

# Messiah Lutheran Church

3 South Third Street  
Mifflintown, PA 17059  
Church Office / 436-6213    Dial-A-Prayer / 436-2100

The Reverend William N. Esborn  
Andrea Cameron  
Linda Bahorik  
Sandy Pines

Pastor  
Choir Director  
Lector  
Altar Guild

## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT December 11, 2011 – 10:30 a.m.

\*Please Stand as **YOU** Are Able

### PEOPLE TO REMEMBER IN PRAYER TODAY

Marian G., Reba S., Sue C., Flo B., Ethel B., Virginia F., Cathryn R., Goldie K., Jean M., Cassie S., Ruth C., Ray B., Anna Mary Z., Paul W., Bob C., Linda R., Laurie F., Mason B., Beth S., Denny K., Mark K., Kaye C., Stephanie M., Jesse K., Matt H., Sarah D., and Deanna C.

### PREPARATION

CHIMES: CALL TO WORSHIP  
MEDITATION AND PRAYER  
PRELUDE

*[A Time for Meditation and Prayer]*

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS  
INTRODUCTION

*"Rejoice always," begins the reading from First Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of the spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes that make us feel happy just to put on. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.*

### \* CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*P Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who shapes the whole creation, who comes with might and mercy, who fills the hungry with good things.*

**C Amen**

*P Let us approach the throne of grace with repentant hearts.*

*Silence is kept for reflection*

*P Faithful God,*

**C we confess that we have been unfaithful to you. Like dry leaves and withered grass, our lives are blown about by our sins and the powers of evil around us. Restore us, O God; let the light of your face shine on us, and we shall be saved. Amen**

*P God is patient, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. In the name of + Jesus Christ, I bring you this good news: You are free from all that imprisons you; your sins are forgiven; God heals your broken hearts. Live in peace and harmony as you wait for the day of God.*

**C Amen**

## **GATHERING**

\* ENTRANCE HYMN "Joy to the World" p. 14 in bulletin

\* GREETING

*P Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the promised gifts of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.*

**C And also with you.**

\* KYRIE

*P Lord, have mercy upon us.* **C Lord, have mercy upon us.**

*P Christ, have mercy upon us.* **C Christ, have mercy upon us.**

*P Lord, have mercy upon us.* **C Lord, have mercy upon us.**

"It Came upon the Midnight Clear" (vs. 3)

And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,  
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow;  
look now, for glad and gold – en hours come swiftly on the wing;  
oh, rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing!

*P Lord, have mercy upon us.* **C Lord, have mercy upon us.**

*P Christ, have mercy upon us.* **C Christ, have mercy upon us.**

*P Lord, have mercy upon us.* **C Lord, have mercy upon us.**

\* SALUTATION AND RESPONSE (**sung**)

*P The Lord be with you* **C And al-so with you.**

\* PRAYER OF THE DAY (**spoken in unison**)

*P Let us pray...*

**C Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**

## **WORD**

*Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of the Lord, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.*

FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The First Lesson is from the 61<sup>st</sup> chapter of Isaiah.

THE LESSON READS:

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; <sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; <sup>3</sup>to provide for those who mourn in Zion — to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. <sup>4</sup>They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

<sup>8</sup>For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. <sup>9</sup>Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. <sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

Lector: Here ends the reading.

**Cong: Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 126

*L – The LORD has done great things for us. (Ps. 126:3)*

<sup>1</sup>When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.

**<sup>2</sup>Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."**

<sup>3</sup>The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

**<sup>4</sup>Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses of the Negeb.**

<sup>5</sup>Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.

**<sup>6</sup>Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

**All – The LORD has done great things for us.**

*Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.*

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

The Second Lesson is from the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1 Thessalonians.

THE LESSON READS:

<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise the words of prophets, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast to what is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup>May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Lector: Here ends the reading.

**Cong: Thanks be to God.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

PLACING THE CRECHE FIGURES

- \* THE VERSE "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (vs. 3)

O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on Si – nai's height  
In an – cient times you gave the law in cloud, and maj – es – ty, and awe.

Refrain

Re-joice! Re-joice! Em – man – u – el shall come to you, O Is – ra – el.

*John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.*

- \* GOSPEL: John 1:6-8, 19-28

*P The Holy Gospel according to John, the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.*

**C Glo - ry to you, O Lord. (sung)**

THE GOSPEL READS:

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>19</sup>This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said.

<sup>24</sup>Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>They asked him, "Why then are you

baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup>the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." <sup>28</sup>This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

*P The Gospel of the Lord.*

**C Praise to you, O Christ. (sung)**

SERMON

Pastor Esborn

\* HYMN OF THE DAY "Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding!"

p. 15 in bulletin

\* APOSTLES' CREED (all)

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen**

\* PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*P Walking in the light of the coming Savior, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who await God's justice.*

*A brief silence.*

*P God of love, you have clothed all the baptized in garments of salvation; equip us to bear witness to the Light of the world, that all might believe. Hear us, O God.*

**C Your mercy is great.**

*P God of goodness, all creation proclaims your glory; open our eyes to see your power and majesty in the detailed beauty of our world, and open our hearts to be gentle caretakers of the earth. Hear us, O God.*

**C Your mercy is great.**

*P God of justice, you anointed prophets to proclaim liberty to captives and release to prisoners; by your Spirit raise up prophetic voices today to challenge all that enslaves people and condemns many to lives of poverty. Hear us, O God.*

**C Your mercy is great.**

*P God of peace, you promise to turn mourning into dancing. Comfort all who mourn, bring healing to the sick (especially all of our shut-ins [both at home and in nursing homes], and Paul Woltman, Bob Cameron, Linda Rhine, Laurie Funk, Mason Beward, Beth Smith, Denny King, Mark Krobath, Kaye Clark, Stephanie Minnick, Jesse Kint, Matt Hutchinson, Sarah Dressler and Deanna Cisney), and give hope and reconciliation to those estranged from family. Hear us, O God.*

**C Your mercy is great.**

*P God of joy and gladness, you desire that we give thanks in all circumstances. In this season of preparation for the coming of your Son, open us to experience your grace in unexpected places. Hear us, O God.*

**C Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

*P God of faithfulness, you have covered your saints with the robe of righteousness; we give you thanks for those who have died (especially), and we entrust them to your keeping. Hear us, O God.*

**C Your mercy is great.**

*P Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your steadfast love and faithfulness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.*

**C Amen**

\* SHARING OF GOD'S PEACE

*P The peace of the Lord be with you always.*

**C And also with you.**

Congregational sharing: **"Peace be with you."**

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

*[Please pass the Friendship Pad down your pew for all to sign and then back to the center aisle so everyone has the opportunity to read the names. We request that our guests also give us their home address. Thank you].*

ANTHEM

Choir

\* SUNG OFFERTORY "Let All Together Praise Our God" (revised wording)

**Let all to – geth – er praise our God Be – fore his glo – rious throne;**

**For he will o – pen heav'n a – bove To give us his own Son, To give us his own Son.**

\* OFFERING PRAYER

*P God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.*

**C Amen**

**MEAL**

\* ADVENT DIALOG

*P We have come with great expectation to meet the coming Messiah.*

**C All creation waits with longing for the Son of God.**

*P As John the Baptist cried in the wilderness, "Prepare the way for the Lord."*

**C We prepare a place in our hearts and in the world for his coming.**

*P O come to us, Emmanuel!*

**C God, be with us and save us from our sins.**

\* EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

*P Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and*

*dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.*

*In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.*

*Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.*

*Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:*

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

*P With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.*

**C Come, Lord Jesus.**

*P Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.*

**C Come, Holy Spirit.**

*P All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.*

**C Amen.**

\* THE LORD'S PRAYER ['trespasses'] **(all)**

**C 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 and ever. Amen**

\* INVITATION TO COMMUNION

*P Come to Christ, who comes to us in this holy supper.*

DISTRIBUTION

*["INTINCTION" – dip your wafer in the wine. Come forward by the center aisle and return by the side aisle. All who wish to stand at the chancel rail after partaking for a time of silent meditation are invited to do so].*

\* COMMUNION BLESSING

*P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.*

**C Amen**

\* PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

*P Lord God, we give you thanks that you have fed us even now with the banquet that is yet to come. Keep us alert for signs of your presence in the world around us. Send us as healing oil and sheltering comfort to those in need, and make us bold in testifying to the light of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.*

**C Amen**

**SENDING**

\* BLESSING

*P God most high, God with us, God poured out on us, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.*

**C A-men, A-men, A-men (sung)**

\* CLOSING HYMN

“Prepare the Royal Highway”

p. 15 in bulletin

\* DISMISSAL

*P Go in peace. Remember the poor.*

**C Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

NEXT WEEK'S LECTOR – Diana Wise

NEXT WEEK'S ALTAR GUILD – Diana Wise

**WELCOME**

IF YOU WISH TO USE OR FOLLOW THE LITURGY MUSIC as we proceed through the service today, please use the blue portfolios placed on top of the sound control system. In addition, headsets are available in the narthex for our sound enhancement system for the hearing impaired.

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME to worship at Messiah. We invite you to register your visit not only in the Friendship Pads, but also in the guest book provided in the narthex. If you are seeking a church home, please speak to the pastor. Our fellowship in Jesus Christ is open and extended to all persons who confess His Lordship over all life. Thank you for worshipping with us. We invite you to return. Visitors are invited to commune with us if they are baptized and, if with us in our faith, they trust Jesus' promise of the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ.

WE INVITE EVERYONE (members and visitors) worshipping with us today to sign the Friendship Pads during the Organ Offertory. If you are a visitor, please be sure to include your address when signing. Please also place a check mark in the box (beside your name) if you are communing today and have not as yet given us a record of your participation in the sacrament during this quarter. (A new quarter begins in January, April, July, and October). The pads are found on the aisle seat of each pew in the nave, and in each section of the Adult Sunday School Room.

PRAYER REQUESTS will be placed in the weekly bulletin for one month. If you wish to have someone included in the prayer list for more than one month, please call the church office.

THE DEADLINE FOR ALL ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE SUNDAY BULLETIN IS THURSDAY NOON.



DIAL-A-PRAYER (436-2100) IS AVAILABLE 24 HOURS DAILY!

ALTAR FLOWERS are presented to the Glory of God and in honor of Linda Clark and Bob St. Clair by the Junior Choir.

JUST A THOUGHT – Wolfhart Panneberg (b. 1928), Philosopher: "In a completely altered context, in a situation that has been radically transformed, a message caste in precisely the same words no longer means the same thing."

### **CONGREGATIONAL NEWS**

CHURCH ORGANIST for weekly services, beginning immediately, at Messiah Lutheran Church, 3 South Third Street, Mifflintown, PA. Allen Digital Electric Organ and Kurzweil Electronic Keyboard. Candidates should contact Ed Beaver at [ebeaver41@yahoo.com](mailto:ebeaver41@yahoo.com) or at 436-9382 for information, including salary. Additional information about the church and congregation can be found at [www.mlcmifflintown.org](http://www.mlcmifflintown.org).

SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATES NEEDED – Two members of Messiah are needed to attend the annual Synod Assembly in June, 2012 at Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove. If you are interested in serving, please contact the pastor or the church office.

CAN TREE – Donations of gallon-size canned food is again being collected this year, now through December, for the "can tree" in the Adult Sunday School Room to benefit Bethesda Mission. Everyone is encouraged to donate as many cans as you are able. Cans will be delivered to Bethesda Mission later in December.

THE 2012 FLOWER CHART will be in the Adult Sunday School Room by the end of December. If you wish to place altar flowers in the church on a specific date, please sign-up on the chart. Flower dates are on a first-come-first-served basis.

THE CHRISTMAS ENVELOPE in your packet, plus the loose plate offering at the Christmas Eve Service goes to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund to help needy people and situations throughout the year. Please be as generous as you can.

THE 2012 CHURCH OFFERING ENVELOPES will be available in the Adult Sunday School Room for you to pick-up later in December. Anyone who would like a statement of their contributions for 2011 for tax purposes may call the church office and your statement will be mailed to you.

AGAIN THIS YEAR, the congregation is collecting a monetary Christmas gift for the pastor. If you wish to contribute, you may do so during Advent or Christmas Eve by putting your gift in the special box in the Adult Sunday School Room, or in the offering plate (designated "Pastor's Christmas Gift"), or to the church office any weekday. (Please make checks payable to the pastor).

RECEIVED IN STAINED GLASS FUND on Sunday, December 4, 2011: \$20.00. This brings the total received to \$63,302.00 of the total \$85,890.00 needed for the project.

POINSETTIAS to decorate the church for Christmas may be placed in honor or in memory of someone, or to the Glory of God. The cost is \$8.00 for a 6-1/2" plant with 3 to 4 blooms. You may order by calling the church office at 436-6213.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

**December 18**, Children's Sunday School Christmas Program at 9:15 a.m. Fellowship Committee will provide cookies and beverage.

**December 18**, Christmas Cantata at 2 p.m. at Juniata High School.

**December 24**, 7 p.m., Family/Youth Service; 9:30 p.m., Prelude Concert with Louis Lynch; 10 p.m. Candlelight/ Communion Service.

**January 7**, Undecorating the church (morning)

**WOMEN OF THE ELCA**

MESSIAH WOMEN OF THE ELCA continuously collect new bath-size bars of soap (4 oz. to 5 oz., preferably Ivory or unscented Dove) as an on-going project for Lutheran World Relief. Please place soap in the basket on the blue table in the Sunday School Room.

**COMMUNITY**

THE FINAL COMMUNITY CHORUS REHEARSAL will be held on Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Juniata High School music room. This year's 15<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas Cantata performance "*Dawn of Redeeming Grace*" will be held **Sunday, December 18, 2011** at 2:00 p.m. in the auditorium of Juniata High School.

THE JUNIATA COUNTY BRANCH OF THE SALVATION ARMY needs bell ringers for the holiday season. Individuals, Sunday School classes, or youth groups who are willing to help may call Sylvia Kepner at 527-2386.

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS will be holding the following local blood drives:

Friday, December 30, 2011  
12:00 pm – 6:00 pm  
Fayette Area Lions Den  
McAlisterville, PA

Wednesday, January 11, 2012  
1:00 pm – 7:00 pm  
Port Royal Community Building  
Port Royal, PA

Saturday, January 14, 2012  
9:00 am – 3:00 pm  
Tuscarora Elementary School  
Port Royal, PA

The need for blood never diminishes because blood is a perishable medicine. Individuals who are in general good health, are age 17 or older and weigh at least 110 pounds are eligible to donate every 56 days. Individuals should bring their Red Cross donor cards, photo ID or two other forms of identification to the donor site. To schedule an appointment call 1-800 Red Cross.

NURSE'S NOTES – **It's that time of year when you just want to curl up with some hot soup.** A calorie-cutting strategy that won't leave you hungry – add pureed vegetables to your soups and stews. People whose dishes were one quarter pureed vegetables at 357 fewer calories a day, according to the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. Parents, this trick works on kids too. (Prevention. November 2011, pg. 21).

### **THIS WEEK AT MESSIAH**

- Today:** -Third Sunday of Advent.  
-9:15 a.m., Sunday School/Catechetical Class.  
-10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion/Jr. Church.
- Monday:** -NEWSLETTER DEADLINE.  
-8 p.m., AA meeting in Fellowship Hall.
- Tuesday:** -7 p.m., Community chorus rehearsal at Juniata High School.
- Wednesday:** -7 p.m., Choir rehearsal.  
-7 p.m., N/A meeting in Youth Area.
- Thursday:** -1 p.m., Dulcimer rehearsal in Fellowship Hall.
- Friday:** -7 p.m., Square Dancing in Fellowship Hall.
- Sunday:** -9:15 a.m., Children's Sunday School Christmas Program.  
-10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion/Jr. Church.  
-2 p.m., Christmas Cantata at Juniata High School.