



The Sower

"Planting seeds of faith and fellowship in East Cocalico Township and beyond."

The Sower is a ministry of the East Cocalico Church of the Brethren.

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"The Lord
has done
great
things for
us, and we
are filled
with joy."

Psalms

126:3

July, August September 2026

From the Pastor's Desk

If I asked 10 random people if they were happy today, I am sure that some would say "yes" and others would say "no". And why wouldn't everybody say "yes"? Because happiness is temporary. It is guided entirely by our emotions. It depends on circumstances – on something that happens to us and thereby affects us. For example: "*I just bought a new car! I always wanted a new one, and I am so HAPPY!*" But then, a few months later as reality sinks in... "*My payments on that car I bought are astronomical! I'm **REALLY NOT HAPPY** about spending all that money on a new car! I should have bought a used one!*"

Did you know that the word "happy" comes from the root of the Greek word "HAP" which means literally... "chance"? Whether we are "happy" or "not happy" on any given day depends, in large part, on external forces – the things that happen in our lives and our reaction to those things. But "joy" is different. Joy actually originates internally and is not dependent on our circumstances. Happiness is based on *chance*. Joy, on the other hand, is based on *choice*. Happiness is based on the external, but joy is based on the internal through the Holy Spirit of God residing in us. And because of this, God expects us to persevere through life with His guidance and help, and in a spirit of rejoicing or joyfulness. Consider these verses:

Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, rejoice."

Romans 15:13 "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace."

Psalms 118:24 "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice (or "be joyful") and be glad in it."

Joy is referenced all through the Bible. It was actually commanded of God's first-covenant people, Israel, and is seen especially

Sunday Mornings

Sunday School 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM



throughout the Psalms.

Psalms 97:12 “Rejoice in the Lord.”

Psalms 16:11 “In your presence there is fullness of joy.”

Psalms 32:11 “Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!”

And there are literally *hundreds* more instances throughout the Old Testament instructing us to be joyful – to rejoice! Jesus himself gives us even more reasons to make joyfulness part of who we are.

Matthew 5:12 “Rejoice (be joyful) and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.”

Luke 10:20 “Rejoice (be joyful) that your names are written in heaven.”

And **James 1:2-3** adds to this thought: “*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.*”

Now, if it weren’t made plain enough, the apostle Paul drives it home further in his letters to the churches;

Romans 12:12, 15 “*Rejoice (or, find joy) in hope.*” “*Rejoice with those who rejoice...*”

1 Thessalonians 5:16 “*Rejoice always.*”

2 Corinthians 13:11 “*Finally, brothers, rejoice.*”

Philippians 2:18 “*Be glad and rejoice with me.*”

It’s not that we’re woefully ignorant of the multifaceted trials of our lives – in fact, we are all too keenly aware of our own hurts and sufferings. But we also know that in Christ, we have access to His joy as He walks alongside us, and the joy that He gives is deeper than the greatest of our sorrows. As Christians, we need to continually remind ourselves that even though it can sometimes be tremendously hard, we are not to be *controlled* by how we feel – by how “happy” we are. God’s Word tells us, among other things, to rejoice - to be joyful - and as children of our heavenly Father, that’s exactly what we need to do.

Have a great (and joyful!) rest of the summer!

Pastor Cyndy

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Choose Joy". The word "Choose" is written in a cursive style, and "Joy" is written below it in a similar style. The word "Joy" is highlighted with a red underline.

Annual Church Picnic - Brubaker Park

Saturday, August 15, 4-7 PM

Hot dogs, rolls, plates, napkins, and utensils will be provided. Please sign up to bring a side. The list is in the rear of the church auditorium. We hope to see you there! There are also directions to Brubaker Park, if you need them.



Q2 2026 Mission Project

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our mission project for Q2 2026, which was collecting items needed by Good Samaritan Services in Ephrata. Good Sam serves individuals and families who are experiencing a housing crisis. The picture to the right shows the items that were donated.



Ladies Sharing Lunch - August 18

Ladies, the next lunch is Tuesday, August, at noon at Udder Choice Restaurant. Doug Gehr will be the guest speaker.



Plan to attend and bring a friend! You may find out something new about Ephrata Cloister that you didn't know. There is a sign-up sheet in the rear of the church. Please include a friend, if you are bringing one.

A Request from the Kitchen Committee

There is a pile of items left from fellowship meals in the kitchen by the microwave. If you are missing any items that you brought to a meal, please check to see if they might be on the pile. The Kitchen Committee would appreciate if you would take your items along home.

Q3 2026 Mission Project

Do you often feel rushed when it is time to start working on the Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes? Do you wish you had started thinking about the boxes when all the school supplies were on sale in August? Well, here is your chance to cash in on those sales and save the hassle just before the holidays. Our 3rd quarter missions project is collecting items for shoeboxes. There is a list of items that can be donated, as well as those that cannot be accepted, on the next page. Have fun shopping!

Suggestions for Shoe Boxes

1. School Supplies: Pens, pencils, sharpeners, crayons, markers, notebooks, coloring books, picture, books, solar calculators.
2. Personal Care Items: Toothbrushes, washcloths, combs, hairbrushes
3. Toys: Toy cars, jump ropes, yo-yos, toys that light up and make noise (with extra batteries)
4. Accessories: Socks, sunglasses, jewelry and watches, flashlights (with extra batteries)
5. Small 'Wow' Items: Soccer ball with pump, doll, stuffed animals, shoes

Remember, everything has to fit in a shoebox!

PLEASE DO NOT INCLUDE:

Any edible items, such as candy, gum, or food; toothpaste; soap; used or damaged items, war-related items; seeds; liquids or lotions; medications or vitamins; breakable items or glass containers; aerosol cans. Any of these will be removed from the boxes, either here when we pack them, or at the distribution center in Baltimore, where volunteers go through them.



Covered Dish Meal

Sunday, September 13

Bring a dish to share!

35th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday, July 18

