



The Manbeck Messenger

*"Look! I am sending my messenger,
and he will prepare the way before me" (Malachi 3:1a)*

JANUARY 2026

Monthly Newsletter of Manbeck's Zion Evangelical Congregational Church

"Seeking to know Christ and make Him known"

110 Wild Cherry Road

Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972

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www.manbecks.org

MANBECK'S "ZION" SERVICES

SUNDAY

WORSHIP...9:00 AM

SUNDAY SCHOOL...10:40 AM

YOUTH GROUP...6:30 PM

WEDNESDAY

PRAYER...6:00 PM

THE CHOSEN: Season 7...7:00 PM

1st WEDNESDAY of the Month

EC Day of Prayer

4th FRIDAY of the Month (January 23rd)

PRAISE NIGHT... 7:00 PM

*From the
Pastor*

Gemini

"Get Real in 2026"

To save time, I just used AI for today's article. For fun I just typed in: "write a good pastoral newsletter article for January" and here's what came up:

Happy New Year! As we step into 2026, I find myself reflecting on how quickly time moves—it truly feels like only yesterday we were beginning 2025. Yet, here we are at a "watershed moment," a time to make important decisions about how we will grow together in the coming year.

Embracing the "New Thing"

In this season of Epiphany, we celebrate the new life God offers. The biblical stories are filled with people who noticed God's initiatives because they lived with **sacred curiosity**. They didn't just fix their gaze on "how it's always been," but were open-hearted enough to see that God was up to something new.

My prayer for us in 2026 is that we approach our lives and our church with that same wonder. Rather than traditional resolutions that often lead to stress or a sense of failure, let's ask a different question: "God, what new thing are You doing among us?"

Faith-Based Habits for 2026

If you are looking for ways to deepen your commitment to Christ this month, consider these five steps for a fruitful year:

- **Daily Scripture:** Start a Bible reading plan to ground yourself in His Word.
- **Persistent Prayer:** Commit to a rhythm of daily prayer
- **Intentional Serving:** Look for ways to use your unique gifts,
- **Generous Living:** Practice "sacred stewardship" by being present and sacrificial in your interactions with others.
- **Deep Community:** Don't walk alone. Join a small group for real connection.



Pastor Kyle here (for real): This scares me. (It even loaded in "roboto" font). It's actually not a bad article. I did edit a few things to shorten it for the newsletter, but otherwise it's good information, even appropriately quoting scripture further into the article! I was mostly just curious at how a computer would do standing in for a pastor. I'm actually not the first to try it. In late 2023 a Catholic group in San Diego created "Father Justin" - an A.I. "bot" who could receive confession from parishioners. Last year Pastor Ron Carpenter created a bot of himself that could answer questions from his congregation (only \$49 to subscribe). What it never will provide is eye contact, or personal touch, or a genuine listening ear. AND (this is most important) it will never be guided by the very real Holy Spirit. These are things you will only ever find in true, personal relationship at Church. To correct my A.I. counterpart – the "new thing" that God is doing is actually as old as the first Pentecost Sunday: Transformed lives through the power of His Spirit working in His Church (visible and present with one another). Let's "get real" this year by meeting weekly to love one another and grow in Christ. -- *Journeying with you, Pastor Kyle*

PINE GROVE AREA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The Food Pantry is trying to collect cookies as we can no longer get bread, pastries, fruits, vegetables and frozen products from Helping Harvest. The tub will be placed in the foyer.

We are collecting any brand of ink cartridges and used batteries. You can either give them to Cathy or put them back on the desk in the fellowship hall. We will use them for either buying ink for Church School or purchasing church supplies at Staples.

Please continue to pray for the Church School and Council of Churches and all it does for the community.

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CHURCH CLEANING

A cleaning schedule is posted for 2025 on the inside of the church door in the vestibule. Church cleaning is done by individuals in our church who volunteer for a month. If you would like to volunteer, just sign your name on the sign-up sheet behind the month you would like to clean. Thank you!

* * * * *

GOOD NEWS CLUB

Good News Club is moving right along. We are up to 17 children. Club is held on Thursdays, from 3:10 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. If you would like to help financially with snacks, please see Cathy Nagle.

There is a teacher in the Minersville area school district that would like to see a Release Time Class start up there. For decades the administration of that district refused to allow a club. Pray that God will make it all fall in place and that they can get volunteers to help.

Please continue pray for this very important ministry.

* * * * *

SPECIAL MUSIC

Jan. 4 – Chris Nickel	Feb. 1 – Lily Flynn
Jan. 11 – Lisa Dillon	Feb. 8 – Deb Reiter
Jan. 18 – Ardella Newswanger	Feb. 15 – Flutes
Jan. 25 – Ladies Chorus	Feb. 22 – Judy & Ardella

If you are unable to fulfill your obligation throughout the year, please contact Ardella or Judy. If you would like to be added or taken off for special music, please see Cathy Nagle.

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USHERS

Jan. 4 – Laura & Faith	Feb. 1 – Deb & Ernie
Jan. 11 – Roth Family	Feb. 8 – Kurtz family
Jan. 18 – Larue & Florence	Feb. 15 – Flynn family
Jan. 25 – Kelly & Jason	Feb. 22 – Chris & Cathy

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JUNIOR CHURCH AND NURSERY

The children will be dismissed for Jr. Church which is taught by Lori Roth. The nursery schedule for five and under is listed below. We are looking for more volunteers to serve. Please see Lori Roth.

Jan. 4 – Kelly Brown	Feb. 1 – Ardella Newswanger
Jan. 11 – Lisa Dillon	Feb. 8 – Wayne & Donna
Jan. 18 – Jen Flynn	Feb. 15 – Cathy Nagle
Jan. 25 – D. Reiter	Feb. 22 – Sandy Hrichak

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LADIES LUNCHEON

The monthly Ladies Luncheon will be held on January 22. Place and time will be decided later and will be put in the bulletin.

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

The Benevolent Fund Offering will be received on January 11. This offering helps people who may be in need in our church family and in our community.

The Monthly Special Offering will be received on January 25. This will be going to the Jewel Women's Center. We also will be doing baby bottle boomerang this year.

Please give as the Lord leads you to support these ministries. Envelopes are provided in your weekly bulletin. You may also mail your offerings to:

Deborah Reiter
159 Spittler Road
Pine Grove, PA 17963

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OFFICIAL BOARD NEWS

The Official Board met on December 16 with twelve members in attendance. Items of discussion are as follows:

- Egg Hunt will be held on March 29
- VBS will be held on June 22-26.
- Communion Sunday will be held on January 4.
- Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Jan. 18 after the morning service.
- Trees were taken care of by Klean Kut Tree Service
- A/C was cleaned by Martin's. It was free.
- Official Board to start working on By-Laws again
- CEF will be holding a Christian Youth in Action for any youth interested in becoming a summer missionary.
- Will be purchasing a new Christmas tree for next year.
- Directory will get updated this year.
- Next meeting will be held January 20. At this time the Official Board will reorganize.

LADIES LUNCHEON

The Ladies Luncheon for the month is scheduled for the 22nd, at 11:00 AM. Location to be determined. Watch your Sunday Bulletins and/or Pastor Kyle's Weekly Newsletter for the location.



GENERAL FUND

Date	Num	Description	Category	Amount
		BALANCE 11/17/2025		27,486.71
11/23/2025	DEP		Church Offering	553.00
11/25/2025	ACH	Nationwide	Pension	-430.00
11/25/2025	ACH	PA Dept. Of Revenue	State Taxes	-133.80
11/28/2025	5776	Pastor Kyle Roth	Pastor Salary	-2,097.20
11/28/2025	DEP		Interest Inc	6.33
11/28/2025	fee	bank Service Fee	Bank Charge	-2.00
11/29/2025	5778	Chris Nickel	Shoe Boxes	-530.00
11/29/2025	5779	P.G. Council Of Churches	Weekday Church School	-100.00
11/29/2025	5780	John Rupp	Pig Roast	-400.00
11/29/2025	5781	PPL	Electric	-101.39
11/29/2025	5782	Cathedral Press	Church Bulletins	-63.20
11/29/2025	5777	Check Voided	Check Voided	0.00
11/30/2025	DEP		Church Offering	1,363.00
11/30/2025	DEP	CEF	Special Offering	100.00
12/1/2025	DEP	C.D.	from building fund	20,000.00
12/1/2025	5783	Manbecks E. C. Church	C.D. Purchase	-20,000.00
12/3/2025	ACH	Comcast	Telephone-Internet	-192.41
12/7/2025	DEP		Church Offering	1,422.00
12/8/2025	ACH	Deluxe Checks	Postage & Checks	-80.78
12/8/2025	5784	Postmaster	Postage & Checks	-78.00
12/9/2025	5785	E. C. Church Ministry Funds	Apportionment	-343.94
12/9/2025	5786	E. C. Global Ministries	Supported Missionaries	-484.00
12/9/2025	5787	Berks Copy Tech Inc.	Copier, Toner & Paper	-300.00
12/9/2025	5788	Tewis Energy	Heating Oil	-1,030.99
12/9/2025	5789	CCLI Renewal Processing	Music	-170.00
12/9/2025	5790	...Deb Reiter	Paper & Cleaning	-66.97
			Church Supplies	-21.19
12/12/2025	5791	Pastor Kyle Roth	Pastor Salary	-2,097.20
11/18/2025 - 12/15/2025				

Beginning Balance as of 11-18-2025 **\$27,485.71**

Ending Balance as of 12-15-2025 **\$22,526.98** ←

CD at C.A.C.L. Financial **\$38,206.67**

Total Balance of General Fund **\$60,733.65**

BIBLE SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the letters in each word to discover the passage.

ROF TRHEE SI ENO OGD, NDA ENO TROMIEDA WTNEEEB OGD NDA NME, EHT NMA
TSRIHC USSJE; WOH VGEA SMLIHFE A SRONMA ROF LLA, OT EB TTSIIFEED NI UED
TMIE.

For

BUILDING FUND

Date	Num	Description	Category	Amount
BALANCE 11/17/2025				\$51,506.11
12/1/2025	TXFR	CD Purchase	to checking account	-20,000.00
11/18/2025 - 12/16/2025				-20,000.00
BALANCE 12/16/2025				\$31,506.11
Beginning Balance as of 11-18-2025				\$51,506.11
Ending Balance as of 12-15-2025				\$31,506.11
CD at C.A.C.L. Financial				\$58,206.67
Minus Memorial Funds				\$ 2,185.90
Minus Benevolent Funds				\$ 3,056.00
Total Balance of Building Fund				\$84,470.38

HOLY COMMUNION

Our quarterly Holy Communion service will be celebrated on **January 4th**, during the Morning Service. Jesus commanded... "As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take this and eat it, for this is my body."



And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them and said, "Each of you drink from it, for this is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many. Mark my words—I will not drink wine again until the day I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom." Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives." Won't you join us?

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SMALL GROUPS



These services will resume on January 7th. First meeting, at 6:00 PM, is going through the Book of Psalms. We conclude this meeting by praying for current Prayer Requests from within our congregation.

Then the second service, at 7:00PM, we will be watching season 7 of "The Chosen", followed by a discussion time. Why not join us?

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

On January 18th, following the Worship Service, we will be holding our Annual Congregational Meeting. One of the items on the agenda is Election of Trustees (2), Stewards (2), Members at Large* (3), Lay & Alternate Lay Delegates (1 each) and Mission's Chairperson (1).

Even if you are not officially a member of Manbeck's church, your input would be welcome.



***This has nothing to do with actual body weight!**

NEWS FROM OUR MISSIONARIES



Joe Toy Jr.

November/December 2025

"And Jesus said to Simon, Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men."

As game time approaches, the crowds swell on their way to the stadium. In the midst of this crowd, the gospel is preached and gospel tracts are extended to those who pass by. This night is the rivalry game between UNC and NCS and the place is packed with fans. As the crowds flow past, an evangelist is praying with a young man who is broken by his addiction to alcohol even though he believes that he is only a social drinker. The football fan is reminded that Christ can forgive his sins and powerfully transform his life. It is not a long encounter, but a gospel seed has been sown into the heart of a seeker. The Lord gave us many such opportunities as were blessed by the Lord's grace to proclaim God's love as seen in Jesus Christ at seven football games this season. There are approximately 400,000 fans at these games, during the fall and many are blessed to hear about Jesus. I am not the only one at these games, but I am grateful to a great team of men who come when they are able. To give you a bigger picture nationally, we partner with Sports Fan Outreach International, which has forty-one men covering NFL and College stadiums around the country. With the help of the Lord, we are trusting God to raise up a man to cover UNC games next year as we have NC State covered. God is able.

Each October, the largest event in North Carolina, the NC State Fair, comes to the Raleigh area. Over the eleven days of the Fair, close to one million people come to a family friendly event to enjoy a great day out and sample some fine food. I love bringing Jesus to the Fair each Fall with a great team of men from the Raleigh area. The weather was great each day with no rain at all, but it did get cool on a couple of mornings to the dismay of our Florida guys, but they endured with a smile. Through the days of the Fair, thirty-eight men assisted in passing out around 19,000 gospel tracts and shared the gospel with those struggling with addiction, depression, broken families, gender confusion and various cult groups. Each day, book tables were stocked with Bibles and New Testaments, and 325 copies of God's word left in the hands of people. The outreach ended with a big push as a team of nine men worked the event for the last four days about eight hours each day. Gospel of God Ministries, in partnership with Sports Fan Outreach, coordinated this four-day event as men from Florida, Virginia and South Carolina came to proclaim Christ. If the events of our modern culture are going to gather the people, then we will. "Raleigh, you will hear about Jesus." We did have some encounters with the Fair security and the police, but we held our ground and responded with respect. I overheard the security officer on his phone say to a fair official, "No, these are the nice guys." Thanks to all the information which we have at our fingertips with our phones, I was able to show them that we are on a public easement and the fairgrounds, which is controlled by the NC Department of Agriculture, so the security has no authority to stop us. I really don't like dealing with the police, but I have learned to be kind and yet firm even to the pushy ones (well most times.)

It is hard to believe that we only have one more week to be on the college campuses. Next week is finals at UNC and NC State, but we will be there to engage those who walk by with the gospel. As I was walking on the campus of UNC, I heard

someone call out, "Joe," but I ignored it as I was in the midst of a crowd of students headed to class. To my surprise, a hand grabbed me on the shoulder and there stood Lee with a big smile on his face. He said, "You will never know how much you have helped me and I am so grateful." I had not seen Lee all semester as his classes are elsewhere, but I did remember all our conversations about how Jesus could deliver him from his pornography addiction and he has been delivered, through the glorious plan of salvation in Jesus. We have been blessed to see a number of men and women come to Christ and get plugged into churches and campus ministries.



Awesome day sharing the gospel with a great group of folks, so blessed to have a great Outreach team here in Raleigh. Many are hearing about Jesus. (12/23/2025)

As we slow down for a brief time, pray for us to be refreshed and strengthened spiritually as we pray and plan for 2026. God Bless. Keep us in your prayers.

Joe

OAM, Inc. Outreach Prayer Needs

Weekly Outreaches (Subject to Change)	Event Outreaches
Monday- Varied	New Years Outreach Raleigh- December 31
Tuesday- Jones Franklin Abortion Mill; Sheetz Gas Station	College Football Championship2026 in Miami-January 16-20, 2026
Wednesday- Office Day	Mardi Gras Outreach in New Orleans -February 11-18, 2026
Thursday- Jones Franklin Abortion Mill; Sam's Club	Keep us in your prayers, God bless!
Friday -Bus Station Outreach	

BIRTHDAYS

12	Noel Shadler
	Eve Kurtz
16	Jordan Reyes
19	Mark Lehr
21	Todd Miller
22	Kelly Rohrer



23	Deb Reiter
23	Anita Farr
28	Carol Lengle
29	Katie Kurtz
30	Larue Troutman
	Lois Dillon
31	Ken Newswanger

Hello
January

NEWS FROM OUR MISSIONARIES



Greetings from warm and sunny Kijabe! The sun is shining, the grass is freshly mowed, parrots are migrating through the campus, and colobus monkeys are playing in our trees while eating the succulent leaves. In the past two weeks, we have had several vivid reminders of why we do what we do.

Student Baptisms

Just 10 days ago we had the privilege of hearing the testimonies of eight students who chose to be baptized! Each student shared their testimony and their personal, heartfelt story of discovering who God is and how much he loves them. Many had hard experiences and had to wrestle with God, ultimately surrendering to his love and redemption found only in Jesus. This is a good reminder of why we do what we do!

Connections with Alumni and Parents Just a few days ago, we had lunch with a Korean couple who are retiring after 40 years of ministry in Africa. As they shared some of their story, they asked if we remembered their children. Brian had taught both of their children, who graduated in 2000 and 2002! We are the only staff members still at RVA from those years and these dear parents were so excited to connect with us. Both of their children are married and involved in ministry around the world. We've also recently connected with other alumni who are now serving as missionaries in East Africa. More reminders of why we do what we do!

AIM Spiritual Life Conference

As our students departed on Saturday morning, AIM missionaries from Kenya and Tanzania began arriving at RVA. We were excited that RVA was again hosting the conference, for the first time since 2017. The speaker, a Kenyan pastor at a church in Nairobi, shared from the Books of Daniel and Revelation, reminding us **why we do what we do**. We were challenged to be different from the world, to dwell on the sovereignty of God, and to recognize that missions is the fruit of worship. One quote that stood out was that modern Christianity often says to God, "I will follow you because you make my life better"; but *biblical* Christianity says, "I will follow you because YOU are better than life!"

Lots of thought-provoking questions from our speaker:

Will we choose obedience over deliverance?

Will we worship even if it kills us?

Will we weep for those facing a Christ-less eternity?

Will we keep Christ at the center of our lives?

Will we partner with God in turning rebels into worshippers?

And...we're off!

Tonight, we are flying to the US to spend a few weeks of our school break with family. We are looking forward to seeing our three children, their spouses, and our grandchildren, along with extended family and friends. Pray for safe travels and rich times full of blessings with those we love so dearly. You are appreciated, as you continue to support us through faithful prayer and giving. Without you, we would not have the privilege of being able to do what we do for so many years as we serve and support many families and their children from across Africa and beyond.

In His Service and for His Glory,

Brian and Missy

Forest Gump and St. Peter

When Forest Gump died, he stood in front of St. Peter at the Pearly Gates. St. Peter said, "Welcome, Forest. We've heard a lot about you." He continued, "Unfortunately, it's getting pretty crowded up here and we find that we now have to give people an entrance examination before we let them in."

"Okay," said Forest. "I hope it's not too hard. I've already been through a test. My momma used to say, 'Life is like a final exam. It's hard!'"

"Yes, Forest, I know. But this test is only three questions. Here they are."

"1) Which two days of the week begin with the letter 'T'?"

"2) How many seconds are in a year?

"3) What is God's first name?

"Well, sir," said Forest, "The first one is easy. Which two days of the week begin with the letter 'T'? Today and Tomorrow."

St. Peter looked surprised and said, "Well, that wasn't the answer I was looking for, but you have a point. I give you credit for that answer."

"The next question," said Forest, "How many seconds are in a year? Twelve."

"Twelve?" said St. Peter, surprised and confused.

"Yes, sir. January 2nd, February 2nd, March 2nd ..."

St. Peter interrupted him. "I see what you mean. I'll have to give you credit for that one, too."

"And the last question," said Forest, "What is God's first name? It's Andy."

"Andy?" said St. Peter, in shock. "How did you come up with 'Andy'?"

"I learned it in church. We used to sing about it." Forest broke into song, "Andy walks with me, Andy talks with me, Andy tells me I am His own."

St. Peter opened the gate to heaven and said, "Run, Forest, Run!"

Things that will make your day go better

1. Pray
2. Go to bed on time.
3. Get up on time so you can start the day unrushed.
4. Say No to projects that won't fit into your time schedule, or that will compromise your mental health.
5. Delegate tasks to capable others.
6. Simplify and unclutter your life.
7. Less is more. (Although one is often not enough, two are often too many.)
8. Allow extra time to do things and to get to places.
9. Pace yourself. Spread out big changes and difficult projects over time; don't lump the hard things all together.
10. Take one day at a time.



Black and White

You could hardly see for all the snow,
Spread the rabbit ears as far as they go.
Pull up a chair to the TV set,
"Good night, David." "Good Night, Chet."

Depending on the channel you tuned,
You got Rob and Laura or Ward and June.
It felt so good, it felt so right.
Life looked better in black and white.

I Love Lucy, The Real McCoys,
Dennis the Menace, The Cleaver Boys;
Rawhide, Gunsmoke, Wagon Train,
Superman, Jimmy and Lois Lane.

Father Knows Best, Patty Duke,
Rin Tin Tin and Lassie too,
Donna Reed on Thursday night!
Life looked better in black and white.

I wanna go back to black and white.
Everything always turned out right.
Simple people, simple lives.
Good guys always won the fights.

Now nothing is the way it seems,
In living color on the TV screen.
Too many murders, too many fights,
I wanna go back to black and white.

In God they trusted, alone in bed, they slept,
A promise made was a promise kept.
They never cussed or broke their vows.
They'd never make the network now.

But if I could, I'd rather be
In a TV town in '53.
It felt so good. It felt so right.
Life looked better in black and white.

I'd trade all the channels on the satellite,
If I could just turn back the clock tonight
To when everybody knew wrong from right.
Life was better in black and white!

Strength For The Day

There is a time of quiet rest
at dawning of the day,
while all the world is asleep
I open my eyes to pray.

Each morn I am overwhelmed
as I awake to see
that God in His infinite mercy
has once again blessed me.

There is an acute awareness
as from sleep released so sweet
I find comfort, joy and peace,
as my Savior I once again meet.

My first thoughts are of
Thanksgiving,
for life and health and joy.
I have so much love inside me
nothing in this world can destroy.

The love I have is God's love,
it was given to me to share.
So many need so much in life,
how can I help but care?

Dear Lord, I need understanding
make me humble I pray;
and as I arise to do Thy will
grant me strength for the day.

Peggy Williams

Three guys are fishing when an angel appears. The first guy says, "I've suffered from back pain for years. Can you help me?" The angel touches the man's back, and he feels instant relief.

The second guy points to his thick glasses and begs for a cure for his poor eyesight. When the angel tosses the lenses into the lake, the man gains 20/20 vision.

As the angel turns to the third fellow, he instantly recoils and screams, "Don't touch me! I'm on disability!"