

**December 24, 2017 10:45 am**

**The Fourth Sunday in Advent “Coming Soon”**

The great dynasties of history include the royal houses of Europe and the Far East, as well as the championship dynasties of American sports. There's only one dynasty that lasts forever, however, and that's the one we celebrate on this last Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve.

**WE GATHER IN GOD’S NAME …**

**Gathering Music**

**Hymnal 234 O come, all ye faithful** (stanzas 1-3) *Adeste fideles* **Hymnal 230 O little town of Bethlehem** *St. Louis*

**Greeting**

Leader: Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors!

**People: That the King of glory may come in.** *Psalm 24:7*

**Announcements**

**Choral Introit**  Alleluia! Emmanuel! His name shall be called Emmanuel *Karle Erickson*

**Call to Worship**

Leader: We gather in preparation

**People: for good news is about to be proclaimed.**

Leader: We gather in expectation

**People: for joy is about to break forth in our midst.**

Leader: We gather in celebration

**People: for we are those people who have said yes to the manger,**

**yes to the one incarnate for others, yes to the wholeness of God.**

Leader: In preparation and expectation, let us celebrate!*Worship & Song*

**… TO GIVE PRAISE TO GOD …**

**Hymnal 238 Angels we have heard on high**  *Gloria*

**Opening Prayer (in unison)**

**God of Advent, of waiting and hoping, keep our hearts expectant, ready for your coming among us. God of Christmas, of celebration and rejoicing, make our hearts glad with the joy nothing can take from us. God of Epiphany, of hiding and making known, fill our hearts with wonder at the revelation of your glory that we have seen in Christ, our Lord.**

*Worship & Song*

**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)  Bradley, Laura, Emily and Evan Shoff

**Hymnal 196 Come, thou long-expected Jesus** (stanza 1, seated)*Hyfrydol*

**Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;**

**from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.**

**Israel’s strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;**

**dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.**

**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.

**… TO HEAR GOD’S WORD PROCLAIMED …**

**Hymnal 245 The first Noel** *The First Noel*

Scripture Reading Sally Munro

A Lesson from the Hebrew Scriptures

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 God’s promise to David

**Pastoral Prayer**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Scripture Reading

A Lesson from the Gospel

Luke 1:26-38 Jesus’ birth foretold

**Response**

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God**.

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

**Offertory Anthem** Carol of Joy *Dan Forrest*

Green leaves all fallen, withered and dry; brief sunset fading, dim winter sky;

lengthening shadows, dark closing in; then through the stillness, carols begin.

O fallen world, to you is the song! Death holds you fast, and night tarries long.

Jesus is born, your curse to destroy; sweet to your ears, a carol of joy!

Pale moon ascending, solemn and slow; cold, barren hillside shrouded in snow.

Deep empty valley, veiled by the night: hear angel music, hopeful and bright.

O fearful world, to you is the song! Peace with your God, and pardon for wrong.

Tidings for sinners, burdened and bound, a carol of joy - a Savior is found!

Earth wrapped in sorrow, lift up your eyes! Thrill to the chorus filling the skies.

Look up, sad-hearted, witness God’s love; join in the carol swelling above!

O friendless world, to you is the song! All heaven’s joy to you may belong!

You who are lonely, laden, forlorn: O fallen, O fearful world,

O friendless world, to you a Savior is born!

**Doxology Hymnal 221** (standing)

**What can I give him, poor as I am?**

**If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;**

**if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;**

**yet what I can I give him: give my heart.**

**Prayer of Dedication**

**Sermon** “A Dynasty of Grace” Rev. Thomas Q. Strandburg

**… TO GO REJOICING IN GOD’S NAME!**

**Hymnal 250 Once in royal David’s city** *Irby*

**Benediction**

**Today’s Services**

**Special music is provided by** the Chancel Choir, conducted by Richard Minnotte.

**Acolytes** Anna Rhoton and Anastasia Sunder

**Greeters** Brad, Laura, Emily and Evan Shoff

**Holiday hours** The church office is closed and will reopen on Wednesday, December 27 at

8:30 am.

**Worship options for children** We encourage children to participate in the **Children’s Sermon** and in **Kids Praise**. There is no nursery at today’s service but a wiggle room is provided in Brookline Parlor, adjacent to the Sanctuary.

**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** Honor or remember a loved one or friend with a Sunday flower arrangement donation. Contact Lizzie Diller, 412-860-3614.

**Welcome New Secretary** The Staff-Parish Relations Committee is pleased to announce the hiring of Sara Miller as our new church secretary, effective January 3rd, 2018. Sara comes to us with experience in a similar position at the First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan. She resides with her husband in Mt. Lebanon. More biographical information will be published in the near future.

**Today’s Scriptures**

**2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16**  
Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 2the king said to the prophet Nathan, “See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.” 3Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.”

4But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: 5Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? 6I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. 7Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” 8Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel;9and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. 10And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, 11from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. 16Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

**Luke 1:26-38**

26In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.”29But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” 34Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” 35The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37For nothing will be impossible with God.” 38Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

***Each year the W PA Conference and Eastern German Conference create daily Advent and Christmas devotionals for use in our homes and churches. We have chosen devotionals from each week.***



**Pastor Lutz Brückner, Kirchberg/Wilkau-Haßlau**

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. (NIV)*

The gospel of John begins that sober. There is no cozy Christmas story with barn and manger like Luke`s report, no wise men from the east with plenty of gifts seeking for the new born king like Matthew said. John simply writes of “the Word“, that was *in the beginning.*

The Old Testament begins with the same phrase. *In the beginning* God created the heaven and the earth. Out of the void (hebrew: Tohu wabohu) structure was generated: light and darkness, day and night, land and water, seasons... “Let there be..!“, was the crucial word of God. “And it was so!“ God`s creative word created life and all its facets and beauties.

John begins his gospel as a reminder of this creation, because in Jesus he recognizes God`s new creation, the “Son of man.“ Therefore this sober-sounding preface is, in fact, far away from sobriety.

What does it mean, that Christ is God`s new creation? In HIM God is being reflected Himself. Through his words and actions, through his life, suffering, death and resurrection we are able to recognize and to experience God. He becomes “the light of the world.“ In Jesus we can encounter God. And in Jesus God becomes our father who unconditionally loves us.

To describe Jesus as “the Word of God“ sounds quite strange to us, but it means: God speaks through Jesus – not as an unfamiliar and distant ruler over the world, but as a personal and caring father. Jesus is the light of the world, not for a few selected people, but for everyone, including me! That encourages me and it provides the power and hope not to resign myself to the darkness in our world; and not to allow fear to rule over me. Instead, I can lead my life in His light, filled with His love, encouraged to hope, strengthened by His power.

**Keep in Prayer**

**Hospitalized**

Carolyn Dagg, Washington Hospital

**Convalescing in Care Facilities**

Leila Berkey, Asbury Heights

Ed Clarke, Asbury Place

Earl Killian, Asbury Heights

Pat Seitz, Concordia

**Convalescing at Home**

Shirley Baker, Mary Birks, Jean Boyer,

Mary Caldwell, Carolyn Dagg,

Charles Hohing, 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

**Help Deliver Poinsettias**

Spread the Christmas cheer. Take a name card or two from the table in the Narthex and deliver a poinsettia to a shut in. Plants may be picked up any time after the 11 pm Christmas Eve service



**Poinsettias and Food Pantry Memorial**

**POINSETTIA DONOR IN MEMORY OF**

Betty Lou Albright Rev. Dr. H. Pat Albright

Kathleen Amant Rev. Dr. H. Pat Albright and my parents & brother

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Ruth Ann & John Esaias Our parents

Anna Fairgrieve Robert Fairgrieve

Tommilea & Dave Giegel Our parents and those we have lost

Donald & Donna Greer Our mothers, Elaine Saxon & Gertrude Greer

Edee Hutchinson My parents, Eleanor & Robert, and my brother, Richard

Edee Hutchinson My aunts, Kathryn Miller & Henrietta Hutchinson, and uncle, Frank Miller

Edee Hutchinson Special friends - Virginia & Vern Starr, Dottie Siebert, Margaret Ott, Jack & Vi Richardson, & Margie Jellison

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Marsha & Brian Roche Our parents, Joe & Rita Roche, and Dorothy Lutes; Rev. Dr. H. Pat Albright

Jon & Jan Rutter Our parents, Dr. Kenneth & Ruth Rutter and Don & Shirley Paterson

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Tom & Kathy Strandburg Our parents and grandparents

Jennifer Thompson & Doug Dusbiber Our parents Glen & Sarah Dusbiber, Granparents Ed & Arvell Kiel

Cindy Volek My brother, John Dalzell

Lily Yuan My parents

The Paine Family Dwight Ladd & Edna Mae Starr

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Krewin Families Thom Knowlson

**POINSETTIA DONOR IN HONOR OF**

Meghan & Andrew Buckley Kathleen Amant

Anna Fairgrieve My Family

Ruth Fleming Our three daughters, Susan, Marcy, & Wendy

Mary Garber Mike Staab & The UMW

Tommilea & Dave Giegel Church Volunteers, Friends, & Family

Bunny & John Knabb Our grandchildren

Corinne & HowardPotter Gerry Oelschlager

Noel, Sharon, Juliana & Lydia Slater Eileen Slater

Steve Stockton Doris Stockton

Jennifer Thompson Mt. Lebanon UMC Choirs

Jennifer Thompson & Doug Dusbiber Our children Mollie, Joe, Ellen, Madeline & Lauren

Silas & Asher Ward Martha & Darl Roberts; Debbie & Gene Girman

John & Marilyn White Grandchildren - Brandon, Brooke, Drew, Abbey, Lizzy & Rachel

Keith Will In loving honor of my three daughters - Patricia Lynne Will Krause, Barbara Lynne Will Myer, and Deborah Lynne Will Rambeau

**FOOD PANTRY DONOR** **IN MEMORY OF**

Carolyn G Dagg Ronald D. Dagg

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Connie Allen Loved ones

Kathleen Amant Rev. Dr. H. Pat Albright and my parents & brother

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Erma Henry Family members who have passed

Anne Hoffman Paul W. Hoffman

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Chuck Hutchinson Loved ones

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Gail Seymour My parents, Harry & Mary Jane Seymour

Fred & Marianne Siersdorfer Jr. Our parents

Rob Spicher Howard & Marie Spicher

Arlene Stewart With Loving Memories, Arthur Stewart

Kathy & Rich Tremblay & Family Dorothy & Dan Nesbit and Lois & Harold Tremblay

Jim & Beverly Weber Our parents

Keith Will In loving memory of Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Doll Will by their children: Keith Douglass Will, Cheryl Lynne Will Graunke, Cythia Eve Will Agryle

Lily Yuan My parents

The Amos Family Harold Amos

The Oettinger Family Perk & Rainy Sawhill

**FOOD PANTRY DONOR** **IN HONOR OF**

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Jane Spicher Rob Spicher

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Peg Stouffer In honor and gratitude to staff and all volunteers at MLUMC

Jennifer Thompson & Doug Dusbiber Our children, Mollie, Joe, Ellen, Madeline & Lauren

Kate, Kara and Tori Touscany Mike and Sally Touscany

David & Barbara Watson Gwen Lammert

John & Marilyn White Family & Friends

Anonymous Staff & every volunteer

UMW Women Francie Robb

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 THRU SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30**

**SUNDAY 12/24**

10:45 am Unity Worship (no children’s Sunday school, no nursery) Sanctuary

Kids Praise Welcome Center

5 pm Candlelight Service for Children and Families Sanctuary

8 pm Candlelight Traditional Service Sanctuary

Wiggle room for parents & children, 5 & 8 pm services Brookline Parlor

11 pm Candlelight Traditional Service Sanctuary

**MONDAY 12/25 OFFICE CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS**

**TUESDAY 12/26 OFFICE CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS**

7 pm Boy Scout Troop #23 Wesley Hall

7 pm Boy Scout Brd. of Reviews Room 105

**WEDNESDAY 12/27**

6:30 pm Cub Scout Wolf Pack Meeting Epworth Chapel

7 pm Tiger Den Room 105

*Join us on Sunday, December 31, for a Unity Service at 10:45 am in the Sanctuary. The service will feature a Christmas Carol Communion, led by Rev. Kimberly Greway. A wiggle room will be offered in Brookline Parlor, but there will be NO Sunday School hour, no nursery and no Kids Praise.*