



DECEMBER 2025

# The Union Press

“To know Him and make Him known”

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

## Growing in Grace: Making Resolutions for the New Year

As the year draws to a close, many of us begin thinking about goals for the new year — eating healthier, exercising more, traveling, getting organized, or spending more time with family and friends. I’m a fan of New Year’s resolutions (even if I’m not always great at keeping them!). It’s a natural time to reflect on how we’re doing in various areas of life — to celebrate how the Lord has been at work in us and through us, and to hit reset in places where we might be struggling.

This month, I want to suggest a few resolution ideas focused on discipleship. A disciple is a follower of Jesus, and discipleship is simply helping others follow Him. In Colossians 1:28, the Apostle Paul gives us the goal of discipleship: “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.”

Paul devoted all his energy to helping believers mature in Christ. This happens as we proclaim Christ, warn against the dangers of denying Him, and teach one another with wisdom. The goal of discipleship is spiritual growth, and as Christians, we should set goals that help us grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ each year.

With that in mind, here are a few suggestions for how we might seek to grow in the grace of Christ in 2026.



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### PERSONAL BIBLE READING

#### *If You’re Just Starting Out*

If personal Bible reading has been difficult for you in the past but you’re determined to build the habit, try the Unfolding Grace Reading Plan. This 40-week plan takes you from Genesis to Revelation, highlighting the major movements in God’s story of salvation. You’ll read about four chapters per week and reflect on guided questions related to the passages. The beauty of this plan is that it helps you see the Bible as one cohesive story centered on Jesus — and it even includes catch-up days for when life gets busy.

#### *If You’re Ready to Take The Next Step*

If you already have a regular rhythm of spending time in Scripture and want to go deeper, try reading through the New Testament and Psalms in 2026. This plan has you read one chapter of the New Testament Monday through Friday and three psalms each week, leaving weekends open to rest or catch up.

#### *If You’ve Been at This For A While*

Challenge yourself with the Robert Murray M’Cheyne Reading Plan. M’Cheyne, a 19th-century Scottish pastor, designed a plan that takes you through the Old Testament once and the New Testament and Psalms twice each year. You’ll read about four chapters a day from different parts of Scripture.

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As you consider taking on a Bible reading plan, why not do it with a friend? Having an accountability and conversation partner goes a long way toward staying on track and growing together.

## **THEOLOGY**

Did you know you're a theologian? It's true — theology is the study of God, and every Christian who studies God's Word is, in a sense, a theologian. One way we grow in Christ is by deepening our understanding not only of what the Bible says, but also of the doctrines it teaches.

### ***Dipping Your Toe into The Pool Of Theological Study***

Start by listening to Things Unseen, a daily podcast from Ligonier Ministries hosted by Dr. Sinclair Ferguson. Each episode is about ten minutes long, presenting rich theological truths in a clear and engaging way. If you don't listen to podcasts, there's a print version available as well.

### ***You've Been Splashing in The Pool***

Take your study further with Dr. Kevin DeYoung's book Daily Doctrine. This one-year introduction to systematic theology breaks down the Bible's teaching into key categories — for example, what Scripture says about God, Christ, salvation, the church, and the end times. Each day features a one-page reflection designed to expand your understanding of Reformed doctrine and how it shapes your life.

### ***Ready For the High Dive***

Why not spend 2026 becoming more familiar with the Westminster Confession of Faith? This confession has guided Reformed churches since the 17th century and remains a faithful summary of biblical teaching. Dr. Chad Van Dixhoorn's Confessing the Faith explores the history and theology of the Westminster Confession in an accessible and devotional way. Each section takes only five or six minutes to read, yet offers theology that is rich, deep, and faithful to Scripture.

## **CHURCH LIFE**

Of course, the Christian life is not meant to be lived alone. We are the body of Christ, and individually members of it. Because we belong to one another, church life is a vital part of discipleship. So first and foremost, let's commit to gathering with God's people in worship each Sunday. It's a time to rest in the finished work of Christ, to grow in His grace, and to encourage one another as we see the Day of the Lord approaching.

### ***Join A Sunday School Class or Growth Group***

Both are excellent ways to stay consistent and accountable in God's Word. They also create space to build deeper relationships — to truly share life together, pray for one another, and encourage each other in our walk with God.

### ***Commit To Attending a Prayer Meeting***

Prayer is the heartbeat of the Christian life and of the church. Someone once said, "The church that prays together stays together." It may sound simple, but it's true. Corporate prayer turns our attention to God's purposes and His work in the world through His church. God has given us a mission that's far greater than our own ability, so we continually come before His throne of grace to find help in our time of need. Consider making it a goal this year to regularly attend one of our prayer gatherings — Sunday morning, Wednesday morning, or Sunday evening — that we might seek the Lord and magnify His name together.

### ***Join A Ministry Team***

One of the ways we love God and one another is by using our gifts to serve. Sometimes that gift is simply the willingness to give our time and energy. Consider how you might serve the body of Christ in 2026 — whether through one of our existing ministries, or perhaps in starting a new one that the Lord has placed on your heart. Whatever it is, serving is one of the most practical ways to grow in Christ this coming year.

## **WHAT ABOUT MY KIDS? SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FAMILY**

Parents, you have a little church right at home. Your greatest responsibility is the spiritual nurture of your children. We hear God say in Deuteronomy 6:

*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might... You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house (mealtime), and when you walk by the way (drive time), and when you lie down (bedtime), and when you rise (in the morning)."*

It's never too early—or too late—to begin incorporating these spiritual disciplines into family life.

### ***Bible Reading***

For families with young children, *The Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd-Jones is a wonderful way to introduce them to the greatest story ever told. It's colorful, beautifully illustrated, and—most importantly—faithful in keeping Jesus at the center of the biblical story. For older children, consider *The Child's Story Bible* by Catherine Vos.

### ***Theology***

Do children need to learn theology? **Yes!** Did you know the average two-year-old has 200–300 words in their vocabulary, yet by the time they turn four, that number grows to nearly 5,000! What a wonderful time for children to be introduced theological truths that, by God's grace, would stay with them for a lifetime.

For younger children, *Little Pilgrim's Progress* adapts John Bunyan's classic allegory for a young audience, creating opportunities to discuss many aspects of the Christian life. For slightly older children, *My First Catechism* offers a simple, question-and-answer format drawn from the Westminster Shorter Catechism to teach biblical truth.

### ***Singing***

One of the best ways to write God's truth on a child's heart is through song. Whether or not you're musical, consider learning some classic hymns together as a family.

David and Barbara Leeman's *Our Hymns, Our Heritage* is an excellent resource—it not only includes beloved hymns of the church but also shares the story behind each one. Another wonderful option is Keith and Kristyn Getty's *Family Hymn Sing* playlist on Spotify—perfect for playing at home or in the car.

If you're hesitant about adding these practices into your family's routine, you might be wondering: *When am I supposed to do this?* The answer is whenever it fits naturally into your daily rhythms—mealtimes, bedtime, or car rides all work well. However, and whenever you begin, strive for consistency, and don't be discouraged when things don't go as planned. God is gracious. He will bless your perseverance as you seek to diligently teach your children in the truth of the gospel.

### **A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT**

If you're interested in any of these resources, they'll be available at church on the book table in the back of the sanctuary throughout December. Take a few moments to look through them and see what might serve you and your family well.

As we look ahead—whether you're setting new goals, renewing old commitments, or simply seeking to be more intentional in your walk with Christ—remember this: spiritual growth doesn't come by sheer willpower, but by the Holy Spirit working within us.

I'm continually thankful for God's promise that *"He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 1:6). God Himself is invested in our spiritual growth—and so should we be: *"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"* (Philippians 2:12).

May 2026 be a year of renewed joy, deeper faith, and greater devotion to the One who loved us, gave Himself for us, and makes all things new.

## OCTOBER FINANCIAL REPORT

Giving for Oct.: \$9,316

Oct. Expenses: \$15,210

Oct. Avg. Attendance: 55

Year-To-Date: Giving - \$127,119 Expenses - \$143,823

Sunday School collection for the Glovers: \$80

## Family Bingo Night



# DECEMBER

2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 7:00 Trustee Mtg	3 Kirkwood Growth Groups	4 Quarryville Growth Group	5	6
7 Communion Sunday 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Adult & Children's Choir Practices 4:00 Prayer Service	8 Octorara Pines Growth Group	9	10 Kirkwood Growth Groups	11	12	13
14 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Children's Choir Practices	15 Octorara Pines Growth Group	16	17 7:00 Session Mtg Kirkwood Growth Groups	18 Quarryville Growth Group	19	20
21 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 6:30 Organ Concert Winter Begins	22 Octorara Pines Growth Group	23	24 4:00 Christmas Eve Service	25 Christmas Day	26	27
28 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship	29 Octorara Pines Growth Group	30	31 New Year's Eve			



# Reverse Advent Calendar

## December 2025



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 Pudding Cups	1 Chicken Noodle Soup	2 Triscuit/Wheat Thin Crackers	3 Diapers Sizes 4 & 5	4 Pop Tarts	5 Assorted Soups	6 Fruit Cups
7 Toothpaste	8 Mac & Cheese	9 Bars of Soap	10 Chef Boyardee Micro Cups	11 Juice Boxes	12 Granola Bars	13 Baby Wipes
14 Spam or other Canned Meats	15 Chef Boyardee Cans	16 Tomato Soup	17 Pudding Cups	18 Mayonnaise	19 Sloppy Joe/Manwich	20 Diapers Sizes 6 & Toddler
21 Applesauce Cups	22 Snack Crackers Individually Wrapped	23 Juice Boxes	24 Enjoy Family	25 We Wish you a Merry Christmas	26 Find Real Joy in Christ	27 Be Reminded That Real Peace is From God
28 Find Community In The Body of	29 God is Faithful	30 Pray for your Neighbors	31 Trust God	1 Happy New Year	2 God's Mercies are New Every Morning	3 God is Good....Always

### Drop off Times:

December 1-22 : Drop off from 9am-4pm Monday through Thursday, Friday 9am-Noon

December 23: 9am-Noon

December 29-30 : Drop off from 9am-12pm

No Drop Offs on December 24, 25, 26, 31 or January 1st

# LECTIONARY PASSAGES

## December 7<sup>th</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19;

Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

## December 14<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:5-10;

James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

## December 21<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19;

Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

## December 28<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday After Christmas

Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148;

Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23

# FOOD BANK

Pop Tarts, applesauce (jars), pineapple (can), peanut butter, tomato soup (10 oz size), chicken noodle soup (10 oz size), seafood chowder/soup (can), microwave popcorn, fruit cups, SPAM and other canned meats

**Christmas Meals:** Ham or Ham Steaks, Green Beans (can), Bag of Fresh Potatoes (or canned potatoes/yams), Butter or Margarine, Pineapple (can), Yellow or White Cake mix (box), Container of Cake Icing, Cake Sprinkles

*If donating perishable items, please make sure they are dated past Christmas Day (12/25/25) and do not put them in the donation cart at Union.*



## Union Post Office

The post office at Union Church will operate for the Christmas Holiday Season. Christmas Cards will be delivered to anyone who attends church in person. Please place the cards in the box in the lobby. Please have first and last name on the envelope. **December 7<sup>th</sup> will be the last day to bring cards.** The sooner cards are deposited the better! If you have any questions, please ask Arlene or Donald Hastings 529-2495.

# GREETERS

- 7 Colleen & Larry Sheaffer
- 14 Joyce Letterman & Darlene Gray
- 21 (Open)
- 28 Kenny & Judy Beiler

# Happy Birthday!



- 2 Emily Hastings
- 4 Nathaniel Wrigley  
Janet Todd
- 5 Patrick Graver  
Chris Shoemaker
- 7 John Noonan
- 8 Mark Jackson  
Kay Jackson  
Adam Kelley
- 12 Colleen Sheaffer
- 14 Lois Ferguson
- 15 William Sumner
- 16 Holly Parmer
- 17 Peter Lesley
- 18 Robert Ambler
- 20 Marsha Ferguson
- 21 Gary Jackson, Jr.
- 22 Jerry Eldreth  
Brian Michael Wade  
Timothy Slodki
- 23 Kristen Hoak
- 25 Jesus  
Martin Greenleaf, Jr.
- 26 Kayla Ferguson Bailey
- 27 Angie Miller
- 29 Timothy Kleinhans



## Save the date!!!!

Union will once again treat the community to a Christmas organ concert performed by Bob Trimble on Sunday evening, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 pm.

Union Presbyterian Church  
5637 Street Road  
Kirkwood, PA 17536

VISIT US ONLINE AT [WWW.UNIONPRES.COM](http://WWW.UNIONPRES.COM)



*O Come Let Us Adore Him!*  
Join us for our  
**Family Christmas Eve Service**  
**Union Presbyterian Church**  
**Wednesday, December 24 @ 4:00 pm**

5637 Street Road, Kirkwood, Pa ~ 717-529-2000  
For more information visit our website, [www.unionpres.com](http://www.unionpres.com) or follow us on Facebook.



*Christmas  
Organ Concert*

**Come celebrate the birth  
of our Lord! Join us for  
our annual organ concert  
by Bob Trimble on  
Sunday, December 21st  
at 6:30pm in the Union  
sanctuary.**



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