

December 16, 2018

ANNOUNCEMENTS



WELCOME ! If you are a visitor or new to Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church— we're glad you're here. Please sign the attendance sheet in the pew. Worship at our church is a joyful, prayerful, music-filled, traditional experience. We worship to glorify God and build up the community of believers to live in this world as followers of Jesus Christ.

The **8:30 am** service meets in Sanner Chapel, immediately inside the front entrance of the church, and the **10:45 am** service is in our beautiful sanctuary. Kids Praise, a special worship service for ages 3 - 3rd grade, takes place during our 10:45 Sunday service.

More information: www.mlumc.org or 412-531-7131.

TONIGHT: Community Christmas Caroling and Dinner

Gather to sing Christmas carols at homes in the church neighborhood and nearby apartments on **Sun. Dec. 16th**. It starts with dinner at 5 in Asbury Center, then caroling at 6, and back to Asbury Center at 8 for hot chocolate and cookies. Don't forget to dress for the weather and bring a flashlight. Register with Kim Rhoton, krhoton@mlumc.org.



Christmas Day Dinners

A ministry of First Presbyterian Church of Castle Shannon,
Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church & Mt. Lebanon UM Church

Reach out to members of our community who may be in need of a good meal or are alone on Christmas Day. Help provide a holiday ham dinner, served from 1 to 4 pm at Castle Shannon Presbyterian Church on Poplar Ave. The meal is free of charge and is served at the church as well as delivered to individuals and families all over SW PA.

Ways you can help: 1) Volunteer to put together and/or serve Christmas meals. Call Bob Stokes at the church ASAP to tell him your availability. *(continued next page)*

Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church

OPEN HEARTS OPEN MINDS OPEN DOORS
3319 W. Liberty Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15216 412-531-7131 mlumc.org
Reverend Thomas Q. Strandburg, Pastor tstrandburg@mlumc.org



(Christmas Dinners continued)

2) Write a check contribution, made out to FPCCS with "Christmas Dinner" in the memo line and send it to the church.

3) Donate a fruit pie, delivered directly to First Presbyterian and not MLUMC. For safety, do not donate pumpkin or egg or cream filling pies. Notify the church and deliver on Christmas morning or before.

4.) To deliver meals, contact Rob Spicher (robert.spicher@pnc.com or 412-720-4589.)

Volunteer (other than meal delivery) contact - Bob Stokes, 412-760-3574

Pie donation call- First Presbyterian Church, 412-561-0401

Check donation mailing address: First Presbyterian Church of Castle Shannon, 3636 Poplar Ave., Pittsburgh, 15234

Know someone who needs a place at the Christmas table or who needs a meal delivery? Contact First Presbyterian Church: 412-561-0401 between 8 am- 4 pm, by Tues., Dec. 18.

Another successful Christmas Cookie & Gift Bazaar – thanks to you!

Many, many thanks to everyone who helped make the Dec. 8 Christmas Cookie & Gift Bazaar event so successful! Not only did it raise money for charity, but also allowed us to work together and extend hospitality to people in and around our neighborhood.



Here's the financial breakdown:

Cookie Sale	\$1,916.00
Vendors	\$1,455.00
Tea Room	\$ 653.50
Raffle tickets	\$ 264.00
Vendor sandwiches	\$ 126.00
Total	\$4,414.50

Special kudos to the Dames In Action (DIA) girls who waited tables in the tea room. They did a lovely job and earned for their UMW circle account half of the tea room proceeds, as well as money from the sale of the vendor sandwiches – a total of \$452.75.



Again, thank you to everyone who baked, prepped cookies, helped with set up, worked the day of the event, shopped and visited the tea room. We couldn't do it without your many hands! Merry Christmas!

Third Sunday
in Advent



Each year the WPA 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 Werner Philipp D. Min., Dresden

And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors." Luke 1:46-56

Singing with Mary The Evangelist Luke reported that Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth some days after the annunciation of the birth of God's son by the archangel Gabriel. After Elizabeth welcomed Mary, Mary began to sing a song of praise, known as a "Magnificat", named from the first word of the Latin version of this song. In the church Liturgy of the Hours, the Magnificat is still today a part of Vespers.

The Magnificat sounds like a song of praise from the Old Testament and includes literary elements and phrases found in the Psalms and in the books of the prophets. It starts with the praise of God's wonder performed on Mary (Verses 46-49), continues by praising God's preference for the poor and humble (VV.50ff.) and ends with God's mercy for his chosen people of Israel (VV.54-55). God's wonder performed on Mary is an example of how he treats Israel and the church as well.

It is impressive how the Magnificat praises God as a faithful God who identifies with the humble and needy and offers them his saving grace. At the same time it includes a warning to the rich and arrogant and to those in power who sit on the world's thrones.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote in an Advent sermon about the Magnificat (1933): "The song of Mary is the oldest Advent hymn. It is at once the most passionate, the wildest, one might even say the most revolutionary Advent hymn ever sung. This is not the gentle, tender, dreamy Mary whom we sometimes see in paintings; this is the passionate, surrendered, proud, enthusiastic Mary who speaks out here... a hard, strong, inexorable song about collapsing thrones and humbled lords of this world, about the power of God and the powerlessness of humankind."

Living in the Advent season means boldly singing songs of salvation, freedom and hope as Mary did.

Rev. Thomas Q. Strandburg, Mt. Lebanon UMC, Pittsburgh

But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Be merciful to those who doubt; save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. Jude 20-25

In this season, as we sit in expectation once again of the birth of a holy babe in Bethlehem, I think of another baby as I ponder this particular passage. A little over one year ago, I had the opportunity to baptize a little boy named Jude. He is growing into a bright, adorable young man. Thinking about him makes me ponder what the future holds for all of our children. Fear and uncertainty seem to be our constant companions in this life. I sometimes wonder what the world will be like when little Jude and his contemporaries are my age? Perhaps we need to hear the message of the Book of Jude once again! This book encourages the faithful to build one another up, and to rely upon the foundation of our faith. Many Christians in the U.S. have heard of the name of Eugene Peterson, who died just a few weeks ago. This Presbyterian pastor and teacher, an expert in the ancient languages of the Bible, wanted people to be able to hear and understand the Bible in contemporary English prose. His most famous book, *The Message*, was a paraphrase of the Bible. It has been used by many churches and pastors in the U.S. to express the meaning of scripture in the modern vernacular. His rendering of the final blessing in the Book of Jude is printed above. Its message I share with you. In the midst of trouble, God can keep us on our feet! Let us stand tall in God's bright presence during this season of light! Only then will we experience the life that really is life!



Christmas Season Worship Services



Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

5 pm

Service for Children & Families

8 & 10 pm

Traditional Christmas Eve Services with Chancel Choir, harp and oboe

Wiggle room for children provided at 5 & 8 pm services

Sunday, December 30 10:45 service only, in Sanctuary