

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
Bob St. Clair
Barbara S. Geedey

Pastor
Choir Director
Lector
Altar Guild

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT December 16, 2012 – 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., Goldie K., Jean M., Cassie S., Helen K., Sis S., Jane M., Fay M., Dorothy P., Ruth C., Ray B., Anna Mary Z., Ryan K., Sarah D., Gene R., Jesse K., Susan M., Tammy W., Josh B., Matt H., Cade C., Lura A., Herbert B., Martin E., Pat and Joe F., Dan C., Florence B., Betty K., Jeanette S., family of JoAnn B.

PREPARATION

CHIMES: CALL TO WORSHIP

MEDITATION AND PRAYER

PRELUDE

[A Time for Meditation and Prayer]

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The presence of the Lord "in your midst" in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the Lord in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one "more powerful" than John, even with his winnowing fork in his hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

* CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, the Lord of Israel who comes to set us free, the mighty Savior who comes to show mercy, the Dawn from on high who guides us into peace.

C Amen

P Let us come before God in confession.

Silence is kept for reflection

P To you, O God,

C we lift up our souls. You know us through and through; we confess our sins to you. Remember not our sins; remember us with your steadfast love. Show us

your ways; teach us your paths; and lead us in justice and truth, for the sake of your goodness in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

P Sisters and brothers, come with joy and draw water from the well of salvation. Remember the gift of baptism: your sin is washed away in the name of + Jesus; you belong to Christ; you are anointed to serve. Stand up and raise your heads! The reign of God is near.

C Amen

GATHERING

* ENTRANCE HYMN "Joy to the World"

* 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 your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; 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 Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.

FIRST READING: Zephaniah 3:14-20

The First Lesson is from the 3rd chapter of Zephaniah.

THE LESSON READS:

¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! ¹⁵The LORD has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. ¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. ¹⁷The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing ¹⁸as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. ¹⁹I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. ²⁰At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

Lector: Here ends the reading.

Cong: Thanks be to God.

PSALMODY: Isaiah 12:2-6

L – In your midst is the Holy One of Israel. (Isa. 12:6)

²Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might, and has become my salvation.

³With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

⁴And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on God's name; make known the deeds of the LORD among the nations; proclaim that this name is exalted.

⁵Sing praises to the LORD, who has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth.

⁶Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

All – In your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Despite being in prison, Paul is remarkably upbeat as he writes this letter. Here, he urges his friends in Philippi to trust God with all their worries and concerns, with the hope they will experience God's joy and peace.

SECOND READING: Philippians 4:4-7

The Second Lesson is from the 4th chapter of Philippians.

THE LESSON READS:

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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 heralds the mighty one "who is coming." John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.

- * GOSPEL: Luke 3:7-18

P The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the 3rd chapter.

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

THE GOSPEL READS:

⁷John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" ¹¹In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." ¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you."

¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ. (sung)

* HYMN OF THE DAY “Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding!”

* 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 Filled with expectation and longing, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

P For your church, that it might rejoice in the Lord always; for our full communion partners; for our companion synods around the globe (especially); for congregations in our neighborhood (especially). Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P For the earth, that it be renewed with love; for old growth forests and polar ice caps; for lakes and rivers (especially); and for the place we call home. Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P For all nations, that war and disaster cease; for countries recovering from famines or earthquakes (especially); and for people whose human rights have been violated. Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P For those whose hands or hearts have grown weak; for the outcast; for those weighed down with shame; for the dying and the sick (especially all of our shut-ins [both at home and in nursing homes], and Ryan Keresey, Sarah Dressler, Gene Rhine, Jesse Kint, Susan Minick, Tammy Walton, Josh Beitz, Matt Hutchinson, Cade Clark, Florence Beasom, Betty Karstetter, Lura Aughey, Herbert Burd, Martin Ehrenzeller, Jeanette St. Clair, Joe and Pat Forney, Dan Conner, Marian Gross, and family of JoAnne Beale). Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P For this gathering, for our congregational leaders, and for those who with their prayers sustain our common life, that with John the Baptist we might proclaim the good news to everyone we meet. Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

P We remember those who have died and now rejoice in your glory. Give us voices to sing your praise in every time and place. Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Hear the prayers of your people, O God, and in your mercy grant us all we need, for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our 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 God fills the hungry with good things. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

(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 Holy One, we give you thanks that in this bread and cup we have feasted again on your endless love. Let that love overflow more and more in our lives, that we may be messengers to prepare your way, harvesters of justice and righteousness, and bearers of your eternal Word, our Savior Jesus Christ.

C Amen

SENDING

* BLESSING

P May God direct your ways in peace, make you abound in love for one another and for all, and strengthen your hearts until the coming of our Lord Jesus. Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

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

* CLOSING HYMN

“Prepare the Royal Highway”

* DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Christ is with you.

C Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

NEXT WEEK'S LECTOR – Linda Leister

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 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.

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 – Henry Edward Manning, Catholic Archbishop of Westminster (1808 – 1892): A priest ought to be in no place where his Master would not go, nor employed in anything which his Master would not do.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATES NEEDED – Two members of Messiah are needed to attend the annual Synod Assembly in June 2013 at Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove. If you are interested in serving, please contact the pastor or the church office.

AVERAGE WEEKLY OFFERING NEEDED TO FUND 2012 EXPENSES IS \$3,250. Offering received on 11/25/12 was \$2,425.

LUTHERAN STUDY BIBLES by Augsburg Fortress are available in the church office for anyone who would like one. Cost is normally \$35.00 but we were able to get them at the sale price of \$18.75 plus shipping.

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.

THE 2013 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 OFFERING ENVELOPE in your packet, plus the loose plate offering at the Christmas Eve Service goes to the Matthew 25 account to help needy people and situations throughout the year. Please be as generous as you can.

THE 2013 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 2012 for tax purposes may call the church office and your statement will be mailed to you.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:

7 p.m., Family/Youth Christmas Service.

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

10 p.m., Candlelight/Communion Service.

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.

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).

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

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).

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE will be held December 21, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. at Aldersgate United Methodist Church for those who are having a difficult time as a result of a death, job loss, health concern, or general sadness this Christmas season. You do not need to be alone in your pain. Come join us and hear prayers, scripture and music that acknowledge God's presence with us.

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.

JUNIATA COUNTY FOOD PANTRY NEEDS FOR DECEMBER

BASIC NEEDS:

ALL NON-PERISHABLE FOODS, PERSONAL AND BABY CARE PRODUCTS, PAPER AND CLEANING SUPPLIES.

HOLIDAY MEAL NEEDS:

TURKEYS, CRANBERRY SAUCE, STUFFING, CANNED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, INSTANT MASHED POTATOES, CANNED SWEET POTATOES, GRAVY MIX, CAKE MIX AND READY MADE ICING.

NURSE'S NOTES – Mints have been cherished since ancient times for their ability to settle an upset stomach, aid digestion, treat a cold, and ease a sore throat. The essential oils in these herbs – compounds such as menthol that give peppermint its wonderful aroma – relax the muscles of the gastrointestinal tract while increasing the flow of bile from the gallbladder, helping the body digest fatty foods more effectively. Drinking a cup of warm mint tea when you have a cold, thins and loosens phlegm, meaning it acts as a natural and safe decongestant. Pour 1 cup of near-boiling water over 6 to 8 fresh peppermint leaves or 1 tsp. dried. Steep for 5 minutes. Strain. Drink as desired after meals. Caution – Peppermint may worsen heartburn in people who have gastroesophageal reflux disease. (*Prevention Magazine*. October 2012, pg. 83).

THIS WEEK AT MESSIAH

- Today:** -9:15 a.m., Sunday School/Catechetical Class.
-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., Sq. Dancing in Fellowship Hall.
- Sunday:** -9:15 a.m., Children's Sunday School Christmas program.
-10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion/Jr. Church.