

Messiah Lutheran Church

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

The Reverend William N. Esborn
Carole Nace
Andrea Cameron
Diana Wise
Kay Varner

Pastor
Organist
Choir Director
Lector
Altar Guild

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT December 18, 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 Dorothy P.

PREPARATION

CHIMES: CALL TO WORSHIP

MEDITATION AND PRAYER

PRELUDE

"The Carolers"

Wilson

[A Time for Meditation and Prayer]

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

God keeps the promise made to David, to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

* 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 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" p. 12 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.**

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" (vs. 2)

For Christ is born of Mar – y, and, gath – ered all a –bove
while mor – tals sleep, the an – gels keep their watch of won-d'ring love.

O morn – ing stars, to – geth – er pro – claim the ho – ly birth,

and prais – es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!

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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

WORD

Instead of David building a house (temple) for the Lord, the Lord promises to establish David's house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, the Lord's anointed.

FIRST READING: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

The First Lesson is from the 7th chapter of 2 Samuel.

THE LESSON READS:

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" ⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Lector: Here ends the reading.

Cong: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Luke 1:47-55

L – You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Luke 1:52)

^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, ⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great things for me, and holy is your name.

⁵⁰You have mercy on those who fear you, from generation to generation.

⁵¹You have shown strength with your arm; and scattered the proud in their conceit,

⁵²casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.

⁵³You have filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴**You have come to the aid of your servant Israel, to remember the promise of mercy,**

⁵⁵the promise made to our forebears, to Abraham and his children forever.

All – You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly.

Paul closes his letter to the Romans by praising God because in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.

SECOND READING: Romans 16:25-27

The Second Lesson is from the 16th chapter of Romans.

THE LESSON READS:

²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith — ²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

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. 4)

O come, O Branch of Jes – se, free your own from Sa – tan’s tyr – an – ny;
from depths of hell your peo – ple save, and give them vic – t’ry o’er the grave.

Refrain

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

In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people (Mary) from littleknown places (Nazareth). This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in his gospel.

* GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-38

P The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the 1st chapter.

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

THE GOSPEL READS:

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ. (sung)

SERMON

Pastor Esborn

* HYMN OF THE DAY "Of the Father's Love Begotten"

p. 12 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 Pour out your Spirit on the church, that its leaders and all the baptized may answer your call to be bearers of the revelation of your love for the world. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Restore wetlands and forests, waterways and the vast sky, mountains and canyons, and enable us to live in harmony with the natural world. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Unseat from their thrones those who use their power to exploit others, and raise up leaders in our nation and throughout the world who will work for justice and peace. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Look with favor on 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 Dorothy Patterson), the lonely, victims of war and of domestic violence, the homeless, and those living in poverty. Fill them all with good things. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Remember with mercy the children of our congregation, that their excitement and anticipation during this season matures into joy and lasting peace in the revelation of the gift of your Son. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

P With thanksgiving for the faithful witness of Mary and all the saints who have responded to your steadfast love, inspire us also to be servants of your will. 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

"The First Noel"

Moffatt

[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 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

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

p. 13 in bulletin

* DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Remember the poor.

C Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

"Behold, He Comes"

Blake

NEXT WEEK'S LECTOR – Sam Leister

NEXT WEEK'S ALTAR GUILD – Linda Leister & Christie Holderman

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.

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 memory of Diane Hower by family.

JUST A THOUGHT – Norman Perrin (circa 1965), Professor of Theology: “Today’s assured results are tomorrow’s abandoned hypotheses.”

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 or at 436-9382 for information, including salary. Additional information about the church and congregation can be found at 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 is now in the Adult Sunday School Room. 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 are now available in the Adult Sunday School Room for you to pick-up. 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).

THANKS, SO VERY MUCH, to the Messiah Junior Choir for the beautiful flowers that I received at home and that were placed on the altar to honor me. I was so surprised and pleased. I hope all of you children enjoy praising the Lord with the songs we sing as much as I enjoy being your leader. Thank you so very much.

Linda Clark

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.

MESSIAH WOMEN OF THE ELCA will meet on Thursday, January 12, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Youth Area.

COMMUNITY

This year's 15th 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 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 – New research reveals that the benefits of learning to play an instrument persist long after those dreaded practices – and might even fend off Alzheimer's: Amateur musicians have better memory and verbal skills as they age than their nonmusical counterparts. (Prevention, November, pg. 34)

THIS WEEK AT MESSIAH

- Today:** -Fourth Sunday of Advent.
-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.
- Monday:** -8 p.m., AA meeting in Fellowship Hall.
- Wednesday:** -7 p.m., Choir rehearsal.
-7 p.m., N/A meeting in Youth Area.
- Saturday:** -7 p.m., Children's Christmas Eve Service.
-9:30 p.m., Prelude Concert with Louis Lynch.
-10 p.m., Christmas Eve Candlelight/Communion Service.
- Sunday:** -9:15 a.m., Sunday School/Catechetical Class.
-10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion/Jr. Church.
- Monday:** -OFFICE CLOSED.
-8 p.m., AA meeting in Fellowship Hall.