations created by others that will be donated to NVFS on Christmas Eve after the worship service. The CACH class is asking for you to support their service by providing new throw blankets, hats, scarves, gloves, or mittens too. Items for all ages are welcome. The tree and items will be displayed in

the church library beginning on December 8th Bring your items to the table between Dec. 8th and Dec. 24th.



## Un-Trim-a-Tree Program

We have been participating with this program for decades and are glad to continue this very special

program that serves children in need in our community. This year we are sponsoring children who will receive two gift tags that are now hanging on our wonderful Christmas tree in the library. Please try to get the items from the child's wish list. We try to keep it to a gift/\$35 as a guide. Please bring the unwrapped gifts with the tag taped to the gift or bag to the church by December 8, 2025. The tag is very important, so we know what gift goes with each child. The gifts can be left by the tree in the library or in the church office. Many thanks for your generosity in bringing much-needed joy to the faces of these children this Christmas season! If you have any questions please contact Mary Geisler.



## *Christmas with Mercy 2025*

House of Mercy is looking for volunteers on Friday, December 12th for Christmas With Mercy, their annual Christmas gift program. It is taking place on Friday December 12th and Saturday the 13th. They currently need volunteer help on Friday December 12th. Contact Tina Fisher if you can help. Here's the link to learn more:

[Christmas with Mercy 2025 | PlanHero](#)



# Conscience and War Workshop Wrap-up

On November 9, about 20 youth and adults attended a workshop presented by the Center on Conscience & War on Selective Service, Conscientious Objection, and Military Recruitment. Attendees learned how to compile a Conscientious Objector (CO) File discerning answers to the following questions:

- 1) Describe the beliefs which are the basis for your claim as a conscientious objector. If appropriate, state whether those beliefs would permit you to serve in a noncombatant position in the armed forces.
- 2) Describe how your beliefs developed, mentioning any religious training you have had if you feel such training helped you arrive at your position.
- 3) Describe how your beliefs affect the way you live and the type of work you do or plan to do.

Resources from this workshop are available in the narthex at the Welcome Center and include brochures on the Delayed Entry Program and What You Should Know Before Joining the Military. Please feel free to help yourself to these. For more information about the Center of Conscience & War, please check out their website: [centeronconscience.org](http://centeronconscience.org)



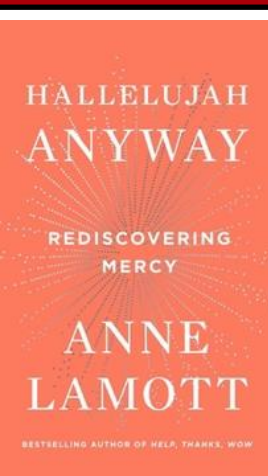
## 130th Anniversary Celebration Continues



### Jeff Carter Preaching on December 7th

As we wrap up our year of celebrating 130 years of ministry in the Manassas community, we will conclude with Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Carter coming to guest preach on Sunday, December 7th. Jeff served on the pastoral staff from 1995-2013 and now serves as the President of Bethany Theological Seminary. He will join us at 9 am for Doughnut Breakfast with a Meet & Greet. Then he will share in the Adult Sunday School Class for a Q&A and give us an update on the seminary. He will preach at our 11 am worship service, while Pastor Mandy serves as worship leader.

## MCOB Reading Group



The MCoB Reading Group will be meeting on 1/5 at 7 p.m. to discuss Anne Lamott's Hallelujah Anyway:

Rediscovering Mercy. If you haven't read Lamott before, you are in for a treat because she has a conversational, relatable, honest, and self-deprecating style. This short book explores mercy and where to find meaning in life, and how mercy to ourselves and others is the ultimate kindness, saying "kindness towards others, beginning with myself, buys us a shot at a warm and generous heart, the greatest prize of all."

For those unfamiliar with the MCoB Reading Group, we read one book chosen by members every few months and then meet one evening to discuss it. That gives us each the flexibility to read at our leisure before the meeting and doesn't require a large commitment of time for discussion (the meeting is generally an hour). Lamott's book is pretty short, so it gives you a perfect opportunity to try us out! We'd love to have you with us and there is an online option.

Hallelujah Anyway is available from your favorite online bookseller in several options, including an audio-book. The book is also available for free via the PWC Library in the Libby app.

# *December Curriculum*

## **Winter Sunday School Curriculum Pre-K—Jr. High Youth**

**Year 6, Quarter 2 (Winter 2025–26)  
The Upside-Down Kingdom**

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Session Title</b>	<b>Text</b>	<b>Faith Link</b>
<b>Advent &amp; Christmas</b>				
<b>1</b>	Nov. 30	Here Is Your God!	Isaiah 40:1–11	We can prepare the way for Jesus.
<b>2</b>	Dec. 7	Joseph's Dream	Matthew 1:18–25	We can listen to God.
<b>3</b>	Dec. 14	Mary Shares Her Joy	Luke 1:26–56	We can tell others what God has done.
<b>4</b>	Dec. 21	Jesus Is Born	Luke 2:1–20	We can celebrate Jesus' birth.
<b>5</b>	Dec. 28	Magi Come to Worship	Matthew 2:1–12	We can honor Jesus.

## *Sr. High Sunday School*

### **Sr. High Sunday School**

**Our Sr. High Youth will be attending a class led by Pastor Mandy on LGBTQ+ and the Bible.**

## *Adult Sunday School*

Our Adult Sunday School in the Fellowship Hall will study the Brethren Press Advent Devotional (see page 10) schedule in December:

12/7 - Q& A with Pastor Jeff Carter.

12/14 - Brethren Press Devotional Study w/ Pastor Mark.

12/21 & 12/28 - Brethren Press Devotional w/ Terrie Cox.

# Bread for the World

BREAD FOR THE WORLD  
BEAN & BAKE SALE  
SUNDAY DECEMBER 7TH!



Our Elementary and Jr. High Youth will be holding a bean & bake sale to benefit Bread for the World.

Baking Day - Sunday November 30th  
9:45 am (Sunday School Hour)



## Cantata

*Christmas Cantata—December 14th*

We hope you can attend our Cantata worship service!

Our Chancel Choir will be singing beautiful songs of the Advent season from *This is Christmas: Celebrating the Heart of Christmas* by Mary McDonald.



# *Advent Devotional*

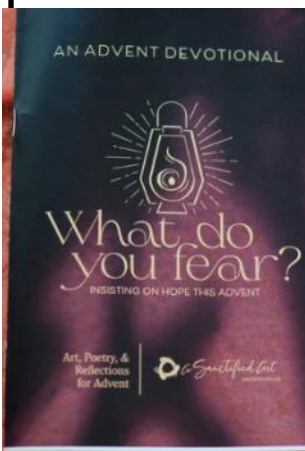
## **2025 Brethren Press Advent Devotional**



The season of Advent reminds us of God’s choice to enter into human experience in a physical way, by sending Jesus. Jesus has some borders to cross in order to “become flesh and live among us,” as John’s Gospel tells us. Because of the tangled mess we have created with our desire to fence off the world, Jesus must continually challenge and even cross our hurtful attempts to section off this from that, and us from them. Yet rightly ordered borders, laid gently by our Creator, can bring us life. Advent is an invitation to witness again the way Jesus navigates the landscape of our human division, tearing down the dividing walls and calling us back to a rightly ordered relationship with him.

# *Bible Study Advent Devotional*

## **A Sanctified Art Advent Devotional**



This Advent series takes seriously the angels’ message and trusts that Christ’s birth truly is good news of great joy for all people. The resources look closely at the fear and terror looming in the background during the time of King Herod and invite us to consider the fears we hold now. Fear can divide and paralyze us and even be used as a tool for oppression. But what if we formed a different relationship with fear? Can we acknowledge fear without letting it rule us? Might we catalyze our fears into love and action? What if naming our fears helps us see more clearly how God is breaking in and where God is at work?

# *Children Disaster Services*

Children’s Disaster Services is seeking a Program Assistant. If you know of anyone who may be interested, please direct them to the link below. The position requires the Program Assistant to work on-site in New Windsor, Maryland. <https://www.brethren.org/about/employment/>

If you are interested in working with CDS, click here for the upcoming training schedule: <https://www.brethren.org/cds/training/>

# Healthy Families

## Healthy Families Prince William Celebrates

On Friday, November 14, Healthy Families Prince William (under the umbrella of Northern Virginia Family Services), held an inaugural graduation ceremony at Sinclair Elementary School for 14 of their families that recently completed the 5-year program. That is a big win for these families and our community in which they live. Healthy Families is the national home visiting program focused on early childhood relational health – partnering

with parents to help their children thrive. Healthy Families Prince William is fully certified by Healthy Families America. To learn more about the local program, visit the website or contact Tina Fisher, our Community Engagement Coordinator, and member of Healthy Families PW Advisory Board. [Healthy Families - Northern Virginia Family Service](#)



If you would like to get involved, our church will host the annual Healthy Families Holiday Party on Friday, December 5, 2025, from 5pm-8pm. If you are willing and available to volunteer to help prepare and serve food from the kitchen, help kids decorate cookies, or help with other play stations situated around the gym, please contact Tina Fisher before Friday, December 5, 2025. Santa Claus will be so pleased to see you there!

# Adult Fellowship



**ADULT FELLOWSHIP GROUP**

**Sunday, December**

**21st**

**12:30pm**



**Join us for an intentional  
property prayer  
following worship, then  
meet at**

**Texas Roadhouse  
9875 Liberia Avenue**

# *Ways to Serve*

## *Ways to Serve!*

**Ushers**



**Sound Board**



**Acolytes**



**Children's Church**



**Nursery**



**Worship Leaders**




Share your time and extend hospitality! Consider signing up for our Sunday morning services!



# December 2025



<b>Sun</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thu</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 12:00pm—Lunch Bunch @ Liberia Arby's 3:30pm—Forgetful Friends Chorus	<b>3</b> 6:30pm—Bible Study 7:30pm—Choir Practice	<b>4</b> 1:00pm—Cards & Games Club	<b>5</b> 5:00pm—Healthy Families Party	<b>6</b> 5:00pm—YA Sojourner Holiday Potluck @ The Barbs
<b>7</b> 9:00am—Doughnut B'fast 9:45am—Sunday School 11:00am—Worship w/ Jeff Carter Bread for the world	<b>8</b> 6:15pm—Executive Committee 7:30 pm-Church Board	<b>9</b> 12:00pm—Lunch Bunch @ Liberia Arby's	<b>10</b> 5pm— Guided Property Prayer 6:30pm—Bible Study 7:30pm—Choir	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> <b>House of Mercy</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> 9:45am—SS 11:00am—Worship 2:00pm—COB Youth Christmas Party	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 12:00pm—Lunch Bunch @ Liberia Arby's 3:30pm—Forgetful Friends Chorus	<b>17</b> 6:30pm—Bible Study 7:30pm—Choir Practice	<b>18</b> 1:00pm—Retirees' Luncheon	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> 9:45am—SS 11:00am—Worship 12:00—Property Prayer and Adult Fellowship 7:00pm Blue Xmas	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 	<b>26</b> OFFICE CLOSED GYM FLOOR RESTORATION	<b>27</b> OFFICE CLOSED GYM FLOOR RESTORATION
<b>28</b> 11:00am—Worship GYM FLOOR RESTORATION	<b>29</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>30</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>31</b> OFFICE CLOSED			

**MANASSAS CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN  
10047 NOKESVILLE ROAD  
MANASSAS VIRGINIA 20110**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



<b>4-Doug S.</b>	<b>19-Kevin S.</b>
<b>5-James B.</b>	<b>20-Leonard P.</b>
<b>6-Luke C.</b>	<b>21-Joe P.</b>
<b>6-Emily W.</b>	<b>24-Connley F.</b>
<b>6-Diane P.</b>	<b>25-Christopher B.</b>
<b>8-Anna W.</b>	<b>25-James L.</b>
<b>8-Julia R.</b>	<b>26-Lucas D.</b>
<b>12-Kelly K.</b>	<b>27-Zelda P.</b>
<b>13-Otto C.</b>	<b>27-Rick B.</b>
<b>13-Eli H.</b>	<b>28-Jim B.</b>
<b>14-Anna C.</b>	<b>28-Caroline B.</b>
<b>15-Kyra O.</b>	<b>30-Priscilla W.</b>
<b>16-Craig G.</b>	<b>31-Patricia F.</b>
<b>17-Dick P.</b>	



*Happy Anniversary!*

<b>2- Jeff and Kim C.</b>
<b>17-Steve and Julie F.</b>
<b>27-Wayne and Kathie K.</b>
<b>29-James &amp; Nancy E.</b>

**We want to celebrate with you! Let our church office know your birthday and/or anniversary!**