

Restore us, O God

As a toddler, my son had his own way of getting my attention. He would crawl into my lap as I was having a conversation with someone, place his tiny hands on either side of my face, and attempt to turn my face toward him. He realized he had my full attention when I looked him in the face.

The Israelites saw their troubles as a sign of God ignoring them, believing God was not answering their prayers and even causing many of their problems. Rather than viewing God as a protector, they blamed God for the scorn they received from neighbors and enemies. In this psalm, they ask three times for God to show attention and renew their relationship by letting his face shine upon them.

I question whether they truly lost God's attention. It's often said that if you feel distant from God, it's not that God has moved—perhaps you have. Had the people of Israel done something that broke their relationship with God? Or were they, like us today, searching or waiting to clearly see God's face shining amid the darkness of their situation?

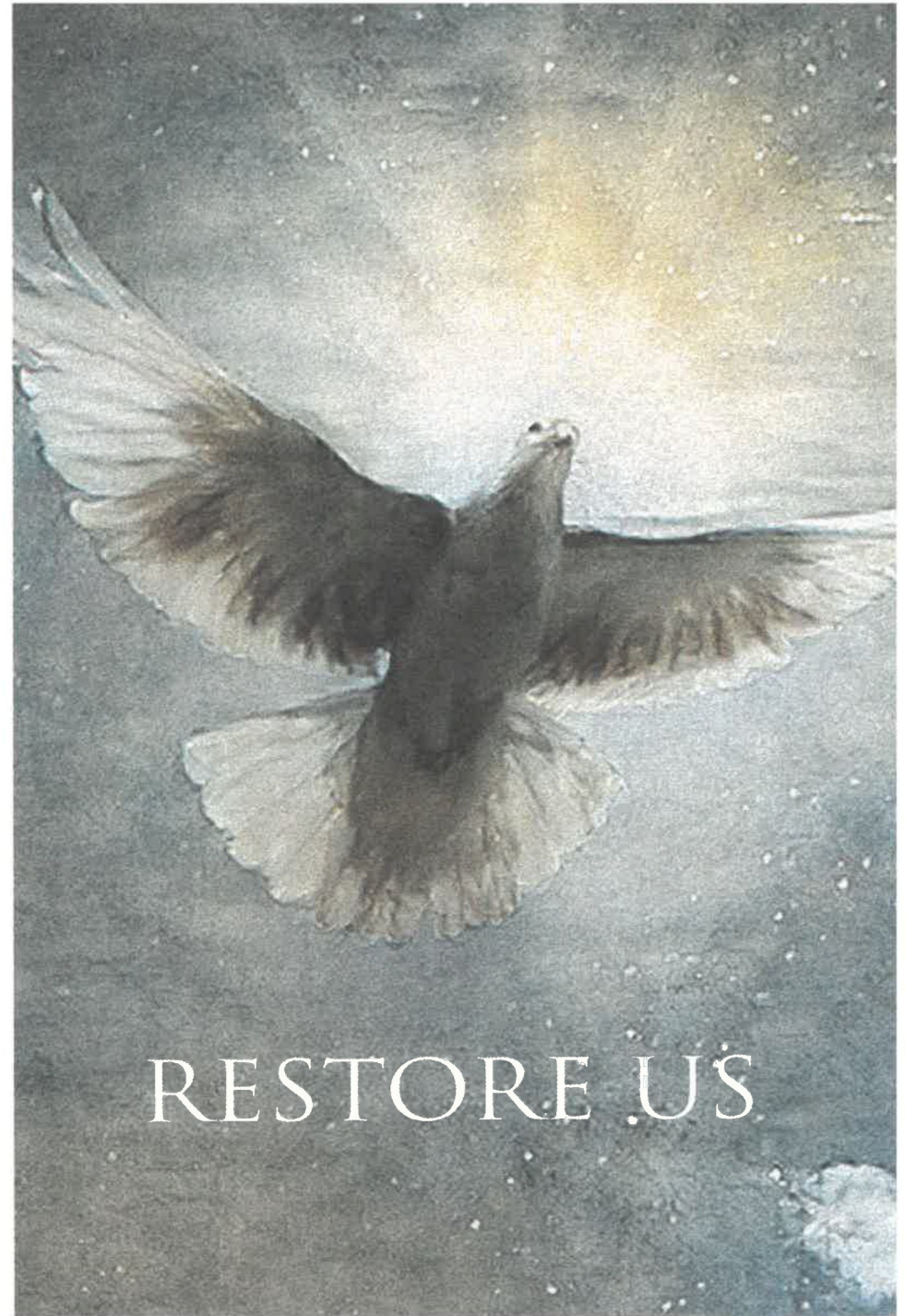
Life's hardships can leave us feeling abandoned by God and questioning his presence. We desire to crawl into God's lap and put our hands on God's face and turn it to us. We yearn to have our relationship with God restored.

During Advent, we reflect on the darkness of life without the presence of the Divine as we await the coming of Emmanuel—God's face shining upon us—and we pray with Israel, "Restore us, O God."

—Cindy Sanders
Cabool, Missouri

"Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved" (Psalm 80:3, NRSVue).
Today's Bible readings from the lectionary: Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25.

December 21, 2025, Fourth Sunday of Advent. Cover design by Paul Stocksdale © Brethren Press. Living Word Bulletin Series © 2025 Brethren Press. Printed in the USA.



RESTORE US

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
Hagerstown, Maryland

MORNING WORSHIP

10:45 AM

December 21, 2025
Fourth Sunday of Advent

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Jack Finniff, Worship Leader

WHERE HAVE YOU SEEN GOD?

PRELUDE “Fum, Fum, Fum” (Hayes)
Piano Duet

CALL TO WORSHIP

The prophet foretold it, the psalmist longed for it,
Joseph dreamed of it, Paul proclaimed it.
God is come to us, to be with us, to restore us, to save us.
Let us come in awe and wonder,
to worship the God who makes it all so.

***HYMN #206** “*Infant holy, infant lowly*”
[Verse 1]

*Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall; oxen lowing, little knowing Christ
the babe is Lord of all. Swiftly winging angels singing, bells ringing, tidings
bringing: Christ the babe is Lord of all, Christ the babe is Lord of all!*

[Verse 2]

*Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new, saw the glory,
heard the story, tidings of a gospel true. Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises
voicing, greet the morrow: Christ the babe was born for you, Christ the babe was
born for you!*

UNISON OPENING PRAYER

We come this morning, tired from rushing around, tired of trying to meet the demands and expectations of the season. Slow us down. Help us center our thoughts. Restore in us a childlike wonder, and a belief that dreams really do come true. We call on your name. Be with us and in us, Emmanuel. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

One: The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God has come near; the true light which enlightens everyone is coming into the world.

All: As we anticipate the light, let us be alert and watching for the glorious appearing of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

One: Let us pray: O Lord our God, the night is far spent, and the day is at hand. Keep us observant, watching for the coming of your Son, in whom is light to reflect splendor. Come and lead us to joy and peace. Amen.

CHORAL RESPONSE

Christ be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ be our light!
Shine in your Church gathered today.
Christ be our light!

SERVICE OF GIVING

Call to Giving

In thanks for all God’s gifts, and in response to the tears of so many of God’s children, we now gather all that we have brought to share, praying that these resources will accomplish much good among us and far beyond our individual reach.

As we pass the offering plate here in the sanctuary, we also pass a virtual offering plate to those worshiping with us on YouTube Live. We invite you to give by mailing your offering to the church or dropping it off at the church during the week, or by going to the Hagerstowncob website.

Offertory “Vom Himmel hoch” (Pachelbel)
(From Heaven on High)

***Doxology #119** “*Praise God from whom*”

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Loving God, we would not weary you with empty words or with routine tips of obligation. You have granted us life with such abundant possibilities that we can never do enough to express our gratitude. You have honored us by calling us saints and apostles. Therefore, we offer ourselves and our abundance in the confidence that you will continue to provide for us in whatever circumstances we face. Use us as ministers of your grace.

MORNING ANTHEM "Fum, Fum, Fum" (Shaler)
Temple Choir

A MOMENT TO BECOME LIKE A CHILD

HYMN #194 "Away in a manger"
[Verse 1]

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head. The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

[Verse 2]

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes. I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky, and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

[Verse 3]

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

SHARING OUR JOYS, CONCERNS, AND HOPES

Please remember our worship is also on YouTube and our website.

Please do not share any personal information you do not want to be made public.

An usher will hold the microphone for you while you share.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

SPECIAL MUSIC "Sussex Carol" (Larson)
Brethren Bells with Becky Jackson, Piano

SCRIPTURE READING Psalm 80:1-3, 17-19; OT 540 - 541
Matthew 1:18-25 NT 1

Psalm 80:1-3—Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us! Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

17-19—But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one whom you made strong for yourself. Then we will never turn back from you; give us life, and we will call on your name. Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

Matthew 1:18-25 – Now let us hear these words from the gospel of Matthew, chapter one, verses eighteen through twenty-five.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

MESSAGE "Save Us" Pastor Twyla Rowe

HYMN #318 "Joy to the World"
[Verse 1]

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king; let ev'ry heart prepare him room, and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

[Verse 2]

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains, repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

[Verse 3]

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground. He comes to make his blessing flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

[Verse 4]

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

BENEDICTION

After the Benediction, you may be seated.

Please continue in a spirit of worship as we listen to the Postlude music.

POSTLUDE

“Christmas Carol Medley”

(Hughes)

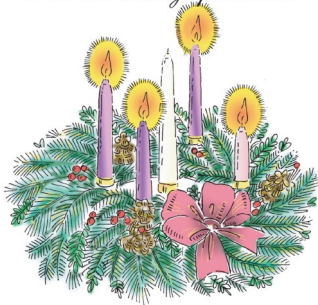
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\*Please rise — in body or spirit — as an act of worship

Thank you for joining us in worship today.

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Fourth Sunday of Advent



Hagerstown
Church of the Brethren
15 S. Mulberry Street,
Hagerstown, Maryland
21740
301-733-3565

Office: Tuesday—Friday
Flexible hours
(appointments welcome/
call ahead)

Morning Praise Worship
at 8:30 AM
Sunday School at 9:30 AM
Worship and YouTube Live at
10:45 AM

www.hagerstowncob.org

[www.facebook.com/
hagerstowncob](http://www.facebook.com/hagerstowncob)

[www.youtube.com/
@hagerstowncob](http://www.youtube.com/@hagerstowncob)

Twyla Rowe
Pastor

Allyson McPeak
Administrative Assistant

Burton Young
Director of
Music Ministries

Don Rowe
Interior Esthetics
Technician

*We welcome you to our church and
Rejoice in your participation with us in
worship. It is our prayer that you will
experience the presence of God's Spirit and
that it will equip you for service and ministry
in the week ahead. Our Pastor, Deacons, and
Cluster Leaders are available after worship
and during the week to listen and assist you in
your Christian pilgrimage.*

THE ANNOUNCER December 21, 2025

If you placed someone on the prayer list and they are now celebrating a recovery and would like their name taken off the list, please contact the church office.

If you or a loved one has surgery scheduled, is hospitalized, or would like a visit from the pastor, please notify the church.

“Take A Moment” Let this be our daily Take a Moment Prayer beginning on Sunday, December 21- O God, I remember that this week we celebrate the birth of our Savior. Amidst all of my holiday preparations, I've strived to keep my heart focused on the true meaning for this celebration. Love...your love came to earth through the birth of a precious baby... your Son. Nothing could stop you from giving this gift of love to the world...not even our sin. Your Love, in fact, saves us from our sin. Knowing this...I humbly approach the manger to worship the Loving Savior of the world. Welcome to our world, precious child. Make your home in my heart so that I too, can share the wonderful gift of God's love. Amen.

Attendance. Please sign the attendance rosters found at the end of your pew, or possibly in the hymnal rack, and pass it down the row so everyone can sign.

Pastor Twyla will be on vacation December 26th through January 4th. If you are in need of regular pastoral care, please contact your Deacon. Pastor Eddie Edmonds will be on call for emergencies, his contact information is 304-671-4775 /edmonds.eddie@comcast.net.

The Church office will be closed December 25th and 26th for the Christmas holiday.

Christmas Poinsettia—For those who purchased a poinsettia, please leave them in the sanctuary until after the Christmas Eve Service. Thank you!

Our thanks to Jack Finniff for being our worship leader today and to the Brethren Bells, Becky Jackson, Becky Ernst, and the Temple Choir for our morning music.

The flowers on the altar this morning are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of our parents, Harry & Margaret Anthony and Calvin and Irma Messer; Theresa's brother, David Anthony, from Larry & Theresa Messer.

Christmas Eve Service—Everyone is invited to the Christmas Eve celebration service of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Come and worship the newborn King through a traditional service of singing carols, listening to the angelic voices of the choir and the heavenly tones of the bell choir and the organ, and hearing the Christmas story, and we will also celebrate communion. Symbolizing the Light that came to the world on that holy night long ago, we will hold light high as we recommit our faithfulness to carry the light into the world. The Christmas Eve offering will be going to the Community Breakfast Ministry and the service will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Come...let us adore Him...Christ the Lord!

Volunteer Needed—The Flower and Altar committee is looking for a volunteer for the month of January. If you're interested, please contact Cinnamon Shay.

The Flower & Altar Committee has an opening on January 18th if you would like to place flowers on the altar in memory, celebration, or honor of a loved one. If you are interested, please contact Cinnamon Shay at 301-730-8499 or email cinnamongirl@myactv.net

NEEDED—New or gently used pots and pans for a woman previously homeless, who has just found an apartment. If you can help, please see Jan Young.

The Mary Martha Circle Christmas craft is now for sale in the west entrance. The price is \$20.00. All proceeds will go to Sleep in Heavenly Peace.

Christmas Cards. Please remember to check your church mailbox for Christmas cards. Any cards leftover will not be delivered or mailed by the church office or Spiritual Nurture Team. Please check your mailbox often. You never know what might be in there. Blessings! - *Your Spiritual Nurture Team*

Valentine's Bread & Soup Luncheon—The Spiritual Nurture Team invites you to a luncheon in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, February 15th directly following the late service worship. If you would like to attend, please see the sign up sheet in the west entrance and Fellowship Hall. Sign up to bring a soup, bread, or dessert as well.

SAVE THE DATE! HCOB's week to volunteer at the REACH Cold Weather Shelter is March 8-15. For those of you who plan to volunteer, please make a note of these dates. More info to come in the new year. Thanks!

Cash for Causes/Martin's Gift Card Program. Purchase Martin's gift cards to take to the store to pay for your groceries or gas, and 5% of the face value of the gift card is a donation to the church and goes toward your yearly charitable contribution. To purchase a card, please contact Donnie Maas (240-866-1077). We can make arrangements to leave cards in your church mailbox or mail them to you.

We're entering the season for high heating costs. We remind everyone to please keep doors closed to the sanctuary, fellowship hall, church entrances, hallways, and church office. All classroom doors (2nd and 3rd floor) should stay open. Thank you for your awareness and cooperation.

Inclement Weather Policy—If inclement weather is forecasted, be sure to:

- * Check your email—we will send out a group email as quickly as possible if the decision to cancel in-person worship is made.
- * Check our Facebook page—Hagerstown Church of the Brethren (facebook.com/hagerstowncob) we will post updates there as well.

If we do hold in-person worship, and if you are uncomfortable driving in bad weather, please join us on YouTube Live. Be safe first and check your email!

Church mailboxes. Everyone is welcome to use the mailboxes. If you would like to be added or taken off the list, please contact Mary Means. If you have a mailbox, we ask that you be willing to monitor it. Any mail that is left in the mailboxes after a three-month period will be disposed of. The mailboxes are located in the hallway of the church office.

Because winter weather is here, we'd like to pass along a gentle reminder to drive slowly in our parking lot, especially when it's snow-covered or icy. Always be on alert for children, pedestrians, dogs, cats, and those less mindful than you are of the pavement surface conditions.

Year-end Giving Guidelines

The Internal Revenue Service states under the heading of Timing of Contributions: *Contributions must actually be paid in cash or other property before the close of your tax year to be deductible, whether you use the cash or accrual method.*

This means all contributions for any given year must be physically at the church no later than December 31st to be applied to the year's contribution statement.

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/charitable-contribution-deductions>

CALENDAR

Sunday, December 21

8:30 am Morning Praise Worship/Fellowship Hall
9:30 am Sunday School, individual classrooms
10:45 am Worship, Sanctuary & YouTube Live (www.youtube.com/@hagerstowncob)

Monday, December 22

Church office closed

Wednesday, December 24

Christmas Eve/Bread & Cup Communion
12:00 pm Deadline for bulletin announcement submissions
7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service/Sanctuary

Thursday, December 25

Christmas Day/Merry Christmas!

Friday, December 26

Pastor Vacation
1:00 pm Islamic Center/Use of Parking Lot (1-3PM)

Saturday, December 27

Pastor Vacation

Sunday, December 28

Pastor Vacation/Junior Church
Pastor Eddie Edmonds/Guest Preacher
8:30 am Morning Praise Worship/Fellowship Hall
9:30 am Sunday School, individual classrooms
10:45 am Worship, Sanctuary & YouTube Live (www.youtube.com/@hagerstowncob)

Remember our weekday schedule is subject to rapid change.

You may mail your offering to
15 S. Mulberry Street,
Hagerstown MD 21740
OR
you can make a secure offering
donation on our website using
Breeze www.hagerstowncob.org

The church calendar is online at
www.hagerstowncob.org.
Click the calendar tab.



Poinsettias 2025

Given In Loving Memory Of

- * Our parents: Lois J. DeNobrega and Donald C. Graham from Diane & Kirk Graham (1 red)
- * Diane's brother, Gerald L. Stevens from Diane & Kirk Graham (1 red)
- * My "heavenly" family from Candice Summers (1 white)
- * Parents, Peggy & Ellis Duffey; Robert & Elise Wolfe; sister, Kay Wolfe; and nephew, Joey Duffey from Bob & Suzie Wolfe (1 marble)
- * My parents, Harold & Hilda Brumbaugh from Christine Ellis (1 marble)
- * Frank & Elaine Shank from David & Carolyn Motz (1 red)
- * Dick & Betty Motz from David & Carolyn Motz (1 red)
- * John King from Annetta King (1 red)
- * Susan & Edward Hultsch from Brian & Cinnamon Shay (2 white, 2 marble)
- * My parents and sister, Susan from Kathy Kelsey (1 red)
- * Our brother, Gerald (Jerry) Stevens. You are greatly missed. With love, your baby sister Laura and brother in law Jimmy Minnick. (1 marble)
- * My father from Scott Fisher (1 marble)
- * Parents and Grandparents from Doris & Scott Fisher (1 white)
- * David Fisher from Doris Fisher (1 red)
- * Our sweet Linda Ebersole. You filled us with your beautiful smile and love. From John & Jenny Ferguson (1 white)
- * Roy & Geraldine Crilly and Gene Hardy with love from the Hardys (1 red)
- * Clyde, Oneida, and Willis Clark with love from the Hardys (1 red)
- * Donovan Beachley, husband of Mary Ellen Beachley from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Ellis & Peggy Duffey, parents of Suzie Wolfe from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Gloria Clem, wife of Richard Clem from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Dean Miller, husband of Karen Miller from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Ray & Geraldine Crilly, parents of Amy Hardy from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Sherry Craig, wife of Joe Craig from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Linda Ebersole, wife of Don Ebersole from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Buddy Lyles, loving husband of Emma Lyles from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Linda M. Ebersole from Donald Ebersole (1 red)
- * Michael Buhrman from Suzanne Buhrman (1 red)
- * Marguerite Pecenco (1 marble)
- * My father, Greg Snyder from Tina Mills (1 marble)
- * Gerald Long; Lawrence & Hazel Long from Rebecca Jackson (1 marble)
- * Lawrence & Hazel Long from Brenda Shane (1 marble)
- * Gerald Long from Brenda Shane (1 marble)

(continued)

POINSETTIAS



- * Greg Snyder, my devoted husband from Marie (1 red)
- * Harry & Rosalie Shockey from loving daughter, Marie (1 marble)
- * My beloved husband, Glenn Young. Second Christmas to celebrate in heaven. Given by Jan Young (1 marble)
- * Linda Ebersole, soaring with the angels in heaven. Sadly missed from Jan Young (1 white)
- * Our parents: James & Beulah Adams & George & Beulah Winner from Ray & Wanda Winner (1 marble)
- * David Nycum, given in love by Debbie Nycum (1 red)
- * My parents, Pauline & Robert Wetzal from Debbie Nycum (1 red)
- * Charles & Marie Heintzelman and Robert & Helen Bricker from Bob & Jean Bricker (2 marble)

Given in Tribute To

- * Doug & Ann Rohrer from David & Carolyn Motz (1 white)
- * Our family from David & Carolyn Motz (1 white)
- * Our parents, Charles & Lois Lumm from Bob & Becky Ernst (1 red)
- * Our mother, Janet Ernst from Bob & Becky Ernst (1 red)
- * Esther Boleyn from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Eileen Smith from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Liz Ashby from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Retta Fralin from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Carol Miller from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Sue Vanderveer from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Doris Smith from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Bucky Stockslager from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Sandy Clipp from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Barbara Starliper from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Alice Edmonds from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Judy Long from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Ann Platou from Emma Lyles (1 red)

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- * Twyla & Don Rowe from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Diana Shepherd from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Karen Lowry from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Judy Dahlhamer from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Kay Ogilvie from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Diane Graham from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Robin Davies from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Nancy Gingrich from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Heather Kees from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Deb Long from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Wanda Winner from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Jan Young from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Helen Caron from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Julie Herman from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Allyson McPeak from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Mary Means from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Christine Ellis from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Carolyn Motz from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Eunice Plank from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Lisa Bussard from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Roberta Maas from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Ann Parker from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Jenny Ferguson from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Burt Young from Emma Lyles (1 red)
- * Twyla & HCOB congregation for all the prayers, cards, and everything you have done for Linda & Don Ebersole from Don Ebersole (1 white)
- * Our wonderful Pastor Twyla and husband Don from Ray & Wanda Winner (1 white)

Given with Thanks To

- * Suzie Wolfe for your leadership and dedication on the Service & Outreach team. You always have a smile and serve others with your heart. We are grateful for you and all that you do for the Community Breakfasts. From the Community Breakfast Servers (1 marble)
- * Wanda Winner from Christine Ellis (1 marble)
- * Emma Lyles from David & Carolyn Motz (1 marble)
- * Twyla & Don Rowe from David & Carolyn Motz (1 marble)
- * Emma Lyles, for loving us all so much. From John & Jenny Ferguson (1 white)
- * Emma Lyles. Merry Christmas with my love. Given by Jan Young (1 red)
- * Emma Lyles, our parish nurse from Ray & Wanda Winner (1 red)

A Holiday Message...
(GriefShare)



Dear world,
please be gentle with grieving hearts as the
holidays near.

They walk among us, often quietly and unseen.
They wear smiles that seem bright. They laugh
in ways that sound real. They show up for
others while silently carrying the weight
of someone missing.

There will be real moments of joy—
followed by the sharp sting of knowing new
memories being made don't include the one
they wish was still here. It's the strange beauty of
being human: joy and grief, forever intertwined.

So when you see a grieving heart, don't look
away. Lean in. Cry with them. And let your love
be louder than their silence.

It's true, love can't fix grief.
But it reminds us we're not alone in it.
And that's what matters most.

—*Her View From Home*