



December, 2016

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

3 South Third Street Mifflintown, PA 17059 (717)-436-6213

INTERIM PASTOR -- Rev. Chris Mathiason -- <u>cmathiason001@luthersem.edu</u> CHURCH WEBSITE: <u>www.mlcmifflintown.org</u> OFFICE EMAIL: <u>messiahlutheran@pa.net</u>

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES! - 9:15 AM WORSHIP, JR. CHURCH, & COMMUNION - 10:30 AM

USS-ARK NEWSLETTER

THE LUTHERAN MAGAZINE



A mother and father went Christmas shopping one Saturday afternoon with their sevenyear-old daughter. The little girl was so thrilled and enthusiastic about the season. But her parents were just the opposite--they were so grumpy, so tense and uptight, so worn out with all the traffic jams and lists and bills and long line.

When the family returned home that night, the little girl was singing Christmas carols; but her mother and father were arguing and irritated with one another. Finally, the father, told the little girl to stop singing and go to bed.

The little girl started upstairs to her room; but she stopped on the stairway, opened the window, and looked out. "Why did you open the window and let in the cold air?" her father asked. "Because I thought I heard the angels singing," she answered. Still angry and tired, the father said, "I don't hear any angels singing, and neither do you. Now get upstairs, and get in that bed right now!" The little girl started up the stairs; but then she paused and said gently, "Daddy, if you want to hear the angels sing, you have to listen with your heart."

For many people, we cannot slow down long enough and we cannot turn down the volume level enough in our lives to enjoy Christmas. That's why the holidays are a burden. The obligations, the guilt, the exhaustion of the season can easily outweigh the pleasures.

Let me tell you about Shelly. She and her husband both work full-time. She insists on preparing the family Christmas dinner for twentyfive people by herself. She spends weeks baking, cleaning, and shopping. Then she's up at 3 A.M. on Christmas morning to put the turkey in the oven and finish the preparations. By 3 P.M. Christmas day she's in tears, because she's exhausted.

Then there's Bill & Nancy. They chase around for weeks, and finally they have collected everything on their list. They stop for the first time in weeks to have a quiet moment. Michael's new bike is leaning next to the wall; Sara's doll house is set up in the corner. But something's not right. Gradually it dawns on them: It doesn't look like enough. They have spent incredible amounts of time--not to mention the money. They bought everything the kids had on their lists and then some. But it just doesn't fit their image of what a wonderful Christmas should look like. What should Christmas look like?

According to psychologists, the Christmas season triggers feelings of loneliness, regret, nostalgia, and failure in many people. And much of the pressure we feel during this season is caused by the pressure we put on ourselves. We feel guilty about not doing enough or not doing it right.

Isn't it time to re-examine the way we do things? Do you realize that no other culture around this world starts the Christmas holidays in September? You won't find slogans like "Only twelve shopping days until Christmas" in Scotland. In Spain, Christmas Eve is a purely religious celebration. Families gather before their crèches to sing hymns and pray before going to midnight Mass. In Ireland, there are few Christmas decorations, except for lit candles set in windows on Christmas Eve to light the Holy Family's way.

Now hear me clearly--I am not advising that we all go out and become modern day "Grinches"/"Scrooges"--I enjoy buying gifts for my family & friends, I enjoy putting up the decorations in the front of my house--I absolutely love many of the holiday traditions--BUT there is a limit to our energy and money and time--therefore, we had better be very intentional and careful about keeping our focus - or else--I'll guarantee you that there are plenty of people who would like to define Christmas for you--and it will never be enough-because that's the way it is designed. It is an important question: What should Christmas look like?

The people at the Barna Research Group took a poll and found that only 37% of adults in America believe that the birth of Jesus is the most important aspect of Christmas. 44% found that family time is the most important part of the Christmas celebration.

Take a look at the Christmas decorations in

your neighborhood. Isn't it true that you can look at the vast majority of them without ever having the slightest clue that the season has anything to do with Jesus Christ? What should Christmas look like? May I suggest to you--that Christmas looks like what happened in Bethlehem. And that we need to go over to Bethlehem to see it. We have to slip away from the mall, and stand back from our multi-tasking, and turn off the TV, and control our own appetites long enough to go over to Bethlehem to see what Christmas looks like.

Consider the shepherds who were keeping watch over their flock by night. They were minding their own business; this night didn't look much different than any other. Then God broke in and spoke to them when an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them. Their first reaction was Fear. Followed by Reverent Attention. What strikes me about this encounter with God's messenger angels is that the angels did not give the shepherds specific instructions about what they were to do. They didn't push them, threaten them, or promise any material reward. They didn't have a star as the Wise Men did, nor some kind of escort angel. The angel simply said in V.12, "This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." "You will find" implies that you will seek. God revealed Himself to these shepherds but this wasn't just the first recorded Christmas decoration out there on some lawn outside of Bethlehem--God is saying that when He reveals Himself, we are required to respond with faith and action.

So, do you want to know what Christmas looks like? It looks like the scene there in Bethlehem, and it's not just the familiar stable and manger, Mary and Joseph and the Baby Jesus--no, it also includes these shepherds making major adjustments in their lives in order to join God in what He was doing.

Max Lucado in his book, The Applause of Heaven, puts it like this: "A small cathedral outside Bethlehem marks the supposed birthplace of Jesus. Behind a high altar in the church is a cave, a little cavern lit by silver lamps. You can enter the main edifice and admire the ancient church. You can also enter the quiet cave where a star embedded in the floor recognizes the birth of the King. There is one stipulation, however. You have to stoop. The door is so low you can't go in standing up. The same is true of the Christ. You can see the world standing tall, but to witness the Savior, you have to get on your knees. So. {out there in Bethlehem, the night when Jesus was born} while the theologians were sleeping, and the elite were dreaming, and the successful were snoring, the meek shepherds were kneeling. They were kneeling before the One only the meek will see. They were kneeling in front of Jesus."

So--what does Christmas look like? It is a picture of God coming into the world to visit and redeem, God turning things around for us, God coming through with His grace and love to give us a new start, a new beginning, a new chance, a new life. What does Christmas look like? It's a picture where we do not have to face our problems and challenges alone. But there is only one thing needed, you've got to get out of the mall, and get out of your schedule, and get out of yourself, and come over to Bethlehem and see the hope and the life that is happening there. Amen.

John Kah, St. Peter Lutheran Church, Lodi, California, Lutheran, Pastor/Minister http://www.sermoncentral.com/

PRAYER REQUEST REMINDER!!

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 436-6213 the church office at 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.

UPCOMING PASTORS & LAY WORSHIP LEADERS

December 4	Andrea Cameron
December 11	Sam Leister
December 18	Stephen Rodgers
December 24	Andrea Cameron
December 25	Sam Leister
January 1	Andrea Cameron

DAILY BIBLE READINGS & PRAYER FOCUS

DECEMBER 1 ISAIAH 11:1-10
FAMILIES
DECEMBER 2PSALM 72:1-7, 18-19
PEACEMAKERS IN OUR COMMUNITY
DECEMBER 3 ROMANS 15:4-13
MISSIONARIES AND EVANGELISTS
DECEMBER 4MATTHEW 3:1-12
THOSE WHO FEEL OVERWHELMED
DECEMBER 51 THESSALONIANS 4:1-12
Those struggling with eating disorders
DECEMBER 6 ROMANS 15:14-21
Children in our community
DECEMBER 7MATTHEW 12:33-37
HYMN WRITERS AND CHURCH MUSICIANS
DECEMBER 8ISAIAH 35:1-10
TRAVELERS
DECEMBER 9 PSALM 146:5-10
REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS
DECEMBER 10 JAMES 5:7-10
THOSE ENDURING A TIME OF WAITING
DECEMBER 11 MATTHEW 11:2-11
PREGNANT WOMEN AND NEWBORNS
DECEMBER 12ISAIAH 29:17-24
GOD'S PROPHETS AMONG US
DECEMBER 13 EZEKIEL 47:1-12
GODPARENTS AND GODCHILDREN
DECEMBER 14 MATTHEW 8:14-17, 28-34
THOSE CARING FOR ILL FAMILY MEMBERS
DECEMBER 15 ISAIAH 7:10-16
New Church Members
DECEMBER 16 PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19
THOSE WHO FIX, REPAIR, AND RESTORE
DECEMBER 17 ROMANS 1:1-7
WORKERS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY
DECEMBER 18 MATTHEW 1:18-25
Those wrestling with tough choices
DECEMBER 19GALATIANS 4:8-20
Those who will not be with their loved ones this Christmas
DECEMBER 20 GALATIANS 4:21-5:1
THOSE WHO MAINTAIN HOUSEHOLDS
DECEMBER 21 MATTHEW 1:1-17
THOSE WAITING TO ADOPT A CHILD
DECEMBER 22 REVELATION 22:6-7, 18-20
BIBLE TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS

DECEMBER 23 ----- GALATIANS 3:6-14 INNOCENT ONES INJURED BY VIOLENCE

DECEMBER 24 LUKE 2:1-7
THOSE FACING UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES
DECEMBER 25 LUKE 2:8-20
THOSE WHO ARE LONELY TODAY
DECEMBER 26 ACTS 6:8-7:2A, 51-60
THOSE CONDEMNED UNJUSTLY
DECEMBER 27JOHN 21:20-25
WRITERS AND STORYTELLERS
DECEMBER 28 MATTHEW 2:13-18
Relief workers serving those in peril
DECEMBER 29 PSALM 20
THOSE IN NEED OF A VICTORY OVER ADVERSITY
DECEMBER 30 2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18
THOSE WHO JUDGE BY APPEARANCES
DECEMBER 31 JOHN 8:12-19
THOSE SEEKING A FRESH START

DECEMBER SERVANTS

LECTORS

18

DECEMBER 24

GREETERS

LUKE AND

- 4 Marina Holderman Stan & Missy Ehrisman11 Ron Yorks Kate & Kevin Swailes
 - Kate Swailes Jean & Garrett Berry
- 25 Jean Compton Ken & Tawny Mummah

ACOLYTES

- 4 Jace White & Tai Kepler
- 11 Harrison Mummah & Braedon Walton
- 18 Nathan Swailes & Tyler Rosenberry
- 24 Haley Mummah & Hannah Ehrisman
- 25 Garrett Berry & Caden Swailes

ALTAR GUILD

November 21 to December 4	4Diana Wise
December 5 to 11	Tawny Mummah
December 12 to 18	Christie Yorks
December 19 to 25	. Christie Holderman
December 26 to January 29.	Kay Varner

ALTAR FLOWERS

- 4 OPEN
- 11 Judy Armstrong





WELCA met on Thursday, November 10th at 7 P.M. Barb Geedey led the group in devotions on Thanksgiving and the business meeting.

Cynthia Smith presented the treasurer's report stating that as of this time she has received \$365.00 for blankets.

Barb reviewed the plans for the Thankoffering Service on Sunday and reported that this Monday, November 14th will be the knitters last meeting for this year. We will start up again on Monday, January 9th at 6:30 in the Junior Church room.

Barb reported that the Christmas Angel poster is on the bulletin board in the kitchenette upstairs. The date for the gifts to be wrapped, labeled, and brought to the church is Sunday, December 4th.

We have postponed deciding on what group/child we are going to sponsor until our January meeting.

Our December meeting will be held on Thursday, the 8th. Everyone is to bring a favorite reading, a Christmas decoration that means something to them personally, and a Christmas goodie for refreshments.

Our January meeting will be held on Thursday, the 12th with Cynthia presenting the program.

MEALS-ON-WHEELS

Individuals, church groups, or Sunday School classes who would like to contribute to the Meals-On-Wheels program, your continued support would be greatly appreciated. Contributions can be sent to:

> Juniata Meals-On-Wheels P.O. Box 251 Mifflintown, PA 17059

STORE GIFT CARDS



Giant Store Gift Cards are also now available as well as the Weis Cards to purchase from members of the Disciples Class.

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SHUT-INS

LOCUST GROVE

(69 COTTAGE DRIVE, MIFFLIN, PA 17058) Jean McNaight 190 JAM House Rd., Cottage #5 Mifflin, PA 17058

BROOKLINE MANOR & REHAB SERVICES

(2 MANOR BLVD., MIFFLINTOWN, PA 17059) Flo Beale, Sara Ann Aurand, Reba Sigler

BROOKLINE RETIREMENT VILLAGE

Jane Marhefka 92 Village Drive Mifflintown, PA 17059

BERRY'S PERSONAL CARE CENTER

(62 LEXI STREET, MIFFLINTOWN, PA 17059) Carol Simonton

NORTHRIDGE CENTER FOR ASSISTED LIVING

(99 NORTHRIDGE DR., MCALISTERVILLE, PA 17049) Dorothy Cleck Dottie Smith

HONNEMAN HOUSE

(58 HONNEMAN HOUSE DR., APT. 108, THOMPSONTOWN, PA 17094) Ruth Cisney Ray Bramm

LEHIGH CENTER

(1718 SPRING CREEK ROAD, ROOM 205B, MACUNGIE, PA 18062)

Lura Aughey

AT HOME

Fay McCormickJim Yetter38 Wagon Wheel Lane128 Manbeck DriveMifflintown, PA 17059Mifflintown, PA 17059

Kitty Walters P.O. Box 61 Port Royal, PA 17082 Craig Walker 7016 Rt. 333 Mifflintown, PA 17059

Mona Lawson 2792 William Penn Hwy. Mifflintown, PA 17059

PRAYER LIST (AS OF NOVEMBER 29TH)

Bob & Jeanette St. Clair	Rick Waller, Sr.
Avonel Waller	Jim Woltman
Bob Cameron	Michal Gayer
Josh Delancey	Letha Swab
Brady Mingle	Belva Fulton
Janie Shearer	Joan Foltz

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.

"CHRIST IN OUR HOME"

A reminder to anyone who would like a daily devotional to jump start their day. There are plenty of devotionals in "Christ in our Home," which can be picked up and are FREE.....and are located at the back of the adult Sunday school room. Get yours today!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE FOLLOWING IN THE <u>MONTH OF DECEMBER.....</u> December 4 – Jean Berry December 5 – Silas Smith December 11 – Gene Crissman December 15 – Jane McNaight Shearer December 26 – Emma Arentz

If you want to add your name to the birthday/anniversary list, or know someone you would like to acknowledge, please let Bob St. Clair know at <u>stclairb@embarqmail.com</u>.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday – 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Thursday – 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. <u>Friday – 12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.</u>

CHURCH OFFICE REQUEST

Please notify Judy in our church office for any address, email address, or phone number updates for those in our congregation, friends or families, as well as any requests for building usage. At this time of year, in particular, a lot of activities are going on, and some coordination is needed as to not "overbook" any specific areas of the church. This also goes for changes in (church) groups who meet at the church. Please contact Judy at the office at 436-6213 or at <u>messiahlutheran@pa.net</u> to share this information. **THANK YOU!**

HANGING OF THE GREENS SERVICE

The annual Hanging of The Greens Service 2016 will be held Sunday, December 4th during the morning worship time. Please come join us! This is a special service with Christmas Carols, and learning about the meaning behind our church Christmas traditions.

CANDLELIGHT AND CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

The 2016 combined Christmas Eve Service will begin at 7:30 PM. We are especially pleased to announce that beginning at



7:00 PM, a Prelude concert will feature our own Bob St. Clair with special selections on the organ! Please plan to attend this beautiful service for the whole family including music (featuring a special anthem with combined Jr. & Sr. Choir), Communion, and Candle Lighting in celebration of anticipation of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ!

POINSETTIAS

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 $6\frac{1}{2}$ " plant with 3 to 4 blooms. You may order by calling the church office at 436-6213.

DONATIONS NEEDED FOR NEW CHOIR, CRUCIFER, & ACOLYTE GOWNS

We have had our current gowns for about 15 years. They have become worn, and some have stains that can't be removed. We also need more/different sizes for the crucifers and acolytes. They will be the same style and in white, but a little lighter, cooler fabric. We already have \$1000 (from a memorial in memory of Sam Zeiders) and \$410 in congregational

giving, which still leaves us needing \$958 towards a total bill of \$2,368 for 19 gowns and 2 more rope cinctures. We will be keeping the salvageable gowns as backups as 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 thank you in advance, and appreciate any amount you feel you can contribute to this project.

MESSIAH ATTENDANCE AND OFFERINGS -OCTOBER 31 THRU NOVEMBER 27, 2016

DATE	ATTENDANCE	Total Offering	General Fund Offering	OTHER FUNDS OFFERING
October 31	59– Worship 37– S.S.	\$3,234.00	\$2,766.00	Sunday School \$68.00 Benevolence \$50.00 Building Fund \$300.00 Choir Gowns \$50.00
November 6	76– Worship 33 – S.S.	\$5,794.00	\$4,677.75	Sunday School \$67.25 Benevolence \$265.00 Building Fund \$710.00 Choir Gowns \$50.00 Jr. Church \$24.00
November 13	73 – Worship 21 – S.S.	\$2,689.00	\$2,075.00	Sunday School \$57.00 Benevolence \$125.00 Building Fund \$370.00 Choir Gowns \$10.00 Flowers \$44.00
November 20	61 – Worship 33 – S.S.	\$2,818.00	\$2,174.00	Sunday School \$94.00 Benevolence \$95.00 Building Fund \$445.00 Choir Gowns \$10.00
November 27	62 – Worship 29 – S.S.	\$1,970.00	\$1,665.00	Sunday School \$70.00 Benevolence \$70.00 Building Fund \$165.00

THE 2017 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.

THE 2017 CHURCH OFFERING ENVELOPES will available in the Adult Sunday School Room for you to pick-up soon. 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.

JUNIATA COUNTY FOOD PANTRY DECEMBER UPDATE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES!

With <u>your</u> help, by the time you read this notice we will have distributed well over 300 Thanksgiving meals to our Juniata County neighbors in need! In three weeks, we'll attempt to do it all again-for Christmas!

The Food Pantry served 334 families in October – 997 individuals. Many thanks to Bunkertown Brethren in Christ Church for providing volunteers in October.

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

CASH/CHECK DONATIONS AND LOCAL STORE GIFT CARDS ARE ALSO APPRECIATED! No More Plastic Bags, PLEASE (although we will gladly accept clean cloth bags)

PO Box 44, 114 N. Main St, Mifflintown, PA 17059 Phone: 717-436-9718 Hours: Tue 9-12 and 1-5, and Sat 9-12

Once again, our vestibule is open 24 hours a day to receive donations. Cash, checks or gift cards may be deposited in the vestibule's mail slot. *Non-perishable foods and non-food items may be dropped off at any time in our vestibule. Please deliver perishable foods only when someone is here to receive them. Thank you!

*PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE JUNIATA COUNTY FOOD PANTRY. (CONTACT PERSON: KATHY QUEITZSCH). Email: jcfoodpantry@embarqmail.com



WE WISH ALL OF YOU A CHRISTMAS FILLED WITH BLESSINGS FROM GOD AND HIS PEACE WHICH PASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING.



DECEMBER 2016 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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Thursday, December 1:	-1 p.m., Dulcimer Rehearsal
Saturday, December 3:	-9 a.m. to 9 p.m. – Fellowship Hall Reserved
Sunday, December 4:	SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT HANGING OF THE GREENS SERVICE -9:15 a.m., Sunday School & Confirmation Class -10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion (Worship Leader: Andrea Cameron)
Monday, December 5:	-8 p.m., AA meeting in Fellowship Hall
Tuesday, December 6:	-9 a.m., "The Needlers" in Fellowship Hall -6:30 p.m., 4-H Beef Club in Fellowship Hall
Wednesday, December 7:	-7 p.m., Choir Rehearsal in Rearick Room
Thursday, December 8:	-7 p.m., WELCA meeting in Youth Area.
Sunday, December 11:	THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT -9:15 a.m., Sunday School & Confirmation Class -10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion/Jr. Church (Worship Leader: Sam Leister) - 5:00 p.m. , FREE Annual Christmas Cantata at Juniata High School – "Season of Wonders" by Joseph M. Martin
Monday, December 12:	-8 p.m., AA meeting in Fellowship Hall
Tuesday, December 13:	-9 a.m., "The Needlers" in Fellowship Hall -12:00 p.m., "The Needlers" Christmas Luncheon in the Fellowship Hall
Wednesday, December 14:	-7 p.m., Choir Rehearsal in Rearick Room
Thursday, December 15:	-1 p.m., Dulcimer Rehearsal
Sunday, December 18:	FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT -9:15 a.m., Sunday School & Confirmation Class -10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion/Youth Christmas Program (Worship Leader: Stephen Rodgers)
Monday, December 19:	-8 p.m., AA meeting in Fellowship Hall
Tuesday, December 20:	-6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Juniata Valley Quilters in Fellowship Hall
Wednesday, December 21:	-7 p.m., Choir Rehearsal in Rearick Room
Saturday, December 24:	-7 p.m., Christmas Eve Prelude Service -7:30 p.m., Christmas Eve Family Service, Communion, Candlelight (Worship Leader: Andrea Cameron)
Sunday, December 25:	MERRY CHRISTMAS!! -9:15 a.m., Sunday School & Confirmation Class -10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion/Jr. Church (Worship Leader: Sam Leister)
Monday, December 26:	-8 p.m., AA meeting in Fellowship Hall
Thursday, December 29:	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
Sunday, January 1, 2017:	HAPPY NEW YEAR!! -9:15 a.m., Sunday School & Confirmation Class -10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion (Worship Leader: Andrea Cameron)
	Happy New Yeart