**December 4, 2016 8:30 & 10:45**

**2nd Sunday of Advent – “Hope is on the Way”**

While the advent of the Messiah is marked with hopeful expectation, preparing for that arrival places demands upon our lives. Today we are reminded that “the one who started a good work in us” will bring it to completion by the coming day of the Lord.

**WE GATHER IN GOD’S NAME …**

**Gathering Music**

 **Hymn 626 Let all mortal flesh keep silence** (seated) *Picardy*

 **Hymn 630 Become to us the living bread** *Gelobt sei Gott*

**Greeting**

Leader: Sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth!

**People: Declare God’s glory among the nations; declare his wondrous works among all people.** *Psalm 96:1, 3*

**Announcements**

**Stewardship Update** Kathryn Karns

**Choral Introit** 10:45 Prepare ye the way *Hart Morris*

 Prepare ye the way of the Lord! Make straight a highway for our God.

**Call to Worship**

Leader: A voice cries in the wilderness:

**People: “Prepare the way of the Lord!”**

Leader: A challenge is uttered from on high:

**People: “Make God’s paths straight.”**

Leader: For every valley will be lifted up, and every mountain will be made low.

**People: Every crooked path will be made straight and every rough way will be made smooth.**

Leader: All will see the salvation of our God. *Adapted from Luke 3*

 **… TO GIVE PRAISE TO GOD …**

**Hymn of Praise 233 Cold December flies away** (standing) *Lo Desembre congelat*

**Opening Prayer (in unison)**

**God of love and renewal, enter the wilderness of our lives, and call us to prepare once more for the coming of your Son. Fill the valleys of our insecurities with hope, and bring low the mountains of our pride and conceit. Make straight the paths before us, and guide our feet in the ways of peace. Amen**. *B.J. Beu*

**… TO CELEBRATE THE FAMILY OF FAITH …**

**Lighting of the Advent Wreath The Angels’ Message: Believe**  *Joel Raney*

8:30 Paulette Colonna and Liz Dipietro

 10:45 Melissa and Tyler Walters

Reader: During Advent we recall God’s promises spoken to us long ago.

 **People:** **For you are great and do marvelous deeds. You alone are God.**

Reader: During Advent we anticipate promises yet to unfold.

 **People:** **For you are great and do marvelous deeds. You alone are God.**

Reader: During Advent we recall God’s mighty deeds from ages past.

 **People:** **For you are great and do marvelous deeds. You alone are God.**

Reader: During Advent we anticipate mighty deeds yet to come.

 **People:** **For you are great and do marvelous deeds. You alone are God.**

*(Lighting of the Candle)*

 **Sung Response: Listen to the angels, hear the message they bring;**

 **Telling the news of a coming King;**

 **filling the world with hope and good cheer.**

 **Jesus, Emmanuel, God is near.**

**Closing Prayer**

**Sacrament of Baptism** 10:45 *Baptismal Covenant II, UM Hymnal #39* Emily Jane Schmidt, daughter of Eric and Courtney Schmidt

 **Pastor:** Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life

 and include *Emily Jane* now before you in your care?

 **People: With God’s help we will proclaim the good news**

 **and live according to the example of Christ.**

 **We will surround Emily Jane with a community of love and forgiveness,**

 **that she may grow in her service to others.**

 **We will pray for her that she may be a true disciple**

 **who walks in a way that leads to life.**

**The Sign of Peace** *Please pass the peace to your neighbors as a sign of reconciliation and love.*

 Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.
 People: And also with you.

Gathering Song *James Ritchie*

 This, this is where children belong,

 welcomed as part of the worshiping throng.

 Water, God’s Word, bread and cup, prayer and song:

 This is where children belong. WORDS AND MUSIC: James Ritchie ©1999 Abingdon Press

**Message for Young Disciples** Paulette Colonna and Rylee Siegert

 (All children are invited. Please sing as children come forward.)

After the children’s message at the 10:45 service, children ages 3 - 3rd grade may attend **Kids Praise** in the Welcome Center. Children will be escorted to and from Kids Praise by teachers. They will return to the Sanctuary near the end of the service, and parents may meet them.

**… TO HEAR GOD’S WORD PROCLAIMED …**

**Hymn 216** 8:30 **Lo, how a Rose e’er blooming** *Es ist ein Ros*

**Handbell Anthem** 10:45Many and great *arranged by Cathy Moklebust*

Scripture Reading 8:30 Bob Murray

 10:45 Stacey Rosleck

 A Lesson from the Hebrew Scriptures

 Isaiah 11:1-10 A shoot from the stump of Jesse

**Worship & Song 3145 Breath of God, Breath of peace** (stanza 2, seated) *Patterns* **Word of God, Word of peace, Word of love, Word of life, Word of justice,**

 **Word of passion, Word creating, Word of healing, Word of singing, Word of praying,**

 **Come upon us, come restore us, come inspire us, Breath of God.**

**Pastoral Prayer**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

 **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

Scripture Reading

 A Lesson from the Gospel

 Matthew 3:1-12 Ministry of John the Baptist

**Response**

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God**.

**… TO OFFER OUR GIFTS AND TO DEDICATE OUR LIVES …**

**Offertory Duet** 8:30 On eagle’s wings  *Michael Joncas*

**Offertory Anthem** 10:45 **O come, O come, Emmanuel** *arranged by William Mathis*

*(The congregation is invited to sing along with the choir.)*

**Doxology 94**

 Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

 Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!

 Praise God the source of all our gifts!

 Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!

 Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Prayer of Dedication**

**Sermon** “We Work While We Wait” Rev. Thomas Q. Strandburg

**Sacrament of Holy Communion: The Banquet of Hopeful Expectation**

 **Invitation**

Pastor: God’s Banquet is coming. The time we await when all will gather from North, East, West and South.
**People:** **A banquet where the rich and powerful will sit with the weak and poverty- stricken. A table where young and old will learn from each other. A time when all will sit together in peace, “and the wolf will lie down with the lamb”.**

Pastor:Here at this table we get a foretaste of God’s banquet. This is indeed God’s table, not the church’s, and so all who seek to follow The Way are welcome to eat and drink from it.
**People:** **Come and taste the grace eternal, come and see that God is good.**

 **The Great Thanksgiving**

Pastor: God is with us
**People:** **We are not alone**Pastor:Christ is present here
**People: The Spirit moves within us**Pastor:Let us give thanks to God
**People: In memory and in hope**

Pastor: Blessings be to you, Creator God, who in the beginning brought light and life to the world and who continues to bring it love and light everlasting.
**People: Your song of wisdom echoes through the ages, your ancient promise still brings us hope.**Pastor: Over the ages you have called people to embrace your hope and share your love. But even when they have closed their ears to the song you did not stop singing. You sent prophets and messengers to your people, reminding them of the promised time of peace and justice that would surround the world.
**People: They came in the midst of our despair and filled us with hope.**Pastor: And then you came to a young woman named Mary and laid out the promise in a new way
**People: Promising her a son, who would be called Jesus; promising her that in her son the world would be changed**Pastor: And now as we prepare for that child to be born, we echo the ancient cry:
**People: O come, O come Emmanuel**

Pastor:And also we lift our voices in song, singing together the praises of ages

 **Response:** *Kingsfold*

**O holy holy holy God,
O God of time and space.
All earth and sea and sky above
bear witness to your Grace.
Hosanna in the highest heav’n,
creation sings your praise.
And blessed is the One who comes
and bears Your name always**

 **The Story Remembered**

Pastor: Yet even now, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, we remember the life that this baby will live.
**People: We remember how he broke the bonds of human tradition to show all what the Banquet of Hope could be as he ate openly with the despised and the outcast of his world.**Pastor: And we remember one special meal, foretaste of the banquet that is to come, that he ate with his closest friends.
**People: Gathering them together in an upper room to share the story of liberation, he prepared them for liberation.**Pastor: And at the end of the meal he took bread, blessed and broke it, then passed it to them saying:
**People: Take and eat. This bread is the body of Life, broken by the world. Eat it in remembrance and in hope.**
Pastor: After that he took the cup, blessed it, and passed it to them saying:
**People: This cup is the sign of the New Covenant. Whenever you drink it remember me, for I shall not eat or drink again until the time of the heavenly banquet.**Pastor: Remembering the birth of the child in the stable, we remember also his life, his death and his resurrection.
**People:** **We remember how he poured his love upon those he met, and we look**

 **forward to his return and the coming reign of peace, love, and justice.**

Pastor: And in our remembering we sing the mystery of faith

 **Response:** *Kingsfold*

**Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!
Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!**

 **The Spirit Transforms**

Pastor: God, you poured your Spirit on Mary and she sang words of defiance and hope. Pour out your Spirit upon us gathered here. As we eat and drink may we know your presence. As we eat and drink may we be opened to the possibilities of your hope and power and may we be strengthened in our time of waiting for peace and justice so that we will have the courage to make the Christmas promise a reality. And the people all sang:

 **Response:** *Kingsfold*

**Amen, amen, O Holy One!
Hosanna and amen!
Amen, amen, O Holy One!
Hosanna and amen!**

 **The Pouring and Breaking and Serving**

Pastor: The Bread we break is the Bread of Life. The Cup we share is the

 Cup of Promise. These are the gifts of God for the people of God.
**People: Thanks be to God.**
Pastor: Come and eat, the banquet awaits.
10:45 *(During the distribution of elements, join the choir singing the first two stanzas of hymns beginning with #213, except for #222.)*

 **Prayer following Communion**

**ALL: God of pregnant expectations, God of Christmas promise, God of child-like hope, we have eaten and drunk from your table. May the eating and the drinking fill us with hope in a world of despair. May we be beacons of hope as we wait for the day when the world will be changed. Grant that this taste of your banquet which is to come would give us the hunger for peace and justice in our community and around the world. Amen**

**… TO GO REJOICING IN GOD’S NAME!**

**Hymn 209 Blessed be the God of Israel** (standing)*Merle's Tune*

**Benediction**

**Today’s Services**

**The flowers in the Chancel** are given by Chuck and Edee Hutchinson in loving memory of

F. Robert, Eleanor and Richard L. Hutchinson, Mr. and Mrs. George Miller and Kathryn.

**The flowers on the altar** are given by Lynne Beck in loving memory of her sister, Claudia Straitiff.

**Additional flowers** are donated by Stephania Martin and Mary Remington in memory of their mother, Joan Harden.

**Special music at 8:30** is provided by Emma Dowds and Maddy Thompson, of our Youth Choir.

**Special music at 10:45** is provided by the Promise Bells, the Chapel Bells and the Chancel Choir with flautist Jennifer Barnabei and oboist Renate Sakins and readers Stacey Rosleck and Bob Mallery, conducted by Nancy R. Lutz.

**Acolytes** Max Siegert and Cary Young **Greeters 8:30**  Paulette Colonna **10:45**  Deanna Baird

**Worship options for children** We encourage children to participate in the **Children’s Sermon** at both services, and in **Kids Praise** during the 10:45 service. **Nursery services** are offered in Room 204 of the Education Building. Ask ushers or greeters and follow signs for direction.

**Podcasts of Sunday Sermons** Would you like to share this morning’s sermon with a friend or did you miss a Sunday? Catch up on the messages from MLUMC with a podcast of Pastor Tom’s and others’ Sunday sermons. Sermons from the past three months are at http:// mlumc.buzzsprout.com. You can navigate to the site from the link on our webpage, www.mlumc.org, through the app, Stitcher or through iTunes.

**Today’s Scriptures** (*The congregation may follow the readings with the Bibles in the pews***.**)

**Isaiah 11:1-10,** The Old Testament, pages 640-641

**Matthew 3:1-12,** The New Testament, pages 2-3

**Keep in Prayer**

**Hospitalized**

Joseph Festor, UPMC Montefiore

**Convalescing in Care Facilities**

Leila Berkey, Asbury Heights

Ed Clarke, Asbury Place

May Fredericks, Concordia Health Care

Mary Garber, Providence Point

Susan Lichtenfels, Curahealth Pittsburgh,

 Oakdale

Pat Seitz, Concordia Health Care

Andy Smith, Concordia Health Care

Tim Watters, Baptist Homes

**Convalescing at Home**

Jean George, Anne Hoffman, Earl Killian

**In Sympathy**

Condolences are offered to the family of church member Joan Harden, who died on Monday, November 21. Words of sympathy for the family can be sent to her daughter:

Mary Remington

1739 Quigg Drive

Pittsburgh, PA 15241

**Birthday Wishes**

Church member Genevieve Sihol will turn 100 on Sat., Dec. 10. You may send your birthday wishes to the following address:

Mrs. Genevieve Sihol

700 Bower Hill Rd.

Pittsburgh, PA 15243

**Challenge Match to Meet Our Apportionment**

Although 2016 has been a very active and successful year in our church, we have one major bill that should be paid by January 12, 2017. Our apportionment asking for 2016 is $97,000. To date, we have only been able to pay $15,000 from our general fund so that we still owe $82,000. A very generous member of the church has offered us a challenge. This member has donated $41,000 and has challenged the congregation to match the $41,000 through a generous Christmas Offering. To date, $4,000 has been contributed to this match. Please give serious consideration to making a generous Christmas offering.