

**Fourth Sunday in Advent**

The angel appeared to Joseph and said *“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”* From the world’s perspective, just about everything concerning the coming of Jesus is unexpected. He may be the most surprising gift of all time, and also the most transformative. All that we need to do is to accept the gift, and allow Jesus to go to work in our lives, in surprising and transformative ways.

**December 22, 2019 8:30 & 10:45**

**WE GATHER IN GOD’S NAME …**

\*Asterisk indicates to rise in body or spirit

**Gathering Music Hymnal 220 Angels from the realms of glory** *Regent Square*

**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**

\*10:45 **Introit** Come, Lord, for in our hearts we make thee room.*Douglas E. Wagner*

**\*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 209 Blessed be the God of Israel** *Merle’s Tune*

**\*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**

**\*Response Come and find the quiet center** (stanza 1) *Beach Spring*

**Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,**

**find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:**

**clear the chaos and clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see**

**all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.**

Shirley Erena Murray ©1992 Hope Publishing Company

**TO CELEBRATE THE FAMILY OF FAITH …**

**Advent Candle Lighting** 8:30 Marcy, Tony, and Anne Picardi   10:45 Chris and Stacey Rosleck

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

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. 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.

**… TO HEAR GOD’S WORD PROCLAIMED …**

Scripture Reading 8:30 Judi Phelps 10:45 Sally Munro

**A Lesson from the Hebrew Scriptures**

Isaiah 7:10-16 The sign of Emmanuel

**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.**

**\*Celtic Alleluia: Alleluia.** (sing 4 times) *James J. Chepponis*

**Scripture Reading**

**\* A Lesson from the Gospel**

Matthew 1:18-25 Birth of Jesus

**Response**

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God**.

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

**Sermon** “The Unexpected Gift” Rev. Thomas Q. Strandburg

10:45 **Offertory anthem** Angels’ Carol *John Rutter*

Have you heard the sound of the angel voices ringing out so sweetly, ringing out so clear? Have you seen the star shining out so brightly as a sign from God that Christ the Lord is here? Have you heard the news that they bring from heaven to the humble shepherds

who have waited long? Gloria in excelsis Deo! Hear the angels sing their joyful song.

He will bring new light to a world in darkness, like a bright star shining in the skies above; He will bring new hope to the waiting nations when he comes to reign in purity and love. Let the earth rejoice at the Saviour’s coming; let the heavens answer with the joyful morn: Gloria in excelsis Deo! Hear the angels singing ‘Christ is born.’

\***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**

**Prayer of Dedication**

8:30 \***Hymnal 240 Hark! The herald angels sing**  *Mendelssohn*

10:45 **Tableaux**

**First Lesson** Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem Luke 2: 1-5

**Hymnal 230 O little town of Bethlehem** (stanza 1) *St. Louis*

**Second Lesson** Saint Luke tells of the birth of Jesus Luke 2: 6-7

**Anthem** Thou shalt know him *Mark Sirett* **Third Lesson** Gabriel announces to the shepherdsLuke 2: 8-12

**Hymnal 238 Angels we have heard on high** (stanza 2)*Gloria*

**Fourth Lesson** The angelsLuke 2: 13-14

**Hymnal 238 Angels we have heard on high** (stanza 1)*Gloria*

**Anthem** Sussex Carol *English Carol arranged by Dale Wood*

**Fifth Lesson** Shepherds visit the Christ Child Luke 2: 15-20

**Anthem** Away in a manger*arranged by Mack Wilberg*

**Sixth Lesson** The wise men are led by the star to Jesus Matthew 2: 7-12

**Hymnal 234 O come, all ye faithful** (stanzas 1-4)*Adeste fideles*

**TO GO REJOICING IN GOD’S NAME!**

**\*Benediction**

Leader:   A young woman is with child and shall bear a son. He shall be called Emmanuel.   
 **People:   We go forth with anticipation and longing. Share the good news —  Emmanuel is coming. We hear, believe, accept and obey the Advent promise**

**that God is with us.**

**\*Hymnal 211** (refrain) *Veni Emmanuel*

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**Tableaux Participants**

Readers: David Seitz, Vera Jane Cornes

The Holy Family: Derick Florian, Lizzie Diller, and Jason Florian

Gabriel: Grant Carvender

Shepherds: Evan Shoff, Silas Ward, Asher Ward, Dillon Schmidt

Kings: Xavier Sanchez, Anna Rhoton, Liam DeLuca

Angels: Maddy Thompson, Lauren Thompson, Emily Shoff, Andrea DeLuca, Lydia Slater, Frieda Lasch, Olivia Schmidt, Emily Schmidt, Gideon Alexander, Teddy Alexander, Agnes Alexander, Addison Alexander, Vivienne Volek, Hannah Baker, Samantha Baker, Emma Purtill, Abby Purtill, Faith Carvender, Gabbie Boone

Special Thanks to our Adult Helpers: Jen Thompson, Jen Volek, Donna Chesleigh, Carrie Purtill, Cori DeLuca, Alan Chesleigh

**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 to honor or memorialize a special person, event, or milestone. If you are interested in donating flowers on a particular Sunday, contact Lizzie Diller, 412-860-3614. The cost is $33 for the altar, narthex, or columbarium arrangements, and $66 for the chancel flowers.

**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.

**Today’s Service**

**Acolytes** Luke Grabowski and Cameron Grabowski

**Greeters** 8:30 Marsha Manke 10:45 Jane Casey

**Special music at 10:45** is provided by the Chancel Choir conducted by Richard Minnotte.

**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.

**Today’s Scripture**

**Isaiah 7:10-16**

10Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, 11Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. 12But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. 13Then Isaiah said: “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? 14Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. 15He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. 16For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

**Matthew 1:18-25**

18Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. 20But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” 24When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, 25but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

**Keep in Prayer**

**Convalescing in Care Facilities**

Bonnie Amos, Providence Point

Ed Clarke, Asbury Heights

May Frederick, Baptist Home

John Katshir, Asbury Heights

Woody Kimmel, Providence Point

Pat Seitz, Concordia

Doris Trimble, Providence Point

Olivia Woods, Baptist Manor

Anne Hoffman, Providence Point

**Convalescing at Home**

Bishop George Bashore,

Jean Boyer, Mary Caldwell,

John Dean, Joseph Festor,

Ezra Gibson, Leon Grant, Jr.,

Steve Howard, Dave Lewis,

Susan Lichtenfels, George Lindow,

Bob Mallery, Jinny Sheppard, Carol Van Sickle, Arlene Stewart, Peyton Wisterman

**In the Military**

Matt Lewis, USMC,

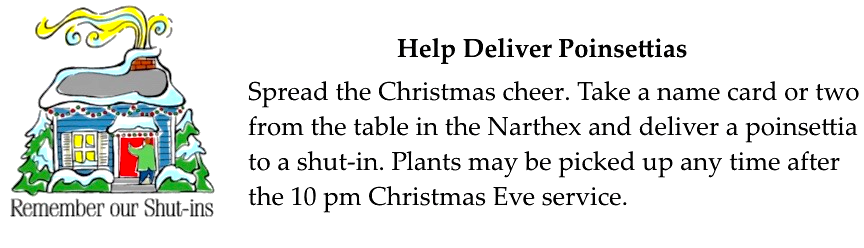
Jason Boyer, SPC Natalie Brown,

**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



**Christmas Memorials of Poinsettias and Food Pantry**

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Keith Douglass Will, Our wonderful Parents

Cheryl Lynne Will Graunke, & Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Doll Will by their Children

Cynthia Eve Will Argyle

Lily Yuan Parents

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Erma Henry Dennis Henry & his father Richard Henry

Anne Hoffman Paul W. Hoffman

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Mary Birks Grandchildren

Jean Boyer My Church Family

Martha and Ed Clarke Our three Sons

John & Donna College Shannon College

Paulette Colonna With thanks & gratitude for the work of Liz DiPietro to support the mission of our food pantry

Cleon and Vera Jane Cornes Our Children & Grandchildren

Bob & Beverly Festor Our three Children & five Grandchildren

Maxine & Albert Furedy Children - Karen Veith, Steven Furedy, & David Furedy

Frances Graham Food Pantry Volunteers

Robert & Julie Kmick Our Grandsons

Martha Matthews My Sister - Jane Snitzer, and Family

Doris & Ford McBeth MLUMC Family past & present

Jack & Maryann McCormick Our Children & their Families

Linda Nixon My Family

Cindy Reichard Kathleen Amant

Gale Seymour Friends & Family

Karen & Don Shaffer Family & Friends

Marianne & Fred Siersdorfer All our Children

Jane Spicher My wonderful Husband, Rob

Rob Spicher Jane Spicher

Jennifer Thompson & Doug Dusbiber Our Children

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

Keith Douglass Will My 3 wonderful Daughters - Patricia Lynn Will Krause, Barbara Lynn Will Myer, & Deborah Lynn Will Rambeau from their loving Father

*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.*

**Donnerstag, 12. Dezember; Jesaja 62, 6-12**

**Superintendent Werner Philipp D. Min., Zwickau**

Experiencing the Spirit of Advent As these prophetic words were proclaimed, the Israelites had already survived the Babylonian Exile and were living in their homeland again. After their liberation, they experienced poverty and lack. There were hostilities from outside but also social wrongs from within, in that some people were getting rich at the expense of others. Because of their disappointed hopes, they accused both God and themselves. Today we are experiencing a similar situation and have to cope with disappointed hopes. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain 30 years ago, we have been experiencing a rising sense of nationalism and are increasingly confronted with a revitalization of radical ideologies. The gap between rich and poor is widening more and more. The increasing secularization in today’s society and conflicts within the church have led to declining membership in congregations. In spite of disappointed hopes, God’s people today should listen again to His promises and once again strive to experience His presence. We are called upon to actively incorporate the spirit of Advent into our daily lives, which means to await God’s coming and intervention. How can we do this? First, we should be watchmen who are alert to God’s voice and the signs of the times. Those who are struggling to follow God need people around them who are neither mere silent observers nor enforcers of morals who are quick to point out the wrongs of others. The original function of watchmen was to remind those in power to fulfil the promises they made when they took office. This means that we can also ask God to fulfil his promises to us. Second, living in the spirit of Advent means being a forebearer by breaking through barriers and removing obstacles so that those people who have strayed from God’s paths may be able to experience His salvation and unite with His people (see Isaiah 40:3). Finally, living in the spirit of Advent means to be a bearer of hope. There are many sceptical people even in the church. However, we need people who are gifted by the living hope in Christ. Such hope strengthens us in situations of seemingly futile work, comforts us when we are failing or are unsuccessful and opens our eyes when we feel confused or disoriented. This is the coming of God’s salvation - for Jerusalem and the entire world.

**The office will be closed 12/24/19 – 1/1/20 for the holidays.**

**CALENDAR – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22 THRU SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28**

**SUNDAY 12/22**

8:30 am Worship Sanner Chapel

8:30 am The Gathering Asbury

9:30 am Sunday School Various

10:45 am Worship - Tableaux Sanctuary

10:45 am Kids Praise Welcome Center

11:45 am Youth Choir Choir Room

5 pm Youth Party Asbury

**TUESDAY 12/24 - OFFICE CLOSED**

5 pm Children & Family Service Sanctuary

8 pm Traditional Service Sanctuary

10 pm Traditional Service Sanctuary

**WEDNESDAY 12/25 – CHRISTMAS/OFFICE CLOSED**

**THURSDAY 12/26 – OFFICE CLOSED**

**FRIDAY 12/27 – OFFICE CLOSED**