



New Basel Church  
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**echo**  
New Basel Newsletter

January 2026

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Whew! Anyone else feel a little relieved that the craziness of the Christmas Season is behind us? Even a glance at our calendar on the back page shows that things have slowed down a bit – good news for those of us that need to catch our breath a little.

But wait! There's one more Christmas-related date coming! Epiphany always comes on January 6. It is a date celebrated by the church, but no one else seems to recognize it. There are no sales at the stores, unions don't ask for holiday pay, and even the banks will still be open that day. What is Epiphany?

Epiphany is the date in which the church remembers the visit of the Magi. You remember the wise men from your nativity scene? That's them. There's even a Christmas carol about them: We Three Kings. But there seems to be a little confusion surrounding their story.

First of all, they're in nativity sets all over the country, and they probably should not be included. At least not right away. When we read their story in Matthew 2:1-12, we see that they showed up some time later, perhaps as much as two years later. So if you want to include the wise men in your nativity and have it be sort of accurate, you should set up the manger in your living room and the wise men probably just the other side of Topeka.

Not terribly practical. Which is possibly why people just shrug their shoulders and set them up next to the manger!

There are other misconceptions as well. Let's look at the carol for a moment.

"We Three..."

Hold it. Reading Matthew 2, we have no idea how many people there were. There were three gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh, sure. But it's speculation to say there were only three.

"Kings..."

Uh oh. Depending on the version you are reading, it will say these people were either wise men or magi, but no one calls them kings. They were astrologers, learned scholars, but not rulers like we would think of a king today.

"Of Orient..."

Pure conjecture. Most likely they were from the Middle East, like Persia.

This is not to say that remembering Epiphany is a total waste of time. Nor is the song we sing about it. The word Epiphany, apart from its meaning inside the church, means a sudden revelation or understanding. What is revealed to Matthew's readers is that not only was Jesus God (born of a virgin, Ch1), but that God revealed his divine nature to Gentiles as well. Profound!

And the carol "We Three Kings" is worth keeping around, if only for the final words of its chorus. "O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light." The star is not asked to guide *by* its perfect light, but rather *to* its perfect light. The perfect light of the Star of Bethlehem was none other than Jesus.

Poetic. Beautiful. Insightful. And worth remembering well past Christmas!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Jamie

## New Basel Church Council

Monday December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025

Called to order at 7:48pm by President Pam ONeal

### **Present**

**Elders:** Pam ONeal, Jen Reiff, and Chris Bethe

**Deacons:** Jennifer Latzke and Judy Barten

**Trustees:** Gary Foltz and Drew Snitker

Pastor Jamie opened with a devotion

### **Approval of Minutes:**

M/S/C to approve the November Minutes

**Communications:** We received a letter from the Hope Center asking for donations

### **Reports**

**Financial Secretary:** Jennifer Latzke gave report

**Treasurer's Report:** Judy Barten gave report

**Pastor's Report:** Work summary for 11/3/25-11/30/25

**Worship-** Preached and/or led Sunday Worship 4 times, and at Homestead Memory Care, Joint Thanksgiving Worship Service

**Administration Meetings:** 1 Church Council, 1 Edward Jones

**Pastoral Care-** 1 Phone Visit, 7 Home Visits, and 4 hospital visits

**Other-** 1 Movie Night, 3 Cross Talk Local meetings, 1 Volunteer Reading at Rural Center (Duck Duck Moose), 1 Work Day

Vacation Days This Month: 0, YTD:10 Professional Development Days: This month 0, YTD:5 Mileage: 142

Reported he would need coverage for the Pulpit Sunday December 28th

**Elders:** Chris Bethe reported no report

**Deacons:** Judy Barten reported she had stopped by Irish Den in Chapman and visited with them about the possibility of our church serving a meal on January 14<sup>th</sup>. She also discussed the remaining mission funds for the year and how those could be allocated or donated.

**Trustees:** Drew Snitker reported lights are now installed, and Jessica and Stacey's rooms have been painted. Gary Foltz noted that the dehumidifier is not working, and it was decided to have the HVAC guy come and look at it.

**Old Business:** Christmas Caroling will be held December 21, with a 3:00pm start time. Chris Bethe created a list of possible places to carol at.

Pam ONeal informed us that Janis Haugh and Joleen Beemer will be on the nominating committee. The Church Council is currently in need of two elders and one deacon.

### **New Business:**

It was M/S/C to approve bills

M/S/C that \$500 would be taken from the Benevolence Fund and donated to Hospice of Dickinson County. Additional designated donations will be taken from the Missions Fund for the following organizations: \$3,000 to the Doda's, \$1,000 to the Rescue Mission, \$500 to Clover Cabinet, \$100 to the Hope Center, and \$100 to Church Women United for their Christmas Aid project.

It was discussed to inform the congregation that at the annual meeting we will present a proposal to amend the church bylaws. The proposed change affects Article IX, Section 9 regarding expenditures: The threshold requiring congregational approval for expenses to increase from \$1500 to \$5000.

The date for the annual meeting has been set for January 25, 2026. A potluck dinner will be held immediately after the church service, followed by the meeting.

### **Announcements**

#### Upcoming Events

December 14<sup>th</sup>: Kids Christmas Program

December 14<sup>th</sup>: Movie Night

December 21<sup>st</sup>: Caroling 3:00pm

December 24<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Eve Service 6:30 pm

January 4<sup>th</sup>: Communion

January 5<sup>th</sup>: Church Council

January 25th: Annual Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 pm

The Lord's Prayer was said in Unison

Jen Reiff, secretary



Naoma Foltz  
Judy Lauer  
Kelly Schrader

Tony Herman  
Bobby Greenwood & Judith Stevens  
Rachael Pritchard

## December at New Basel

### Youth Sunday School Christmas Program and Christmas Caroling





# JANUARY

2<sup>nd</sup> Travis Beetch  
19<sup>th</sup> Carolyn Beetch  
Jen Reiff  
24<sup>th</sup> Bobby Greenwood  
27<sup>th</sup> Benson Smiley  
28<sup>th</sup> Adalynn Haynes  
31<sup>st</sup> Randy Barten



Anniversary  
25<sup>th</sup> Seth & Judy Lauer

## Upcoming February Birthdays

2<sup>nd</sup> Janet Chamberlin  
6<sup>th</sup> Duncan Reiff  
10<sup>th</sup> Bob O'Neal

## Movie Night

January 11<sup>th</sup>

***God's Not Dead***

Starting Shane Harper and Kevin Sorbo

HAPPY  
**New Year**

May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us...  
PSALM 90:17a

## Greeters, Acolytes, & Usher for January

### Greeters:

### Acolytes:

4<sup>th</sup>

Kevin & Stacy Smiley

Svannah Smiley

11<sup>th</sup>

Dwight & Marion Kamm

Janessa Latzke

18<sup>th</sup>

Ron & Sam Pryor

Devin Kamm

25<sup>th</sup>

Holly Bethe and Angela Bonnema

Scarlet Murphy

**December Usher:** Larry Haugh

Thank you to Gary Foltz for being the November

## New Basel Annual

## MEETING

**Sunday January 25<sup>th</sup>**

*A potluck luncheon will take place after church service, followed by the meeting*

### **\*Notice of Proposed Bylaw Change\***

This is to inform the congregation that at the annual meeting on January 25, 2026, we will present a **proposal** to amend the church bylaws. The proposed change affects **Article IX, Section 9** regarding expenditures:

- The threshold requiring congregational approval for expenses to increase from **\$1,500** to **\$5,000**.