

Messiah Lutheran Church

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

The Reverend William N. Esborn	Pastor
Bob St. Clair	Organist
Andrea Cameron	Choir Director
Linda Clark	Junior Choir Director
Diana Wise & Tawny Mummah	Altar Guild
Tai Kepler, Marina Holderman, Malin Kint	Readers
Drew Lauver	Crucifer
Emma Arentz & Livia Arentz	Acolytes
Neil Fisher, Butch Pines, Sam Leister, Kevin Swailes	Ushers

CHRISTMAS EVE PRELUDE CONCERT OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

December 24, 2015 -- 7:00 PM

Louis Lynch, Harpist

FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE OF CAROLS AND COMMUNION -- 7:30 PM

*Please Stand as **YOU** Are Able

ANTHEM: "The Best Present of All" Jr. and Sr. Combined Choirs

CHIMES: CALL TO WORSHIP

PRELUDE: "Joy to the World" G. M. Martin

[A Time for Meditation and Prayer]

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

On a long winter evening we gather to proclaim the coming of the light. Isaiah announces that the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Paul reminds us that the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all. In the familiar account of Christ's birth, the evening sky is bright with the heavenly host singing, "Glory to God in the highest." Amid our broken world we proclaim that the prince of peace is born among us. God comes to us in human flesh—in Christ's body and blood—so that we may be bearers of divine light to all the world.

TIME OF SILENCE

* INVOCATION (from rear)

OPENING GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

[¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.]

* PROCESSIONAL CAROL "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

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**

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God in the highest: **Refrain**

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: **Refrain**

PLACING OF THE CHRIST CHILD IN THE CRECHE

JR. CHOIR ANTHEM “The Savior of the World”
CHILDREN’S HOMILY

Pastor Esborn

* 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

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Isaiah 9:2-7

Tai Kepler

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness--on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

OLD TESTAMENT CAROL “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (vs. 1)

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 shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

PSALM 96 (responsively by verse)

Marina Holderman

Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.

²**Sing to the LORD, bless the name of the LORD; proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**

³Declare God's glory among the nations and God's wonders among all peoples.

⁴**For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised, more to be feared than all gods.**

⁵As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; but you, O LORD, have made the heavens.

⁶**Majesty and magnificence are in your presence; power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**

⁷Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD honor and power.

⁸**Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the holy name; bring offerings and enter the**

courts of the LORD.

⁹Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; tremble before the LORD, all the earth.

¹⁰**Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is king! The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peoples with equity."**

¹¹Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

¹²**Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O LORD, for you come to judge the earth.**

¹³You will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with your truth.

PSALM CAROL "Joy to the World" (vs. 1)

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

THE EPISTLE: Titus 2:11-14

Malin Kint

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

EPISTLE CAROL "It Came upon the Midnight Clear" (vs. 1)

It came upon the mid-night clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

* THE GOSPEL: John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

* CAROL OF THE DAY “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**

* 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.”**

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].

SR. CHOIR ANTHEM: “Mary, How Could You Have Known”
Words & Music by S. Albrecht & J. Althouse

* THE GREAT THANKSGIVING (spoken)

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 mystery hidden for the ages is revealed for us in this meal. Come, behold and receive your God.

* 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).

COMMUNION:

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

Louis Lynch

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 We give you thanks, O God, that in this bread and cup of Christ's very life, you give us food for our journey. As you led the magi by a star, as you brought the holy family home again, guide us on the way unfolding before us. Wherever we go, may our lives proclaim good news of great joy in Jesus Christ our 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”

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: "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" Louis Lynch

[The candles remain lit, symbolizing that the light of the Christ Child is shining in our world].

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 parents and children and all who worship with us at the Children's Christmas Service. May love and peace, God's gift to us in the Christ Child, fill all our hearts this night and always.

WE WELCOME our guest harpist, Louis Synch, 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 choirs and choir directors, those who are providing special music during the recital, and especially to our youth, young adults and members of Messiah, and to all those who worship here tonight.

ATTENTION KIDS! At the time of the sermon, all children are invited to come forward to gather around the pastor in the chancel area.

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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”), in the special box on the table in the Adult Sunday School Room, or to the church office during the week. Please make any checks payable to the pastor rather than the church.

WE WISH ALL OF YOU a Christmas filled with blessings from God and His peace which passes all understanding.



THANK YOU TO ALL WHO GAVE POINSETTIAS to decorate the church in honor of Christ's birth.

TO THE GLORY OF GOD:

In memory of Sue Collins by family.

In loving memory of Floyd and Lois Covert by Larry and Shirley Covert.

In loving memory of Garry Covert by Larry and Shirley Covert

In memory of loved ones by Larry and Shirley Covert.

In memory of John and Helen Sieber by George and Kay Varner and family.

In memory of loved ones by Sieber and Ona Stoner.

In memory of loved ones by Don and Barb Geedey.

In memory of my grandparents, John and Hulda St. Clair, by Bob St. Clair.

In memory of my grandparents, Lester and Grace Parsons, by Bob St. Clair.

In honor of my parents, Robert and Jeanette St. Clair, by Bob St. Clair.

In memory of our parents, Richard and Daisy Van Gavree and Paul Patterson by Rich and Cindy Van Gavree.

In memory of Ralph E. Goss, Jr. by Wendy, Ralph E. Goss, III and Galen, Elizabeth and Anduin Goss.

In memory of Harry 'Preach' Fairman by family.

In memory of Ansel B. McNaight and Leo and Susie McNaight and E. Jane McCormick and Elaine and Jack Cramer by Anne and Jean McNaight and Jane M. Shearer.

In memory of family and friends whom we miss by Paul Goss and family.

In memory of Evelyn and George Shirk and Evelyn (Nootie) and Gerald Davis by family.

In memory of my grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Stuck, by Kenton Stuck.

In memory of my grandfather, Mr. Melvin Bortell, by Kenton Stuck.

In memory of my grandmother, Mrs. Margaret Rodriguez, by Kenton Stuck.

In memory of Jean, George and Bill Flint and Mary Lorraine Hazard by the George Hazard, Jr. family.

In honor of family and friends by George and Marylou Hazard.

In memory of Diane and Denise Hower by family.

In memory of George and Anna Ruth Dullea by Herman and Judy Armstrong.

In memory of husband and loved ones by Midge Rowell.

In loving memory of Daniel and Thelma Dreibelbis and Abram and Ruth Shoener by the Stephen Dreibelbis family.

In memory of Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Miller by family.

In memory of Morgan C. Strawser by Patsy and Jerret Strawser.

In memory of Roy Morral by the Morral family.

In memory of Nora Ella Singer by Ed Singer and family.

In memory of Tammy Pines Walton by the Walton, Pines and Stoner families.

In memory of Carolyn J. Wieseman and Paul F. Wiesman and Mr. and Mrs. Cloyd A. Pines, Sr. by the Pines and Stoner families.

In memory of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Tyson by daughter and family.

In memory of our dad, David H. Naugle by Roger and Rodney Naugle and families.

In loving memory of Barry T. Stratford by Betty and family.

In memory and in honor of loved ones by Larry and Diana Wise.

In honor of my mother, Florence Williams, by Debbie Meinsler.

In memory of loved ones by Leon and Madeline Kramer.

The large Poinsettia on the piano in the front of the sanctuary was placed in memory of Joyce Yetter by Vernon Gunnion and family.

The white Poinsettia on top of the poinsettia tree is placed in honor of God's people at Messiah by Pastor Esborn.

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.

