

**December 30, 2018 10:45**

**1st Sunday After Christmas**

The ultimate resolution a Christian can make is to live in the light of divine intentions, not human inventions. The New Year's resolution to end all resolutions is to live under the umbrella of God's expectations and to make it my business and your business to be a part of God's business in our world today.

**WE GATHER IN GOD’S NAME …**

**Gathering Music**

**Hymnal 230 O little town of Bethlehem** (seated) *St. Louis*

**Hymnal 221 In the bleak midwinter**  *Cranham*

**Announcements**

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

**Call to Worship**

Leader: Christ is born, give him glory!

**People: Christ has come down from heaven, receive him! Christ is now on earth; exalt him!**

Leader: O you earth, sing to the Lord!

**People: O you nations, praise him in joy, for he has been glorified!**

*Traditional Byzantine Christmas Prayer*

**… TO GIVE PRAISE TO GOD …**

**Hymnal 240 Hark! the herald angels sing** (standing) *Mendelssohn*

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**Opening Prayer** (in unison)

**O God our Father, you have brought us again to the glad season**

**when we celebrate the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Grant that his Spirit may be born anew in our hearts this day**

**and that we may joyfully welcome him to reign over us.**

**Open our ears that we may hear again the angelic chorus of old.**

**Open our lips that we, too, may sing with uplifted hearts.**

**Glory to God in the highest,**

**and on earth, peace, goodwill toward all;**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.** *Book of Worship, 1944*

**Silent Prayer**

**Worship & Song 3119** (standing) *Take, O take*

**Take, O take me as I am; summon out what I shall be;**

**set your seal upon my heart and live in me.**

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

**The Sign of Peace**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

**Gathering Song**

**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.**

**Message for Young Disciples** Rev. Thomas Q. Strandburg

All children are invited. Please sing as children come forward. *Today, a wiggle room is available in Brookline Parlor, but there is no Sunday school hour, nursery or Kids Praise.*

**… TO HEAR GOD’S WORD PROCLAIMED …**

Scripture Reading Jane Casey

**A Lesson from the New Testament**

Colossians 3:12-17 The garments of love

**Response**

Leader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.

**People: Thanks be to 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**Gospel Acclamation:** **Festival Alleluia** (standing) *James Chepponis*

**Alleluia** (repeat 6 times)

Scripture Reading

A Lesson from the Gospel

Luke 2:41-52 Jesus in the Temple at Passover

**Response**

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God**.

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

**Offertory Anthem** *Edward Arthur, arr. Gary Evans*

On to Bethlehem town; join the crowd and travel down,

down the road that leads us to the cradle.

Come, come if you’re able; come, come to the stable with hearts

full of love as we kneel and pray.

Come and see the child, with his mother Mary mild; come along and worship at the cradle.

There we’ll see the boy; hearts aglow with boundless joy; here we stand before the holy Baby.

Come, bow before him; come, come and adore him; bring gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

On to Bethlehem town; join the crowd and travel down;

down the road that leads us to the cradle.

**Doxology 221 In the bleak midwinter** (stanza 4,standing) *Cranham*

**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**

**Hymnal 219 What child is this** (stanza 3) *Greensleeves*

**So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come, peasant, king, to own him;**

**the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.**

**This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;**

**haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.**

**Sermon**  “The Resolution to End All Resolutions” Rev. Thomas Q. Strandburg

**… TO GO REJOICING IN GOD’S NAME!**

**Hymnal 242 Love came down at Christmas** (standing) *Gartan*

**Benediction**

**Hymnal 240 Hark! the herald angels sing** (refrain)*Mendelssohn*

**Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”**

*Join us for services next Sunday, January 6, on the feast of Epiphany, featuring a Christmas Carol Communion, led by Rev. Kimberly Greway.*

**Today’s Services**

**The flowers on the altar** are given in loving memory of Bill Ward from the Homebuilders class.

**Special music for the 10:45 service** is provided by the Chancel Choir.

**Acolytes** Cameron and Luke Grabowski **Greeters**  **10:45** David and Barbara Watson

**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**  Catch up on 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.

**Honor or remember a loved one with a flower donation.** The flowers that grace the sanctuary each week are generously donated by our church family members. This is a great way to honor or memorialize a special person, event, or milestone in your personal life or in the life of the church. If you are interested in donating flowers on a particular Sunday, contact Lizzie Diller , 412-860-3614. The cost is $30 for the altar, narthex, or columbarium, and $60 for the chancel.

**Today’s Scriptures**

**Colossians 3:12-17**

12As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. 13Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.14Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. 16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. 17And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

**Luke 2:41-52**

41 Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. 42And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. 43When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it.44Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day’s journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. 45When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. 46After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.48When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, ‘Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.’ 49He said to them, ‘Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?’ 50But they did not understand what he said to them.51Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

**January Emphasis on Our Membership Vow of Prayer** The Church Council, at its last meeting, endorsed an emphasis on our membership vows throughout 2019 beginning in January. During the next month, we will emphasize our vow of prayer. In worship, we will have special opportunities to pray at the altar rail and receive special prayers as needed. Pastor Tom will be preaching a sermon series on facing our fears. Our emphasis on prayer will coordinate well with his sermons, since prayer can be very helpful as we deal with our fears. In addition, Cindy Biery will be leading a small group on the topic of prayer. More details will follow

**Keep in Prayer**

**Hospitalized**

Sara Mercer, Presbyterian

**Convalescing in Care Facilities**

Bonnie Amos, Providence Point

Ed Clarke, Asbury Place

John Katshir, Asbury Heights

Pat Seitz, Concordia

Carol Van Sickle, Marian Manor

Olivia Woods, Baptist Manor

**Convalescing at Home**

Bishop George Bashore, Jean Boyer,

Mary Caldwell, John Dean,

Joseph Festor, Leon Grant, Jr.,

Dave Lewis, Susan Lichtenfels,

Diane Shaw, Jinny Sheppard,

**In the Military**

Jason Boyer, SPC Natalie Brown,

**Maj. Zachary Allen Finch, USMC,**James Iantelli, 1st Lt. Jaskiewicz,   
S. Sgt. Keith Kimmell,

Sgt. 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

**In sympathy**

Condolences are offered to the family of church member Bill Merchant, who died, surrounded by his family, on this past Wednesday, December 26, 2018. Arrangements for a memorial service are not yet set. Words of sympathy and prayers may be sent to his wife Bernice and their family:

2806 Queensboro Ave.

Pittsburgh, PA 15226

**Update on Sara Mercer Lung Transplant**

Sara Mercer is hospitalized at UPMC Presbyterian Hospital, recovering from surgery during which she received a double lung transplant. Her doctors have asked that she not receive visitors or phone calls during her recuperation in this cold and flu season. You can send your prayers and good wishes to Sara at the following address:

UPMC Presbyterian Hospital

c/o Sara Mercer

200 Lothrop Street

Pittsburgh, PA 15213

***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***

**Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, WPA United Methodist Conference**

*What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.* James 2: 14-18

All essential psychological principles can be found in the Bible. Through scripture, God tries to reveal to us who God is and who God created us to be. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Bible includes insights into the mind and behavior of God’s most prized creation - humankind. This passage in James gives insight into the psychological principles of cognitive dissonance. Dissonance occurs when we have conflicting beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors. If we believe or have faith in one thing, and then act in another way such as not performing any works, we will have cognitive dissonance. There is always a price to pay for cognitive dissonance. It causes stress. As a result, we engage in mental gymnastics. We justify our bad behavior and don’t assess our actions or the actions of others accurately. This can lead to the figurative death of our true selves. Dissonance causes those around us to question our faith, or worse, to question the existence of the One in whom we profess that faith.

During the season of Advent, we celebrate that God performs an act of great consonance. God is love and all of God’s actions demonstrate that love. As a deed of love, God, through Jesus Christ, decided to live among us in bodily form. Love came down at Christmas. That is consonance.

What actions, deeds, behaviors ought I begin to perform or stop performing to demonstrate consonance with my faith in the true meaning of Christmas?

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

While reading this passage you might get the idea that James is in contradiction with Paul, who in his letters clearly emphasizes the redemption by God`s grace and nothing but. Unlike Paul, James seems to say: It all depends on deeds and actions. Is that true? I ́m convinced that Paul and James complement each other. Paul speaks about what redeems us: faith in God`s redeeming grace. James speaks about what grows out of faith: namely the fulfilment of the will of God.

What we`ve got to do as Christians is explained to us in many passages of the Bible. It is crucial that we do not only listen and talk about it but also have the courage to do so. That ́s the character of lively faith.

What is necessary to be done in our world? This question concerns me as I ́m thinking of our church’s focus at the moment. From the beginning we have dedicated ourselves to the principle that faith must have an impact on our lives and therefore also on our actions.

And I wonder. What would be our reply if God asked us: What did you as Methodists do when a bulk of refugees drowned in the Mediterranean Sea? What did you do when an uncountable number of human beings almost perished in refugee camps all across the globe? What did you do when children and parents were segregated for months at the border between Mexico and the US? What did you do against hate and unkindness on earth, what against rabble-rousing, arms deals and populism? And I ́m afraid, that we might have to reply. Not enough, because we were too much occupied by quarreling about homosexuality and perhaps have split in this regard.

It`s my wish, that we succeed in living by God`s grace and love, and that this love can be proven as we talk and act at the place where God sends us.

**CALENDAR – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30 THRU SATURDAY, JANUARY 5**

**SUNDAY 12/30**

10:45 am Worship Sanctuary

**MONDAY 12/31 OFFICE CLOSED FOR NEW YEAR’S EVE HOLIDAY**

**TUESDAY 1/1 OFFICE CLOSED FOR NEW YEAR’S DAY HOLIDAY**

**WEDNESDAY 1/2**

7:30 am Northside Lunch Program Prep Asbury Kitchen

6 pm Homebuilders Potluck Wesley Hall

7 pm Bear, Tiger, Wolf Den Meeting Various

**THURSDAY 1/3**

8:30 am Northside Lunch Program Prep Asbury Kitchen

9 am Hearts and Hands Epworth Chapel

12 pm TNT Asbury Heights 6:30 pm Promise Bells Rehearsal Bell Room

7:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal Choir Room

**SATURDAY 1/5**

10 am Food Distribution & Food Lift Free Market Food Pantry

3 pm Betty Trout Memorial Service Sanner Chapel