

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 Clark
Louis Lynch

Pastor
Senior Choir Director
Junior Choir Director
Organist

CHRISTMAS EVE PRELUDE CONCERT

Louis Lynch, Harpist
December 24, 2012 -- 9:30 PM

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE OF CAROLS AND COMMUNION -- 10:00 PM

*Please Stand as **YOU** Are Able

- * CHIMES: CALL TO WORSHIP (*A Time for Meditation and Prayer*)
PRELUDE
- * GREETING (***from the rear...please stand, if able***)
Pastor: Today Christ is born: Alleluia, alleluia! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
Congregation: And also with you.
- * LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE
- * PROCESSIONAL CAROL "*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born king;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts pro-claim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain: Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"

Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the ever-lasting Lord,
late in time be-hold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see! Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! **Refrain**

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us second birth. **Refrain**

* PRAYER OF THE DAY

P *Let us pray...*

C Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

OFFERING

[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].

OFFERTORY

ANTHEM

"Away in a Manger"

Parks

I. THE LIGHT FORETOLD

LESSON -- Isaiah 11:1-10

¹Jesse's family is like a tree that has been cut down. A new little tree will grow from its stump. From its roots a Branch will grow and produce fruit. ²The Spirit of the Lord will rest on that Branch. He will help him to be wise and understanding. He will help him make wise plans and carry them out. He will help him know the Lord and have respect for him. ³The Branch will take delight in respecting the Lord. ⁴He will always do what is right when he judges those who are in need. He'll be completely fair when he makes decisions about poor people. When he commands that people be punished, it will happen. When he orders that evil people be put to death, it will take place. ⁵He will put godliness on as if it were his belt. He'll wear faithfulness around his waist. ⁶Wolves will live with lambs. Leopards will lie down with goats. Calves and lions will eat together. And little children will lead them around. ⁷Cows will eat with bears. Their little ones will lie down together. And lions will eat straw like oxen. ⁸A baby will play near a hole where cobras live. A young child will put his hand into a nest where poisonous snakes live. ⁹None of those animals will harm or destroy anything or anyone on my holy mountain of Zion. The oceans are full of water. In the same way, the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. ¹⁰At that time the man who is called the Root from Jesse's family line will be like a banner that brings nations together. They will come to him. And the place where he rules will be glorious.

DIALOGUE (Isaiah 2, 9, 11)

L: There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse:

C: And the people who have walked in darkness shall see a great light.

L: A branch shall grow out of the root of Jesse;

C: And those who have dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them shall see a great light.

L: And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him;

C: And they shall learn from him the ways of the Lord.

L: He shall reign on the throne of David forever.

C: And the nations shall flow to his mountain.

ALL: A shoot shall come forth from the stump of Jesse, and the people who have walked in darkness shall see a great light.

CAROL *"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"* (vss. 1 & 2)

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming as seers of old have sung,
it came, a flow'r so bright, amid the cold of winter, when half-spent was the night.

Isaiah had foretold it, the rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love a-right, she bore to us a Savior, when half-spent was the night.

II. THE LIGHT GIVEN

LESSON -- Luke 2:1-7

¹In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a list be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. ²It was the first time a list was made of the people while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be listed. ⁴So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. ⁵He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby. ⁶While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. ⁷She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. There was no room for them in the inn.

DIALOGUE (Micah 5:2-4)

L: But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the class of Judah,
C: From you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

L: Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in travail has brought forth;

C: Then the rest of his brethren shall return to the people of Israel.

L: And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

C: And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

ALL: From you, O Bethlehem, from you shall come forth one who is to be ruler of Israel.

CAROL *"O Little Town of Bethlehem"*

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in the dark streets shin - eth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth!

How silently, how silently, the wondrous Gift is giv'n;
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His Heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

III. THE LIGHT PROCLAIMED TO THE WORLD

LESSON -- Luke 2:8-20

⁸There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were looking after their sheep. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. ¹²Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said, ¹⁴"May glory be given to God in the highest heaven! And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!" ¹⁵The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." ¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger. ¹⁷After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child. ¹⁸All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over. ²⁰The shepherds returned. They gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told.

DIALOGUE (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

L: Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Judah.

C: For to us a son is born.

L: Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord.

C: To us a son is given.

L: But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord.

C: And the government shall be upon his shoulder.

L: I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

C: And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

L: And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

ALL: Behold, the days are coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, says the Lord.

**IV. THE LIGHT SPREAD TO US:
THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

* LESSON -- John 1:1-5, 9-14

¹In the beginning, the Word was already there. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³All things were made through him. Nothing that has been made was made without him. ⁴Life was in him, and that life was the light for all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness. But the darkness has not understood it. ⁹The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. ¹⁰The Word was in the world that was made through him. But the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to what was his own. But his own people did not accept him. ¹²Some people did accept him. They believed in his name. He gave them the right to become children of God. ¹³To be a child of God has nothing to do with human parents. Children of God are not born because of human choice or because a husband wants them to be born. They are born because of what God does. ¹⁴The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. We have seen his glory. It is the glory of the one and only Son. He came from the Father. And he was full of grace and truth.

HOMILY

Pastor Esborn

CAROL

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

(vss. 1 & 2)

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him, born the king of angels:

Refrain: O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

The highest, most holy, light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father now in flesh appearing! **Refrain**

* NICENE CREED (all)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken

through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*** PASSING OF THE PEACE**

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you.

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

*** THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

P Glory to God in the highest.

C And peace to his people on earth.

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give him thanks and praise.

*** COMMUNION CANTICLE "Of the Father's Love Begotten"**

(vss. 1 & 5)

Of the Father's love begotten ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see, evermore and evermore.

Christ, to thee, with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to thee,
hymn and chant and high thanksgiving and unwearied praises be:
honor, glory, and dominion,
and eternal victory evermore and evermore! Amen

*** EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

P We give you thanks, Father, through Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, whom you sent in this end of the ages to save and redeem us and to proclaim to us your will. He is your Word, inseparable from you, through whom you created all things, and in whom you take delight.

He is your Word, sent from heaven to a virgin's womb.

He there took on our nature and our lot and was shown forth as your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and of the virgin Mary.

He, our Lord Jesus, fulfilled all your will and won for you a holy people; he stretched out his hands in suffering in order to free from suffering those who trust you.

He is the one who, handed over to a death he freely accepted, in order to destroy death, to break the bonds of the evil one, to crush hell underfoot, to give light to the righteous, to establish his covenant, and to show forth the resurrection, taking bread and giving thanks to you, said: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

In the same way 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.

Remembering, then, his death and resurrection, we take this bread and cup, giving you thanks that you have made us worthy to stand before you and to serve you as your priestly people.

Send your Spirit upon these gifts of your church; gather into one all who share this bread and wine; fill us with your Holy Spirit to establish our faith in truth, that we may praise and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ; through whom all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church, both 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 The bread of God comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.
Come, eat, and live.*

* COMMUNION CAROL "What Child Is This" (vss. 1 & 2)

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!

(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 (by Intinction)

[Come forward by the center aisle. Receive the wafer from the pastor on your side and dip it into the wine held by the lay assistant. After partaking, you may go to the rail for a time of silent prayer or return directly to your pew by the side aisle].

* 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 Great and saving God, you have gathered your scattered people around gifts of grain and wine, the body and blood of our Savior Christ. As we, like the shepherds, return on our way, may we proclaim all we have heard and seen, praising you in word and loving deed for the gift of Jesus, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen

LIGHTING OF THE INDIVIDUAL CANDLES

(The assistants will light the candle of the first worshipper in each pew, who will then pass it to the next person. Please do not tilt the lighted candles as you pass the light to those with unlit candles.)

SOLO: Andrea Cameron “Ave Maria” (accomp. by Louis Lynch)

Schubert

* POST-COMMUNION CAROL “*Silent Night, Holy Night!*”

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.

Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar, heav’nly hosts. . sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love’s pure light
radiant beams from your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

* DISMISSAL

L Go in peace. Christ is with you!

C Thanks be to God!

* CLOSING CAROL “*Go Tell It on the Mountain*”

Refrain: Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching over silent flocks by night
Behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. **Refrain**

The shepherds feared and trembled, when lo! above the earth,
Rang out the angels chorus that hailed the Savior’s birth. **Refrain**

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. **Refrain**

* POSTLUDE

(The candles will be extinguished after all have left; we leave in the light of Christ’s glory.)

PLEASE NOTE that we do not sing all the verses of every hymn, but only those verses which reiterate the message of the Scripture Word.

TONIGHT WE ARE COMMUNING BY INTINCTION -- Intinction is an early means of distribution, first recorded in the third century. It originated as a way to make communing easier for the ill. Over the centuries, it has become one of the several accepted methods of Distribution of the Sacramental Elements. We use Intinction since the Christmas decorations leave no room for pastor and assistants to move around behind the rail and so the Altar Guild will not have to wash glasses.

FRIENDSHIP PADS - We invite everyone (members and visitors) worshiping with us this evening 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 this evening 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.

IN THE NAME OF THE CHRIST CHILD, we cordially welcome all who worship with us this Christmas Eve. May love and peace, God's gifts to us in Christ, fill all our hearts this night and always. A special welcome to our visitors!

WE WELCOME our guest harpist, Louis Lynch, from Camp Hill, PA. We thank him for being a part of our service again this year and for providing the special music during the recital this evening.

A SPECIAL "THANK YOU" to all those who are taking part in the service: the organist, the choir and choir director, those who are providing special music during the recital, and especially to our youth and young adults of Messiah, and to all those who worship here tonight.

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

THE CONGREGATION has been collecting a monetary Christmas gift for the pastor. If you wish to contribute and have not already done so during Advent, you may place your gift in the offering plate (designate it as "Pastor's Christmas Gift") or in the special box on the table in the Adult Sunday School Room. Please make any checks payable to the pastor rather than the church.

WE WISH ALL OF YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS filled with blessings from God and His peace which passes all understanding.

WELCOME

This evening we would like to welcome you to our celebration of the birth of the Christ. This festival is one of the most beautiful and moving of the church year reminding us that God has freely chosen to submit himself to the limits, pains and suffering of this world. He has done this that He might dwell with us in the flesh and share our experience that we might have real hope through Him.

It is through this incarnation, being made flesh, which Christ's sacrifice for our sins on Good Friday is made possible and the reality of Christ's resurrection on Easter is proven to be for you.

This evening the forgiveness of sins given for you is once again made incarnate as Christ offers himself in His Holy Supper. It is in this meal where Jesus says to us, "This is my body given for you," that once again you receive the undeniable, physical assurance that God's grace applies to you specifically this day.

The life of every Christian is dependent on this very grace from God. We hope and pray that you will join with the Messiah Family to regularly partake of the assurance of God's grace offered in this meal. You are invited to come and join with us as we gather weekly to give thanks to God for His many blessings and to ask His Spirit be upon us as we serve Him and our neighbors.

Please place a check mark in the box (beside your name) if you are communing this evening so we may have a record of your presence with us.

Thank you again for blessing us with your presence this evening. We hope that you are also blessed by your participation with us and we pray that the peace of Christ may be upon you and yours in this Holy Season.