**December 10, 2017 8:30 & 10:45**

**2nd Sunday of Advent – “Coming Soon”**

Today, most of us, at times, feel as though we're walking in circles. The opening words of the gospel, tell us about someone who came to make our paths straight. The t**ime has come to break out of our endless loops and move in a new direction.**

**WE GATHER IN GOD’S NAME …**

**Gathering Music**

 **Hymnal 202 People, look east** (stanzas 1-2) *Besançon*

 **Hymnal 210 All earth is waiting** (stanzas 1- 2)*Taulè*

**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**

**Choral Introit** 10:45 *Karle Erickson*

 Alleluia! Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight his paths.

**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 …**

**Hymnal 203 Hail to the Lord’s Anointed** (standing) *Ellacombe*

**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*

**Silent Prayer**

**Worship & Song 3129** *Aihu*

**God of all living, God of all loving, God of the seedling, the snow, and the sun,**

 **teach us, deflect us, Christ, reconnect us, using us gently and making us one.**

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

**Lighting of the Advent Wreath**  (seated)  8:30 Laura, Silas and Asher Ward

 10:45 Bethany Lockie, Gabbie Boone and Lydia Slater

**Worship & Song 3047 God Almighty, we are waiting** (stanza 2, seated)*Hyfrydol*

 **God Incarnate, we are waiting for the feast day of your birth.**

 **Looking back and looking forward to the Christ’s return to earth.**

 **Help us to proclaim the gospel, ‘til the world is reconciled.**

 **Let us set your holy table for each woman, man, and child.**

**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** Rev. Thomas Q. Strandburg

 (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.

**Sacrament of Baptism** 10:45 *Baptismal Covenant II, UM Hymnal #39* Chandler Faye Policz, daughter of Michael and Haley Schmidt Policz

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

 and include *Chandler Faye* 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 Chandler Faye 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.**

**… TO HEAR GOD’S WORD PROCLAIMED …**

**Anthem** 10:45 *Bernadette Farrell*

Refrain: Come to set us free, come to make us your own.
 Come to show the way to our people, your chosen.
 Open our lives to the light of your promise.
 Come to our hearts with healing, come to our minds with power,
 come to us and bring us your life.

 *Stanza 1 Stanza 2*

You are light which shines in darkness, You are hope which brings us courage,

Morning Star which never sets. You are strength which never fails.

Open our eyes which only dimly see, Open our minds to ways we do not know,

The truth which sets us free. (refrain) But where your Spirit grows. (refrain)

 *Stanza 3*

You are promise of salvation,

You are God in human form.

Bring to the world of emptiness and fear

The Word we long to hear. (refrain)

Scripture Reading 8:30 Liz DiPietro 10:45 Barbara Watson

 A Lesson from the Hebrew Scriptures

 Isaiah 40:1-11 Comfort for God’s People

**Anthem** 10:45 *15th C. Carol; Carson Cooman*

 Adam lay bounden, bounden in a bond; four thousand winter thought he not too long.

 And all was for an apple, an apple that he took, as clerkès finden written in their book.

 Ne had the apple taken been, ne had never our Lady a-been heav’nè queen. Deo gracias!

**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

 Mark 1:1-8 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 Anthem** 10:45 *arranged by Michael Cox*

 *Stanza 1 Stanza 2*

Come, Thou long-expected Jesus, Comfort, comfort ye, my people,

Born to set Thy people free; Speak ye peace, thus saith our God;

From our fears and sins release us, Comfort those who sit in darkness,

Let us find our rest in Thee. Mourning ‘neath their sorrow’s load

Israel’s Strength and Consolation, Speak ye to Jerusalem

Hope of all the earth Thou art; Of the peace that waits for them;

Dear Desire of every nation, Tell her that her sins I cover,

Joy of every longing heart. And her warfare now is over.

 *Stanza 3 Stanza 4*

Born thy people to deliver, Make ye straight what long was crooked,

Born a child, and yet a king; Make the rougher places plain;

Born to reign in us forever, Let your hearts be true and humble,

Now thy gracious kingdom bring. As befits his holy reign;

By thine own eternal Spirit For the glory of the Lord

Rule in all our hearts alone; Now o’er earth is shed abroad,

By thine all-sufficient merit And all flesh shall see the token

Raise us to thy glorious throne. That his word is never broken.

**Doxology Hymnal 97** (standing) Tune: #688 *Ar hyd y nos*

**For the fruits of this creation, thanks be to God;**

 **for good gifts to every nation, thanks be to God;**

 **for the plowing, sowing, reaping, silent growth while we are sleeping,**

 **future needs in earth’s safe-keeping, thanks be to God.**

**Prayer of Dedication**

**Sermon** “From Circles to Straight Paths” Rev. Thomas Q. Strandburg

**… TO GO REJOICING IN GOD’S NAME!**

**Hymnal 210 All earth is waiting** (standing) *Taulè*

**Benediction**

**Today’s Services**

**The flowers on the altar** are given by Laurel Lockhart in loving memory of her aunt, Isabel Lockhart Walker, who died last December at the age of 99. Isabel grew up at Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church and was a faithful Methodist at her church in Coral Gables, Florida.

**The flowers in the chancel** are given in honor of Tom and Kathy Strandburg.

**Special music at 10:45** is provided by the Youth Choir; the Chancel Choir conducted by Richard Minnotte; and the men of the Chancel Choir with percussionist Richard Minnotte.

**Acolytes** Lydia Slater and Luke Grabowski **Greeters 8:30**  Fran Travis **10:45**  Marda Katshir

**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 can be found at http:// mlumc.buzzsprout.com or navigate to the site from the link on our webpage, [www.mlumc.org](http://www.mlumc.org). Sermons also will be posted to iTunes. Full recordings of the service are available upon request.

**Flower Donations needed for January 7** Honor or remember a loved one or friend with a Sunday flower arrangement donation for January 7. Contact Lizzie Diller, 412-860-3614.

**Online Pledge and Giving** If you have not completed your pledge, you can do so by submitting your pledge via our website. Visit: <https://www.mlumc.org/giving/pledge>. You can get to this page by clicking "Pledge" from the Giving dropdown in the top navigation menu.

In addition to our direct debit giving option that allows you to make contributions directly from your bank account, Mount Lebanon UMC is happy to also provide online giving. This option allows you to give without the need of writing checks or worrying about cash donations. You can make a donation using your mobile device by texting “**MLUMC”** to phone number **73256** or use our online donation website.\* Our online donation website allows you to make one-time donations, designate your gift for a particular cause and also set up automatic contributions with an account. To make a donation using our website, visit [www.mlumc.org/giving](http://www.mlumc.org/giving) on your home computer or mobile device where you’ll find more information and a link to get started!

 \*Standard text messaging rates may apply.

**Today’s Scriptures**

**Isaiah 40:1-11**

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. 2Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.

3A voice cries out: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 4Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. 5Then the glory of the Lordshall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” 6A voice says, “Cry out!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. 7The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. 8The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

9Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, “Here is your God!” 10See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. 11He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

**Mark 1:1-8**

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

2As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
3the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

4John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.6Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. 8I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

**Keep in Prayer**

**Hospitalized**

Earl Killian, Montefiore

**Convalescing in Care Facilities**

Shirley Baker, Providence Point

Leila Berkey, Asbury Heights

Ed Clarke, Asbury Place

Charles Hohing, Canonsburg Hosp. Rehab.

Pat Seitz, Concordia

Carol Van Sickle, Manor Care

Tim Watters, Baptist Home

**Convalescing at Home**

Mary Birks, Jean Boyer,

Mary Caldwell, David Lewis,

Susan Lichtenfels,

Robert Murray, Betty Trout

**In the Military**

Jason Boyer, SPC Natalie Brown

**Maj. Zachary Allen Finch, USMC**James Iantelli, 1st Lt. Jaskiewicz
S. Sgt. Keith Kimmell, Adam Kmick
PFC Brendan Lamport
Sgt. Matthew McConahan, Thomas Orda
David Poncel, Sgt. Steven Reitz
Capt. Scott B. Rushe, Pastor Rick Townes
Maj. Azizi Wesmiller

Maj. Matthew C. Wesmiller
Sgt. Keith Scott Winkowski

Sgt. Michael Zimmerman

**A Note of Gratitude**

*Dear Friends,*

 *Thank you, thank you, and thank you for the pastoral visits, many cards, prayers and food which I have received following my recent surgery. I really appreciated it all.*

 *I hope to be back with you soon.*

 *Mary Birks*

**CALENDAR – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 THRU SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16**

**SUNDAY 12/10**

 8:30 am Worship Sanner Chapel

 9:30 am Sunday School for All Ages/Coffee Café Various/Brookline Parlor

 10:45 am Worship Sanctuary

 Kids Praise Welcome Center

 2 pm Korean Worship Sanner Chapel

 4 pm Combined *Lessons & Carols Service* St. Bernard’s Church

**MONDAY 12/11**

 7 pm Chapel Bells Rehearsal Bell Room

 7 pm Mission Committee Welcome Center

**TUESDAY 12/12**

 6 pm Terrific Tuesday (final for 2017) Asbury Center

 6:30 pm Family Promise Board Library

 7 pm Boy Scout Troop #23 Wesley Hall

 7 pm Boy Scout Board of Reviews Room 105

 7 pm Cub Scout Planning Epworth Chapel

**WEDNESDAY 12/13**

 9:30 am Advent Bible Study Wesley Hall

 6:30 pm Cub Scout Wolf Pack Meeting Epworth Chapel

 6:30 pm Tableaux Rehearsal Sanctuary

 7 pm Tiger, Wolf and Bear Den Cub Scouts Various

 7:30 pm Finance Wesley Hall

**THURSDAY 12/14**

 6:30 pm Promise Bells Rehearsal Bell Room

 7:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal Sanctuary

**FRIDAY 12/15**

 9:30 am Women’s Bible Study Room 102

**SATURDAY 12/16**

 10 am Food Distribution Food Pantry