

Messiah Lutheran Church

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

The Reverend William N. Esborn
Bob St. Clair
Andrea Cameron
Andrea Cameron
Diana Wise & Tawny Mummah
Marina Holderman
Emma Arentz & Livia Arentz

Pastor
Organist
Choir Director
Lector
Altar Guild
Crucifer
Acolytes

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 20, 2015 – 10:30 a.m.

*Please Stand as **YOU** Are Able

Those we want to remember in prayer today—please refer to “Prayers of Intercession.”

PREPARATION

CHIMES: CALL TO WORSHIP

PRELUDE: “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” R. W. Thygerson

[A Time for Meditation and Prayer]

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and the Blessed Virgin Mary's magnificent song of praise, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in no uncertain terms that Christ's advent is for "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." It is the kind of tension in which the church always lives as when in the Holy Communion—with high delight—"we proclaim the Lord's death."

* 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 “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”

* 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.

CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

PLACING THE CRECHE FIGURES

* THE VERSE “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (vs. 4)

O come, O Branch of Jesse, free your own from Satan’s tyranny;
From depths of hell your people save, and give them vict’ry o’er the grave.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

We are presented with Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth's inspired greeting and Mary's song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.

* GOSPEL: Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

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

C Glory to you, O Lord. (sung)

THE GOSPEL READS:

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

[⁴⁶And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."]

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ. (sung)

* HYMN OF THE DAY "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

* 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 Emmanuel has come, is here, and is coming soon. Let us join in prayer for the church, the earth, and those who are in need, that all receive what God promises to give.

A brief silence.

P O God our Wisdom, give to all the baptized knowledge of your truth and the power of your presence. Inspire worship leaders and church musicians toward ever-deepening praise. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P O God, Lord of might, hold the cosmos in your care. Give the earth both darkness and light, cold and warmth. Protect the mountains from exploitation. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P O God, King of nations, bring peace and justice to all the countries of the world. Guide all leaders toward honest and merciful rule. Raise up those who are poor. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P O God, Key of David, look from your throne upon all in need. Mend the broken and the brokenhearted. Free those imprisoned by anxiety or illness. We pray especially for all of our shut-ins: (Marian Gross, Reba Sigler, Kitty Walters, Flo Beale, Ethel Bossinger, Jean McNaight, Jane Marhefka, Fay McCormick, Dorothy Patterson, Ruth Cisney, Ray Bramm, Dottie Smith, Dorothy Cleck, Carol Simonton, Lura Aughey, Earl & Mona Lawson, and Jim Yetter). And for Bob & Jeanette St. Clair, Allison Garver, Clara Shepps, Andy & Wesley Kinzer, Kaiden Woods, Tina Hutchinson, Leiah Bridges, Mical Gayer, Judy Grimes, Sara Ann Aurand, Betsy Aumiller, Jodi Fitzgerald, Virginia Waller, Mindy Fryer, Mary Ann Bardell, Audrey Morral, Diane Layton, Gabby Baney, Josh Delancey, Kay Stuck, Minnie Minick, Tina Benner, Don Wert, Shirley Zeiders, Michelle Stoner, Sue Crouse, Sandy Pines, Carol Jan Mahlin and sons, Nancy Hannon, Tanner Johnson, Vincenzo Evola, Bowie Smith, Ed Forney, and Clay Ianson. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P O God, Tree of Jesse, nurture our community. Give us joy in one another, and make us servants of all in need. Bless our holy day celebrations with your Spirit. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

P O God, Dayspring, we remember all who have died and now live in your light. Gather us to yourself and teach us to sing together Mary's song of praise. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Receive our prayers, merciful God, and make us ready to receive you when you come through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

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 together praise our God Before his glorious throne; For he will open heav'n above 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 Amen, Amen, Amen (sung)

* **CLOSING HYMN** “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

* DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Christ is with you.

C **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE:

NEXT WEEK'S LECTOR – Randy Clark

NEXT WEEK'S ALTAR GUILD – Diana Wise & Tawny Mummah

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.

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 – Otto Zockler, German Theologian (1833 – 1906): The wise man is also the just, the pious, the upright, the man who walks in the way of truth.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

December 6, 2015 Worship Service

Attendance – 80

Total Offering - \$4,145.00

General Fund - \$2,802.00

Sunday School

Attendance – 52

Offering - \$80.00

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

NEW ENVELOPES – The envelopes for 2016 are in the back of the Adult Sunday School Room and are ready to be taken home. Please be aware that your number has changed and the envelopes are now in alphabetical order according to last names. There are only 52 envelopes in each box—no colored extras for various funds. Please check the funds and the amount you wish to contribute on the front of the envelope. **IMPORTANT: On the memo line of your check(s) also please specify which funds and how much. You may use one check for several funds (specifying on both envelope and check) or write a separate check for each fund.** Thanks for helping us save \$200.00 on envelopes this year. Anyone who would like a statement of their contributions for 2015 for tax purposes may call the church office and your statement will be mailed to you.

THE SECRETARY'S WEEKLY OFFICE HOURS are as follows:

Tuesday – 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Thursday – 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Friday – 12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

GIANT STORE GIFT CARDS are also now available as well as the Weis Cards to purchase from members of the Disciples Class.

CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR THE PASTOR – 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'). Please make checks payable to the pastor.

THANKS TO MESSIAH MEMBERS for giving to two special offerings. Blanket Sunday offering totaled \$370.00 and Thankoffering totaled \$583.00. Both offerings support the ministry of the Women of the ELCA.

CARD MINISTRY – The Compassionate Service Committee is in need of someone to take over a card ministry as of January 1, 2016. This card ministry includes sending cards to those making memorial contributions to Messiah as well as sending cards to our shut-ins on the holidays. If you are interested in helping with this important ministry, contact Don Geedey at 436-6433 or email to geedey@centurylink.net.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATES NEEDED – Two members of Messiah are needed to attend the annual Synod Assembly in June 2016 at Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove. Synod delegates should also plan on attending the Juniata Valley Conference Assembly the 1st Sunday of May. If you are interested in serving, please contact Pastor Esborn or the church office.

THE CHRISTMAS 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 2016 FLOWER CHART will be in the Adult Sunday School Room soon. 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.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE – ALL ARE WELCOME!! – The 2015 Christmas Eve Service will be one service this year, beginning at 7:30 PM, Thursday, December 24th, preceded at 7:00 PM by a prelude concert of Christmas music presented by harpist Mr. Louis Lynch of Camp Hill. This service will be a combined service of family, communion, and candle lighting. The junior and senior choirs, directed by Linda Clark and Andrea Cameron, respectively, will both provide anthems throughout the service. Service music and accompaniment for the choirs

will be provided by Robert St. Clair. Scripture and carols will be part of the service as well. If you are willing to help be a part of this service – lecturing, candle lighting, church lights (during candle lighting), communion attendants, ushers for offering, greeters, etc., please let Diana Wise, Bob St. Clair, or Pastor Esborn know. We look forward to this being a VERY special service this year and are anticipating the celebration of our Lord Jesus and the arrival of the Christmas season at Messiah!

CAN TREE – Donations of gallon-size canned food is again being collected this year, now through December, to benefit Bethesda Mission. Everyone is encouraged to donate as many cans as you are able.

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

WOMEN OF THE ELCA

MESSIAH WOMEN OF THE ELCA continuously collect new bath-size bars of soap (4oz. to 5oz., preferably Ivory or unscented Dove) as an on-going project for Lutheran World Relief. Please place soap in the basket on the blue table in the Adult Sunday School Room.

COMMUNITY

MEALS-ON-WHEELS needs volunteer cooks, drivers and people to help assemble meals. **Cooks are especially needed for the 5th Tuesday and 5th Friday of the month.** If you have some spare time and can help, please call Dottie Heck at 436-6002 or 717-348-1950 (cell).

APARTMENT FOR RENT AT JAM HOUSE – The board of directors at JAM House is looking for an individual or a couple to rent the four-room apartment attached to our house. The apartment has a separate entrance, parking and all utilities are included with the \$800/mo. rent. If you know of someone who may be interested, please contact Larry Wise at 436-6629.

FOOD PANTRY BASIC NEEDS FOR DECEMBER:
ALL NON-PERISHABLE FOODS, PERSONAL AND
BABY CARE PRODUCTS, AND CLEANING SUPPLIES

HOLIDAY MEAL NEEDS FOR DECEMBER:
HAMS, CANNED FRUITS, CANNED SWEET
POTATOES, AND DESSERT MIXES

**DONATIONS OF CASH AND GIFT CARDS
ARE ALSO APPRECIATED!**

*Unfortunately, we have recently been forced to lock our vestibule doors due to theft. We are very sorry for the inconvenience and are working on a solution. In the meantime, please leave donations during the hours we are open. If this is not possible, give us a call and we will work out a convenient time for you.

WHAT IS CIMT AND HOW CAN IT HELP ME? Carotid intima-media thickness (CIMT) measurement is a non-invasive screening tool, using ultrasound, that provides very useful information about a person’s cardiovascular health. It detects the earliest traces of plaque within the layers of the artery walls, years before there is enough obstruction of blood flow to cause heart attack or stroke. It also allows the calculation of “arterial age,” which equates a person’s average carotid artery thickness to a person of that age who is at a normal risk. The Prevention Health Screenings group will be at **Messiah Lutheran Church on Friday, January 15, 2016** to offer you this

CIMT screening along with 7 other quick, painless, non-invasive health screenings to see if you are at risk for serious health problems. The costs vary depending on how many screenings you have done. You must have an appointment to have the screenings done and appointments are at first-come-first-serve—so register early. This program has been very popular in the past years. **Call 1-800-257-3516 or go to www.preventionhealth.org for more information.**

THIS WEEK AT MESSIAH

- Today:** -9:15 a.m., Sunday School/Cate. Class.
-10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion/Children’s Christmas Program.
-2 p.m., Christmas Cantata “The Winter Rose” at Juniata High School.
- Monday:** -NEWSLETTER DEADLINE.
-8 p.m., AA meeting in Fellowship Hall.
- Wednesday:** -7 p.m., Choir rehearsal.
- Thursday:** -7 p.m., Christmas Eve Prelude Concert.
-7:30 p.m., Christmas Eve Family Candlelight & Communion Service.
- Sunday:** -FOOD PANTRY SUNDAY.
-9:15 a.m., Sunday School/Catechetical Class.
-10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion/Jr. Church.