

Messiah Lutheran Church

3 South Third Street
Mifflintown, PA 17059
Church Office / 436-6213

The Rev. Chris Mathiason
Stephen Rodgers
June Bricker
Andrea Cameron
Linda Clark
Christie Yorks
Kate Swailes
Nathan Swailes & Tyler Rosenberry
Jean & Garrett Berry

Interim Pastor
Lay Worship Leader
Organist
Choir Director
Junior Choir Director & Children's Christmas Program Director
Altar Guild
Lector
Acolytes
Greeters

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 18, 2016 – 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:

[A Time for Meditation and Prayer]

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday in Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

* CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who comes to wake us from sleep, who leads us into the light of grace. **Amen.**

P Let us prepare the way of the Lord by confessing our sin against God and neighbor.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P God of all time,

C We confess that we have not prepared for your merciful reign among us. We ignore our neighbors in need and fail in the labor of justice and peace. In your mercy forgive us. Grant us wisdom to welcome your light and to seek the things that will endure until Christ comes again in glory. Amen.

P Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. In + Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven and all things are made new. Rejoice in this good news!

C Amen.

GATHERING

* ENTRANCE HYMN “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” #34 (LBW)

* GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Narration

Carol – “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (vs. 1 only)

Narration

Carol – “What Child is This?” (vs. 1 only)

Narration

Carol – “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” (vs. 1 only)

Narration

Carol – “Away in a Manger” (vs. 1 only)

Narration

Carol – “O Come, All Ye Faithful” (vs. 1 only)

Narration

Carol – “We Three Kings” (vs. 1 only)

Narration

Carol – “Joy to the World” (vs. 1 only)

“Happy Birthday to You, Jesus” and “We Wish You a Merry Christmas”

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.

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

* GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

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

C Glory to you, O Lord. (sung)

THE GOSPEL READS:

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ. (sung)

* HYMN OF THE DAY "Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us" #481 (LBW)

* 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 As we anticipate the fullness of the presence of Christ, we join with the church throughout the world, praying for all who are in need.

A brief silence.

P For the church universal and all servants of the gospel, for poets and artists, for musicians and preachers, and for theologians and teachers; that all proclaim that God is with us in Christ, let us pray.

C Have mercy, O God.

P For all plants and animals, seas and skies, snow and rain, and all of God's marvels; that all of creation grow and thrive as we bless, protect, and use with care what God has made, let us pray.

C Have mercy, O God.

P For the nations and those in authority, for peace and justice throughout the whole world, and for those who advocate on behalf of others; that all in positions of leadership choose what is good for the community, let us pray.

C Have mercy, O God.

P For the thirsty and hungry, the weak and fearful, those in childbirth, those who mourn, and the sick (especially all of our shut-ins: Reba Sigler, Kitty Walters, Flo Beale, Jean McNaught, Jane Marhefka, Fay McCormick, Ruth Cisney, Ray Bramm, Dottie Smith, Dorothy Cleck, Carol Simonton, Lura Aughey, Mona Lawson, Sara Ann Aurand, and Jim Yetter). And for Bob & Jeanette St. Clair, Rick Waller, Sr., Avonell Waller, Jim Woltman, Bob Cameron, Michal Gayer, Josh Delancey, Letha Swab, Brady Mingle, Belva Fulton, Joan Foltz, Janie Shearer, Mary Ernest, and John Miller; that they know Christ the Anointed One who dries up every tear and comforts those who suffer, let us pray.

C Have mercy, O God.

P For those who travel near and far, for those who prepare our congregation for worship and celebration, and for those who gather around word and sacrament; that all experience welcome and refreshment, let us pray.

C Have mercy, O God.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

P In thanksgiving for the saints who have died and are now at rest; that the witness of their faith point us to the promises of grace and resurrection in Christ, let us pray.

C Have mercy, O God.

P Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, those spoken aloud and those known only to you, and grant us peace through Jesus Christ, our coming Savior.

C Amen.

* SHARING OF GOD'S PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you.

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

OFFERING

OFFERTORY:

[Please pass the Friendship Pad down your pew for all to sign and then back to the center aisle so everyone has the opportunity to read the names. We request that our guests also give us their home address. Thank you].

ANTHEM:

* SUNG OFFERTORY “Let All Together Praise Our God” (revised wording)
Let all 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 Savior of the nations, come. Make your home here in us. Feed us with your love, that our faith shine ever new and our lives reveal your light.

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 Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you. Share in the feast of salvation

(If you desire, you may take a gluten free wafer located on the oak pedestal on the step in front of the chancel).

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 God for whom we wait, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share.

Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world, announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen

SENDING

* BLESSING

P May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path. Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C Amen, Amen, Amen (sung)

* CLOSING HYMN

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

#44 (LBW)

* DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE:

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NEXT WEEK'S LECTOR – Jean Compton

NEXT WEEK'S ALTAR GUILD – Christie Holderman

NEXT WEEK'S ACOLYTES – Garrett Berry & Caden Swailes

NEXT WEEK'S GREETERS – Ken & Tawny Mummah

WELCOME

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 or indicate such in the Friendship Pads being sure to include your contact information. 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.

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.

GLUTEN FREE WAFERS ARE ALSO PROVIDED FOR COMMUNION. Wine and wheat wafers are used and if you so desire, you may take a gluten free wafer located on the oak pedestal on the step in front of the chancel.

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.

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.

THIS MORNING WE ARE LED IN WORSHIP by Stephen Rodgers, an Authorized Lay Worship Leader of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. Authorized Lay Worship Leaders have received extensive training so as to provide worship leadership and preaching, and also have been authorized by the bishop of the synod to preside at the Eucharist in specific situations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is committed to ordained ministry as the primary means for filling the needs of this church for Word and Sacrament, but at this place in the church's pilgrimage, the church's inability to provide all congregations with full-time ordained pastoral ministry presents a challenge. On any given Sunday, congregations have needs that cannot be met by available ordained ministers. Therefore, because it is the bishop's responsibility to meet the Word and Sacrament needs of the congregations in this synod, synodically authorized lay worship leaders are trained to meet this need. On behalf of the whole church, Bishop Collins is deeply gratified by the ministry of these servants of the Gospel.

JUST A THOUGHT – Walter Elwell, et. al, Contemporary Authors: The fact that a remnant survives emphasizes both the grace of God and the dawning of a new age and a new community.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

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.

THE DEADLINE for all items to be included in the Sunday bulletin is **Thursday noon**.

PRAYER REQUESTS will be placed in the Sunday bulletin for **one month**. If you wish to have someone included in the prayer list for an additional month, please contact Judy directly at the church office at 436-6213 or at messiahlutheran@pa.net. If you have anyone who is a “last minute” addition after the bulletin has been printed on Fridays, please fill out an orange prayer card in the pew and lay it on the stand where the gluten free wafers are placed PRIOR to the morning worship service.

CHOIR GOWN/CRUCIFER/ACOLYTE DONATIONS UPDATE: Of the \$1368 that was needed, we have received \$410 leaving a total of **\$958 still needed**. If you would like to contribute to this project, please mark your check on the note line “choir gowns,” or if giving cash, put in an envelope also marked “choir gowns.” We greatly appreciate those who have already given and thank any others in advance for any amount you feel you can contribute to this project.

PLEASE NOTIFY THE CHURCH OFFICE for any change in addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, or for any requests for building usage. At this time of the year, in particular, there are a lot of activities and some coordination is needed so events are not “overbooked” in any specific areas of the church (this also applies to church groups who meet in the church). Please contact the office at 436-6213 or email messiahlutheran@pa.net for any changes or requests.

WEEKLY FINANCIAL REPORT:

December 11, 2016 Worship Service

Attendance – 67

Total Offering - \$3,700.00

881.00

General Fund - \$2,819.00

Sunday School

Attendance – 38

Other Funds

Sunday School - \$ 49.00

Benevolence - 370.00

Building Fund - 290.00

Matthew 25 - 30.00

Flowers - 32.00

Choir Gowns - 110.00

\$ 881.00

THE 2017 CHURCH OFFERING ENVELOPES are now available in numerical order for you to pick-up in the Library. Anyone who would like a statement of their contributions for 2016 for tax purposes may call the church office and your statement will be mailed to you.

MATTHEW 25 FUND – All loose offering at the Christmas Eve Service will go to the Matthew 25 Fund to help those in need throughout the year. You can also donate to the fund by writing Matthew 25 Fund on your regular offering envelope and the amount you wish to contribute.

CHRISTMAS DAY – Because Christmas Day falls on a Sunday this year, it was decided at the last PPC meeting that Sunday School and Jr. Church will be cancelled for that day. The regular Worship Service will be held at 10:30 a.m.

MESSIAH’S DOORS will be unlocked at 8:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings for Sunday School and Worship.

FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS – Any Messiah member who wishes to receive the monthly financial reports and the weekly tallies by email, please send Ann Beaver (annbeaver@embarqmail.com) your email address.

COPIES OF OCTOBER PPC MINUTES are available in the Adult Sunday School Room.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

MUSIC PRELUDE begins at 7:00 p.m. with our own Bob St. Clair showcasing his talents for our enjoyment, performing an organ concert of Christmas music!

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE will begin at 7:30 p.m. and will include singing of Carols, a special anthem by the Jr. & Sr. Choirs, and our own Andrea Cameron singing “Ave Maria.” Please plan to attend this beautiful service for the whole family in celebration of anticipation of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ!

MESSIAH UPCOMING SCHEDULE OF SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EVENTS:

- 1) Today, the Children’s Christmas Program will be included in the morning worship service.
- 2) Saturday, December 24th: Combined Candlelight Christmas Eve Service at 7:30 p.m. Beginning at 7:00 p.m., a Prelude Concert will feature our own Bob St. Clair with special selections on the organ.

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

POINSETTIAS to decorate the church for Christmas may be placed in honor or in memory of someone, or to the Glory of God. The cost is \$8.00 for a 6½ “ plant with 3 to 4 blooms. You may order by calling the church office at 436-6213. PLEASE ORDER BY **DECEMBER 19th**.

A FIRST COMMUNION CLASS will be held for any youth who are interested. Parents may contact the church office at 436-6213 or Sam Leister at 436-8589. A date and time will be set based on those who wish to attend.

BAPTISMAL/NEW MEMBER CLASS will be held for those who are interested. If you wish to have your child baptized or you wish to attend the New Member Class, please call the church office at 436-6213.

NOVEMBER FINANCIAL REPORT PACKETS (with blue covers) are available in the back of the sanctuary. If you have any questions, call Ann Beaver at 436-9382.

HOME COMMUNION – The Compassionate Services Committee is again looking for people who would like to give Communion to our shut-ins. A rotating schedule of our shut-ins is used on a quarterly basis. If interested in this important ministry, contact Don Geedey. Phone: 436-6433 or Email: geedey@centurylink.net.

BIRTHDAY CARDS FOR SHUT-INS – The Compassionate Services Committee needs someone to do the birthday card ministry for our shut-ins beginning January 1, 2017. Addresses, birth dates, cards, and stamps are provided. All that is necessary to do is sign and mail the cards each month. If interested in this ministry, see Don Geedey--phone, 436-6433 or email geedey@centurylink.net.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED to press quilt tops for “The Needlers.” Tops can be taken home and pressed and brought back to the church. Anyone who is interested, please contact one of “The Needlers.”

WEIS AND GIANT GIFT CARDS are available to purchase from the Disciples Class. This is a very important outreach ministry that helps neighbors in need in our own community. We thank each and every one for continued support of this very worthwhile project.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATES NEEDED – Two members of Messiah are needed to attend the annual Synod Assembly in June 2017 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 the church office.

WEEKLY CHURCH 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.

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

NEW BATH-SIZE BARS OF SOAP (4oz. to 5oz., preferably Ivory or unscented Dove) is continuously collected 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.

THE NEXT MESSIAH WELCA MEETING will be held on Thursday, January 12, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Youth Area. Cynthia Smith will be presenting the program.

ITEMS FOR THE SEAFARERS BAGS will be collected through next summer, that way everyone will get to take advantage of any holiday saving and after Christmas sales for the winter items. Items needed are:

- 1 sweatshirt, preferably hooded (sizes L-XL)
- 3 pairs of socks (thermal or white gym socks)
- 1 pull-over T-shirt (sizes M-L)
- 1 knit heavy winter cap

COMMUNITY

CHRISTMAS EVENT – The Upper Tuscarora Presbyterian Church, 589 Brick Church Road, East Waterford, PA [back road between Blairs Mills and Waterloo] will present “Singing the Songs of Christmas” on Friday, December 23, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. Non-Denominational – ALL are invited!

FOOD PANTRY BASIC NEEDS FOR DECEMBER

ALL NON-PERISHABLE FOODS, OVER THE COUNTER
COLD AND FLU MEDICINES, TISSUES AND PAPER TOWELS

HOLIDAY MEAL NEEDS FOR DECEMBER

HAMS (3-5 LBS), INSTANT POTATOES

THIS WEEK AT MESSIAH

- Today:** -Fourth Sunday of Advent.
-9:15 a.m., Sunday School/Confirmation Class.
-10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion/Youth Christmas Program. Lay Worship Leader – Stephen Rodgers.
- Monday:** -8 p.m., AA meeting in Fellowship Hall.
- Tuesday:** -6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Juniata Valley Quilters in Fellowship Hall.
- Wednesday:** -7 p.m., Choir rehearsal.
- Saturday:** -7 p.m., Christmas Eve Prelude Service.
-7:30 p.m., Christmas Eve Family Service, Communion, Candlelight (Worship Leader: Andrea Cameron).
- Sunday:** -Christmas Day – Merry Christmas!
-Sunday School & Jr. Church cancelled.
-10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion. (Worship Leader – Sam Leister)