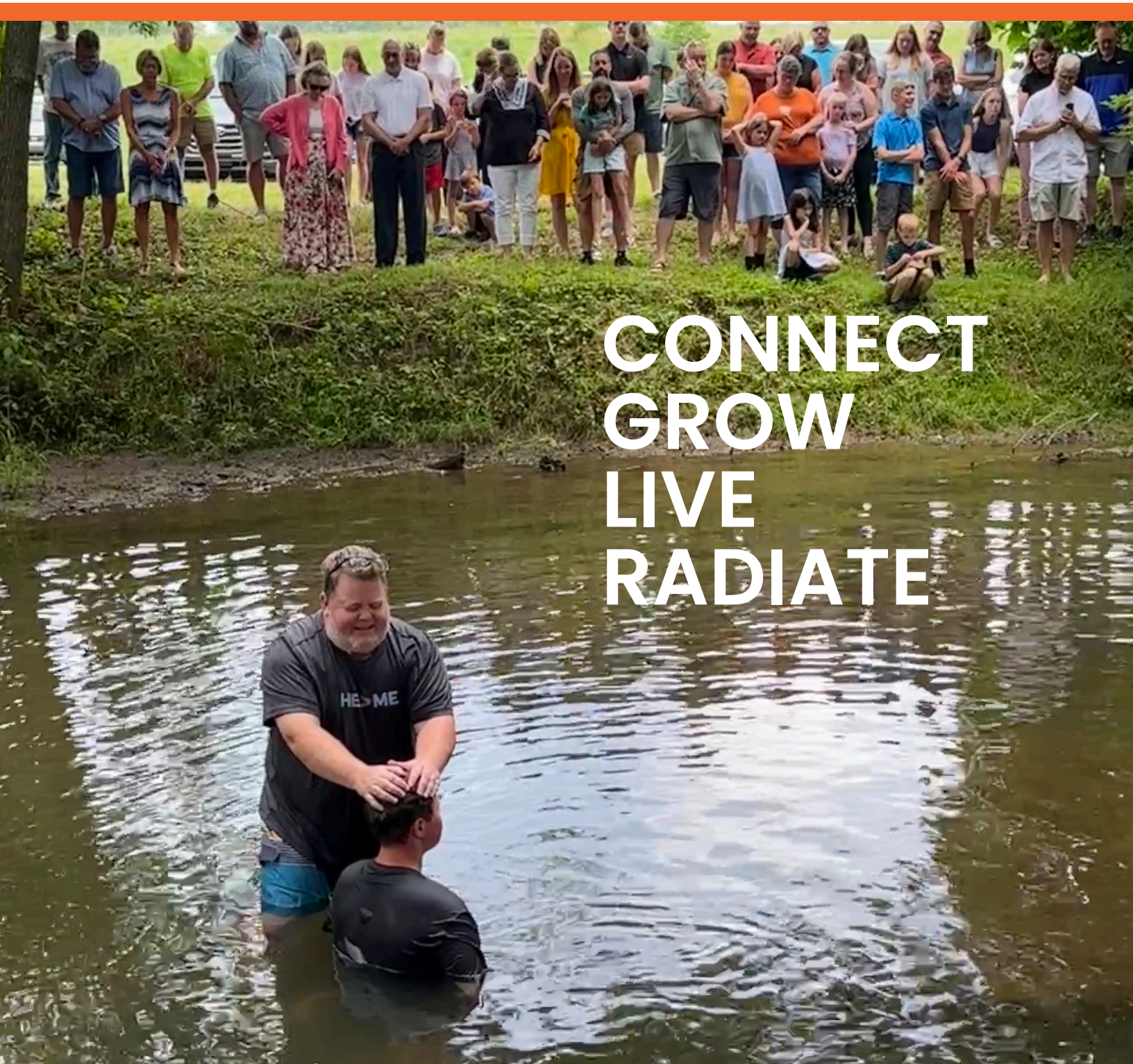




**ephrata**  
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN



**CONNECT  
GROW  
LIVE  
RADIATE**





# ephrata

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

At Ephrata Church of the Brethren, we believe in things that matter – faith, family, friendships. We are a family of disciples who connect to, grow in, live out, and radiate the transformative power of Jesus in the world. At our core, it is our desire to make innovative, adaptable, and fearless disciples, ready for an ever-changing community in which we serve. In order to do that, we understand that as a faith community, we need to also adapt our way of communicating how your participation at ECOB will develop your faith walk.

To that end, this brochure will give you a glimpse into this coming year. Specifically, it will help you see the tremendous amount of prayer and thought put forth into your faith formation. Making disciples is about finding opportunities to connect you with other believers in ways that are meaningful. Making disciples encourages growth in your personal and familial journeys, seeking ways to be more like Jesus. Making disciples means celebrating our call to live like Jesus, following his example to be light bringers into this world. Making disciples means that we take that light and radiate it into the world, sharing the love of God with all people, everywhere.

I look forward to this journey with you, as together, we deepen our faith in the one who is the way, the truth, and the life!

Serving Christ Together,  
PASTOR BRIAN MESSLER





# MISSION STATEMENT

We are a family of disciples who connect to, grow in, live out, and radiate the transformative power of Jesus in the world.

## **CHRIST-CENTERED LIVING:**

Fixing our eyes on Jesus, we will daily worship God through our actions and attitudes – seeking God’s best, not our own.

**Romans 12:2**

## **COMPASSIONATE ENGAGEMENT:**

So that others may know the hope and new life in Jesus, we will be vulnerable disciples who desire to build relationships that resemble those Jesus had.

**Mark 12:30-31; Matthew 5:43; 1 Cor 13:13; Isaiah 43; Romans 5:8; John 13:34-35; Luke 6:36**

## **BIBLICAL HOSPITALITY:**

Understanding that we are at the banquet of God, we will demonstrate the characteristics of a servant by radically welcoming all who desire a seat at the table.

**Luke 10:35-37**

## **SPIRIT-DRIVEN MINISTRY:**

Everything that we do as a body of faith will be anchored in the character and nature of Jesus.

**Colossians 1:18; John 14:6; Matthew 25:45**

## **OUTWARD FOCUSED:**

Out of our desire to support our neighbors, near and far, we will proactively engage in partnerships that will care for the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being of others.

**John 13:14-17; Phil. 2:6-11; Romans 12:4-8; Luke 14:15-24**

## **FAMILY-ORIENTED:**

Viewing all people as children of God, we believe our missions, ministries, and resources are to be focused on how we can encourage, support, and equip each person’s discipleship.

**Deuteronomy 6:5-7**

# CORE COMPETENCIES

Relationship Development **CONNECT**

Spiritual Growth **GROW**

Christian Living **LIVE**

Community Outreach **RADIATE**

## SERMON SERIES

At ECOB, we value the importance of faith formation for the entire family. Life groups of all ages will be engaging in our sermon-based curricula, using age-appropriate content and tools. This also ensures that family members can communicate with each other about the big ideas they're exploring throughout the week. Here's how we'll learn together this year:



### Villains

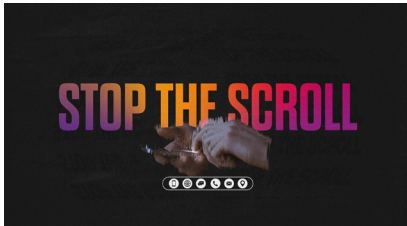
**Starts 9/10/23 • 5 Messages**

Anyone can become a villain who destroys others, but we will also discover that God can redeem even the worst of villains.

*Kids* - Be kind to others

*Youth* - Don't be a villain, be redeemed

*Adults* - God redeems us from being a villain



### Stop the Scroll

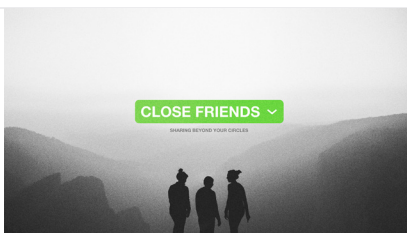
**Starts 10/15/23 • 3 Messages**

Stopping with the distractions and resting in Jesus

*Kids* - Focus on God alone

*Youth* - Putting the distractions away

*Adults* - Finding rest during the busyness



### Close Friends:

**Sharing Beyond Your Circles**

**Starts 11/5/23 • 3 Messages**

Building healthy relationships in Christ and modeling Jesus to others

*Kids* - My friends are important

*Youth* - Making healthy friend choices

*Adults* - Your friends, your actions model Christ



### Advent:

**The Light Has Come**

**Starts 11/26/23 • 5 Messages**

The importance of preparing to receive Jesus into our lives

*Kids* - Jesus is coming

*Youth* - Welcoming Jesus to our world

*Adults* - Preparing space for Jesus in our lives



### Christmas Eve @ECOB

**12/24/23 • 1 Message**

Celebrating the coming of Emmanuel: God with us!

*Kids* - Jesus is here!

*Youth* - Jesus is here!

*Adults* - Jesus is here!





## Our House

**Starts 1/7/24 • 6 Messages**

Knowing congregational values that define our relationships within and outside the church

*Kids* - I love my church

*Youth* - My church is important to me

*Adults* - My faith community is central to my life



## Ashes to Ashes

**Starts 2/14/24 • 7 Messages**

Finding our grounding by contemplating our sinfulness and preparing ourselves to see the significance of God's loving sacrifice.

*Kids* - God loves me

*Youth* - Know yourself like God knows you

*Adults* - Understanding our sinfulness and God's grace



## Resurrection Sunday!

**Starts 3/31/24 • 1 Message**

Celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus

*Kids* - Jesus is alive

*Youth* - Jesus's resurrection gives me hope

*Adults* - Jesus conquered death to give us life



## The Wilderness

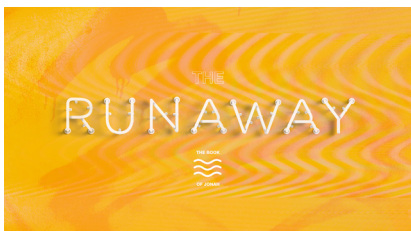
**Starts 4/7/24 • 6 Message**

We serve a God who sees us, hears our cries for help, and provides for our needs in the wildernesses of life.

*Kids* - God is there for me

*Youth* - When things are tough, God hears me

*Adults* - Our desert moments are met with God's provision and care



## The Runaway

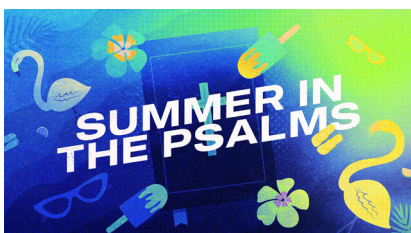
**Starts 5/19/24 • 4 Messages**

Nobody is beyond God's reach, for He relentlessly pursues us.

*Kids* - God seeks me out

*Youth* - God pursues my heart and life

*Adults* - God is always reaching out to us, no matter where we go



## Summer in the Psalms

**Starts 6/16/24 • 6 Messages**

Learning about Psalms of Ascent and what they can teach us about God and community.

*Kids* - God is part of my life

*Youth* - God is always moving in my life

*Adults* - Living the character of God is important to our faith



## Community Life:

**Living Out The Gospel Together**

**Starts 7/28/24 • 5 Messages**

The importance of being with other believers in our daily lives.

*Kids* - My church friends are important

*Youth* - Connecting with other Christ-followers makes me stronger

*Adults* - Having a bold and strong faith community is important

Families and individuals can listen or watch the sermons live or during the week on our [website www.ecob.church](http://www.ecob.church)

### Sunday Faith Formation Opportunities

**8:30 am** Classic Service • **9:45 am** Life Group hour for all ages • **10:45 am** Contemporary Service

**10:45 am** age-appropriate offerings from infant – grade 4

**6:00 pm** ECOBYOUTH SNL (Sunday Night Live)





# Events with impact on faith formation



*“This was our first Love Feast ever so we were a bit unsure but loved the experience! It was such a blessing explaining it to [our daughter].”*

*– ECOBKIDS Mom*

## MISSIONS

Being a disciple means that we are to use our gifts to serve those both near and far. We are to seek ways in which the love of Jesus can radiate through our words and actions. Through local opportunities, we serve those experiencing homelessness and the working poor through City Gate and Mountaineers’ Table. Nationally, we make school, hygiene, and clean-up kits that support those in areas of disasters. Globally, we build houses, share Jesus, and proclaim love to all people. Participating in missions, near and far, you will have the opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

*“Mom, don’t worry. Call Mountaineers’ Table, they’ll help us.”*

*– local boy to his mother after she was laid off from her job*

## DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS

As part of our faith formation, there are many opportunities to develop relationships with others. Whether it is a Life Group, Sunday worship, or hosting a block party, we desire to provide space for you to create those life-long healthy friendships. Specifically, we host many meals with other men, women, and older adults – focused around living life together. Participating in these events will have a deep impact on your faith formation as together, you grow closer to Jesus and one another.



*“I feel comfortable to be myself at the youth retreats.”*

*- an ECOBYOUTH*

## AGE-APPROPRIATE MINISTRIES

Each person at ECOB can participate in a ministry that will impact their faith walk. Whether it is Kid’s Church, VBS, or seasonal events for children – retreats, camps, or SNL (Sunday Night Live) for our youth – Men’s Worship Nights, or Women’s Breakfasts for adults – or – lunches, trips, and special growth events for our Prime Time older adults – all of these opportunities are building blocks to connect, grow, live, and radiate the power of Jesus in the world.

*“She is on fire! She shared how much the sermons have been speaking to her heart.”*

*- an ECOB Staff after connecting with a new attendee*





# MILESTONES



## Children

### Parent/Child Dedication

We believe that babies born into our congregation belong to Jesus and are an important part of our congregation. Together with the congregation's support, parents dedicate themselves to raising their child to learn who Jesus is, proclaim Him as Lord, and engage in a relationship with Him.

### Move Up Sunday

Each year, we celebrate how God has encouraged all of our children and youth. We celebrate with them as they move from our children's ministry to our youth ministry, and our youth to our young adult ministry. As they move on to the next age-appropriate ministry, these young disciples grow deeper and deeper in their faith, learning more about how to be like Jesus.



## Youth

### Driver's License

There are moments in our lives that are considered turning points. Getting a driver's license is a moment which reflects the independence of our youth. Celebrating with these young people is a way for a deepening of relationships with the congregation, as together we pray for safety and celebration.

### Graduation Sunday

Whether it is high school or college, graduation marks an end and a beginning of new journeys. This milestone celebrates with families and students as together, we enter new moments of opportunities and growth in Jesus



## For Any Age

### Baptism

We believe that baptism is vital to our faith walk. While at the time of baptism, we have already accepted Jesus, we hope and pray that the act of baptism is a reflection of what Jesus did – committing his life to the ministry and mission of God and proclaiming his desire to follow God's will.

### Membership

Multiple times each year, we receive those who desire to become a member of ECOB. This time is one that shares a level of commitment from those becoming members and from the congregation as we welcome them in the family of faith at ECOB.

### Memorial Sunday

Part of living together means that we often experience death together. On Memorial Day Sunday, we take some time to remember those who have passed, pray for grieving families, and to sit within the faithfulness of God's comfort together.

# Regular Program Offerings:



## WORSHIP

Each week, ECOB offers two worship services that praise God and engage us in our discipleship. Our 8:30 Classic service offers strong liturgy, faith-filled hymns, and times of prayer that connect with the very nature of God. At our 10:45 Contemporary service, our time together is marked by energetic and meaningful music, prayers, and a message that connects the deep truths of the Bible with the need for real life application.

## LIFE GROUPS

At the core of our faith formation is our Life Group Ministry. These groups, meeting both on Sunday mornings and throughout the week, provide opportunities to connect with other disciples in deep and meaningful relationships as together, we explore faith and life. Our Welcome Desk has an ongoing list of Life Groups for men, women, all ages, and even special groups based off of our weekly messages. Our mid-week, all-church gathering, Jericho, happens during specific weeks in the fall and spring with a meal followed by Life Group offerings.



## SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Each week, there are opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus. These opportunities are both within ECOB and our local community giving ways to use your unique gifts, talents, and passions to serve our neighbors.

Photos by Janelle Burkholder, Allen Kevorkov, and ECOB staff.



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