

Messiah Lutheran Church

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

The Reverend William N. Esborn
June Bricker
Andrea Cameron
Linda Leister
Linda Leister

Pastor
Organist
Choir Director
Lector
Altar Guild

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT December 15, 2013 – 10:30 a.m.

*Please Stand as **YOU** Are Able

PEOPLE TO REMEMBER IN PRAYER TODAY

SHUT-INS: Marian G., Reba S., Sue C., Flo B., Ethel B., Virginia F., Jean M., Cassie S., Helen K., Sis S., Jane M., Fay M., Dorothy P., Ruth C., Ray B., Florence B.

OTHERS: Tammy W., Audrey L., Josh B., Karl and Margaret G., Darlene Y., Arielle D., Sarah S., Troy B., Riley C., Allen H., Esther L., Rick V., Michael S., Trent P., Charlene A., Wendy S., Gretchen W., Tryon B., Jack S., Todd E., Kim S., Cindy V., Gary C., Jo-Anne B., Linda R., Connor L., Matt H., Luke, Amber & family, Shirley B.

PREPARATION

CHIMES: CALL TO WORSHIP

PRELUDE

[A Time for Meditation and Prayer]

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom. Jesus points to signs of God's reign: the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

* CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, our life, our mercy, our might.

C Amen

P As we await the day of the Lord, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection

P Great and Holy One,

C in this time of waning daylight, we confess the shadows of sin in our lives. We build ourselves up at the expense of others. We rely on our own efforts to make our lives secure. Yet you, O Lord, are the potter, and we are the clay. Come to restore us in your image, remake us into your people, and rebuild what sin has broken, that we and the whole creation may rejoice. Amen

P Fear not, people of God: the Almighty has done great things for us. God casts away our sin from us and makes of us a new creation. In + Jesus Christ, God comes to set you free. Take heart in the tender compassion of our God.

C Amen

GATHERING

* ENTRANCE HYMN "Hail to the Lord's Anointed"

* GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the refining fire of the Holy Spirit, and the peace of God, which surpasses understanding, 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 (spoken)

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 all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

WORD

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

The First Lesson is from the 35th chapter of Isaiah.

THE LESSON READS:

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. ³Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." ⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; ⁷the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. ⁹No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Lector: Here ends the reading.

Cong: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10

L – The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:8)

⁵Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help, whose hope is in the LORD their God;

⁶who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; who keeps promises forever;

⁷who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger. The LORD sets the captive free.

⁸The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

⁹The LORD cares for the stranger; the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

¹⁰The LORD shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!

All – The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down.

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

SECOND READING: James 5:7-10

The Second Lesson is from the 5th chapter of James.

THE LESSON READS:

⁷Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

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 the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth. From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this.

* GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

P The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 11th chapter.

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

THE GOSPEL READS:

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." ⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' ¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ. (sung)

* HYMN OF THE DAY

"Joy to the World"

* 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 In hope and anticipation, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

P Stir up in our hearts an eagerness for your coming. Grant us patience in our waiting, and while we wait, strengthen us to persevere in ways of justice and righteousness. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P In this season, nurture dry and dormant lands so that they will blossom in the coming months. Spread your abundance throughout all lands, that every living thing may be filled. Hear us, O god,

C Your mercy is great.

P Draw near to all who are oppressed or neglected. Lift up all who are cast down. Deliver those in the captivity of loneliness and poverty into your freedom. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Strengthen those who are made weak by the heavy burdens that they carry (especially all of our shut-ins [both at home and in nursing homes], and for Tammy Walton, Dorothy Patterson, Audrey Landis, Josh Beitz, Karl and Margaret Guss, Darlene Yutzy, Arielle Dougherty, Sarah Shellenberger, Troy Burd, Riley Cooper, Allen Hall, Esther Long, Rick Varner, Michael Slagle, Trent Phillips, Charlene Aughey, Wendy Swartz, Gretchen Wray, Tryon Benner, Jack Stutts, Todd Eby, Kim Shearer, Cindy Van Gavree, Gary Comp, Jo-Anne Brooks, Linda Rhine, Connor Lauver, Jean McNaight, Helen Knox, Matt Hutchinson, Marian Gross, Luke, Amber & family, and Shirley Beitz). Surround them with messengers who announce your presence with them. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Raise the expectations of all who seek you in this season. Turn us from material things, and open us to a life full of healing and renewal, where all people receive good news. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

P Remembering the saints who have entered into your eternal reign, sustain us through their witness to your everlasting faithfulness until we are united in the fullness of your kingdom. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Almighty God, we entrust to you all for whom we pray, confident that you fulfill your promises through 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

* 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 the table where Christ comes to make a home in you.

(In hospitality and attempting to meet the needs of individuals, Messiah now offers gluten free communion hosts. If you wish to receive gluten free hosts, please come to the side where Pastor Esborn is serving).

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 God of wonder, we give thanks that you have fed us once again with this foretaste of the feast to come. Strengthen us through this gift to serve our neighbor with joy, that all may come to see your glory reflected in the lives of your people; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen

SENDING

* BLESSING

P The God of hope, through Christ our peace, in the power of the Holy Spirit, + bless you now and forever.

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

* CLOSING HYMN

“Fling Wide the Door”

* DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Bring good news to the poor.

C Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

NEXT WEEK'S LECTOR – Bob St. Clair

NEXT WEEK'S ALTAR GUILD – Sandy Pines

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 worshiping 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) worshiping 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.

ALTAR FLOWERS are presented to the Glory of God and in memory of Diane Hower by family.

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!

JUST A THOUGHT – M. F. Unger, Christian Thinker: Divine inspiration makes the Bible uniquely the Word of God and not merely a book containing the Word of God, and as such is different from any other book sacred or secular.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

PRAYER CHAIN – Any time you wish to add a name to our prayer list, please contact Stacie Kint at dskint@nmax.net. If at any time you would like to receive emails with prayer requests, please also contact Stacie.

NEW MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY – Sample copies of the new updated membership directory are on the table in the Adult Sunday School Room. Before final copies are made, members are asked to check their address, phone number and email address to be sure they are correct. Please make any corrections or additions to be included in the directory on the correction sheet provided or call the church office at 436-6213.

THRIVENT CHOICE – Thank you to everyone at Messiah who has designated choice dollars to Messiah. If you are a Thrivent member and have questions about Thrivent Choice please contact Stacie Kint at dskint@nmax.net or 436-6341.

MESSIAH IS IN NEED of a new treasurer to replace Ken Eyler after his many years of service. If you would like details, please contact Executive Director Guy Dillman or Pastor Esborn.

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).

ATTENTION ALL KIDS! – This will be the last Sunday that we will be reading through the Christmas program in preparation for the Sunday School performance on December 22, 2013 at 9:15 a.m. Please join us during Sunday School at 9:15 a.m. in the church basement to read parts, sing songs, and celebrate the Birth of Jesus. We have many speaking and non-speaking parts to fill as well as special musical performances! See Christie or Stacie with any questions.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:

7:00 p.m., Family/Youth Service

9:30 p.m., Prelude Concert with Louis Lynch

10:00 p.m., Candlelight Service

SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATES – Two members of Messiah are needed to attend the annual Synod Assembly in June, 2014 at Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove. If you are interested in serving, please contact the pastor or the church office.

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 6½ " plant with 3 to 4 blooms. You may order by calling the church office at 436-6213. Please order no later than **December 12th**.

THE 2014 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 2014 CHURCH OFFERING ENVELOPES are now available in the back of the Adult Sunday School Room (in numerical order). Anyone who would like a statement of their contributions for 2013 for tax purposes may call the church office and your statement will be mailed to you.

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.

HELP AVAILABLE – If you or someone you know needs help with home repairs or yard work, there are volunteers in our community who may be able to help. For more information, contact Michael "Doc" Johnston at 436-9209, or Cynthia Smith at 436-8512.

WOMEN OF THE ELCA

MESSIAH WOMEN OF THE ELCA continuously collect new bath-size bars of soap (4oz. to 5oz., 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 Adult Sunday School Room.

COMMUNITY

MEALS-ON-WHEELS needs volunteer drivers, cooks and people to help assemble meals. If you have some spare time and can help, please call Dottie Heck at 436-6002 or 717-348-1950 (cell).

THE FOOD PANTRY will be working with the Mifflintown Kiwanis Club, local churches and the Boy Scouts to help provide Christmas meals for every person in Juniata County who needs one. We are again asking this month for help to provide holiday meals. For every \$7.00 donated we can provide a complete holiday meal for a family of four. Or we will gladly accept donations of turkeys, hams, stuffing, sweet potatoes, fresh potatoes, fresh fruit (apples & oranges), rolls, and cake and icing mixes. If you will be alone for the holidays,

please talk to your local pastor and they will be glad to match you up with a family to enjoy a Christmas meal. Our vestibule (located on ramp side of building) is open any hour any day to received donations. Cash or gift card donations may be deposited through the mail slot. Hours are Monday and Wednesday, 2—6 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m.—1 p.m. Please make checks payable to the “Juniata County Food Pantry,” P.O. Box 44, Mifflintown, PA 17059.

THIS WEEK AT MESSIAH

- Today:** -9:15 a.m., Sunday School.
-10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion/Jr. Church.
-2 p.m., Christmas Cantata at Juniata High School.
- Monday:** -NEWSLETTER DEADLINE.
-8 p.m., AA meeting.
- Wednesday:** -7 p.m., Choir rehearsal.
- Thursday:** -1 p.m., Dulcimer rehearsal.
- Friday:** -7 p.m., Square & Line Dancing in Fellowship Hall.
- Sunday:** -9:15 a.m., Children's Sunday School Christmas Program.
-10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion/Jr. Church.