

“Growing God’s Kingdom”



THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 23rd, 2018

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

3 SOUTH THIRD STREET
MIFFLINTOWN, PA 17059
(717)-436-6213

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Messiah Lutheran Church

3 South Third Street
Mifflintown, PA 17059

Church Office: 717-436-6213 Email: mlchurchoffice@gmail.com

The Rev. Chris Mathiason
Stephen Rodgers
Bob. St. Clair
Andrea Cameron
Diana Wise
Hannah Ehrisman and Haley Mummah
Zeb Berry and Harrison Mummah

Interim Pastor
Lay Worship Leader
Organist
Choir Director
Altar Guild
Acolytes
Offering Ushers

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Children's Christmas Program

December 23, 2018– 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: “Fling Wide the Door”

H. Balcombe

[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 Children of God, 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 “Hail to the Lord’s Anointed” #87 Green Hymnal

* GREETING

P Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the promised gifts of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

C And also with you.

* PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

(sing only first verse of each carol.

There will be narration prior to each carol.)

Carol	“O Little Town of Bethlehem”	#41 Green Hymnal
Carol	“What Child Is This?”	#40 Green Hymnal
Carol	“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”	#60 Green Hymnal
Carol	“Away in a Manger”	#67 Green Hymnal
Carol	“Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful”	#45 Green Hymnal
Carol	“We Three Kings of Orient Are”	#646 (WOV) Blue Hymnal
Carol	“Joy to the World”	#39 Green Hymnal

“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)

Oh, come, blest day-spring, come and cheer our spirits by your advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadows put to flight.

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. (spoken)**

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. (spoken)**

* HYMN OF THE DAY "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" #315 Green Hymnal

* 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 await the coming of Christ, we pray in hope for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

P Faithful Lord, you keep your promises. Move your church to sing like Mary and rejoice like Elizabeth. Teach us to sing of your faithfulness all our days. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Ancient of Days, with joy you danced over the waters and birthed creation. Give us joy in caring for the soil beneath us, the water around us, and the sky above us. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Prince of peace, your sacrifice gives abundant life to all. Raise up leaders in every nation whose goals are health and well-being for all people and creation. Grant them wisdom and compassion to serve as you would have them serve. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Good Shepherd, you feed your flock. Fill the hungry with good things. Lift up the lowly. Accompany the refugee. Comfort the lonely. Heal the sick. Today we pray especially for our shut-ins, the sick, and those who may be grieving who are in our hearts and minds listed here: Kitty Walters, Jane Marhefka, Ruth Cisney, Ray Bramm, Dottie Smith, Dorothy Cleck, Carol Simonton, Mona Lawson, and Jim Yetter. And for Bob & Jeanette St. Clair, Jim Woltman, Bob & Andrea Cameron, Mary Ernest, John Miller, Joan Fulkroad, Don Clark, Butch & Sandy Pines, Joyce Bradley, Minnie Minick, Austin Parker, Terry Coder, Barbara Wengerd, Rich Walters, Mary Sanders, Jane Ann Baney, Donna Barton, Carolina Rubio, Josh Hohol, Noel Peachey, Shirley Miller, Elienai Ramirez, Larry Miller, Jamie Miller, Ed Fraker, Ben & Dorothy Towsey, Tami Metz, Dottie Wilson, Sieber Stoner, Megan Shoop, Carol Lyter, Kay Stuck, Jasmine Vazquez, Jim Minick, Bob Bell, Curt Houtz, and California Wildfire victims. Send us in haste to surround them with your love. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Love Incarnate, you are with us at the manger, on the cross, and on the resurrection road. Walk with all who live with depression, grief, or heartache in this season. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

P Gracious gifting God, we are reminded of your gifts in and for all the children of the church. In this season of gifting and giving, call on our gifts now, use us, in service of your whole church. As our Call Committee works to call a new pastor to our congregation, may your Holy Spirit lead us to discern the gifts we seek and see those gifts clearly in the candidates you may send to us. In our communications, interviews and meetings with these candidates, may we all find ourselves once again who we

surely are in Christ Jesus, stewards of your many gifts. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

P Ever-living God, you are Alpha and Omega. We thank you for all who sing now in the heavenly choir, especially those dear to us. Join our voices with theirs in praise of the Christ child. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Confident that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we bring to you these prayers and those unspoken, in the name of 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: "Be Comforted, My People" L. Smith

[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: "Come Emmanuel" by Price & Besig

* SUNG OFFERTORY "Let All Together Praise Our God" (revised wording)

Let all together praise our God Before his glorious throne;

For he will o-pen 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:

C 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

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

[“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 A-men, A-men, A-men (sung)

* CLOSING HYMN “O Little Town of Bethlehem” #41 Green Hymnal (vss. 2, 3, 4)

* DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Christ is with you.

C Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

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CHRISTMAS EVE ALTAR GUILD – Kay Varner

CHRISTMAS EVE LAY WORSHIP LEADER – Sam Leister

CHRISTMAS EVE ACOLYTES – Nick Reed and Julia Martin

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING USHERS – Gabby Reed, Olivia Mummah, Hannah Ehrisman and Braedon Walton

NEXT WEEK’S LECTOR – Diana Wise

NEXT WEEK’S ALTAR GUILD – Kay Varner

NEXT WEEK’S LAY WORSHIP LEADER – Andrea Cameron

NEXT WEEK’S ACOLYTES – Slone Smith and Olivia Mummah

NEXT WEEK’S USHERS – Hope Miller and Nick Reed

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 – Charlotte Perkins Gilman, American writer and Social Reformer (1860 – 1935): Eternity is not something that begins after you are dead. It is going on all the time. We are in it now.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

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 the church office at 436-6213 or mlchurchoffice@gmail.com. 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.

PRAYER CHAIN – If you wish to be included on the email recipient list for the Messiah Prayer Chain, please send an email to Sam Leister at sleister@gmail.com.

PLEASE NOTIFY THE CHURCH OFFICE for any change in addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, or for any requests for building usage. 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 mlchurchoffice@gmail.com for any changes or requests.

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.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATES NEEDED – Two members of Messiah are needed to attend the annual Synod Assembly in June 2019 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 Sam Leister or the church office.

THE FIRST EVER SUMMER BROCHURE RELEASE PARTY will be held at Camp Mount Luther on Sunday, December 30, 2018 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the Evergreen Center. All campers and friends, parents, Alumni staff and pastors are invited to attend. There will be crafts, games, food and singing plus details about the 2019 Summer Camp schedule and theme. The annual Camperson (a liaison between camp and your congregation) Meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. Mark the date on your calendars and plan to attend! For more information, a poster about the event is on the bulletin board in the Kitchenette.

THE NEW FLOWER CHART FOR 2019 is now available in the Adult Sunday School Room. If you wish to place flowers on a specific date, please sign-up on the chart.

THE 2019 CHURCH OFFERING ENVELOPES are now available to pick up in the Library. Anyone who would like a statement of their contributions for 2018 for tax purposes may call the church office and your statement will be mailed to you.

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.

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.”

COPIES OF OCTOBER 28, 2018 PPC MINUTES are available in the Adult Sunday School Room.

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

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.

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.

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.

WEEKLY FINANCIAL REPORT FOR DECEMBER 16, 2018

Attendance

Worship Service – 68
Sunday School - 28
Total Offering \$4,564.65
Other Funds \$2,062.65
General Fund \$2,502.00

Other Funds

Benevolence -	\$	695.00
Building Fund -	\$	755.00
Sunday School -	\$	34.85
Flowers/Poinsettias -	\$	7.80
Youth -	\$	20.00
Matthew 25 Fund -	\$	<u>550.00</u>
Total	\$	2,062.65

THANK YOU TO MESSIAH LUTHERAN again this year for your generosity. We were able to help 163 children from 50 families have a Merry Christmas. Thanks to all who helped with this project.

God Bless,
Ted, Nicole, Garrett & Marley Wilson

TOMORROW, Monday, December 24th – Christmas Eve Prelude Service at 7:00 p.m. by pianist Justin Aurand of Selinsgrove, followed by the annual Christmas Eve Candlelight and Communion service at 7:30 p.m. with Lay Worship Leader Sam Leister at the pulpit and featuring both our junior and senior choirs. (The service will also be broadcast live on JuniataCountyRadio.com and rebroadcast at their convenience).

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 WOMEN OF ELCA MEETING will be on Thursday, January 10, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Youth Area. Ann Beaver will have the program. All women are invited to attend.

COMMUNITY

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS FOR JANUARY:

ALL-NON-PERISHABLE FOODS, TISSUES, TOILET PAPER, ANY HOUSEHOLD CLEANING ITEMS, OVER-THE-COUNTER PAIN, COLD AND FLU MEDICINES, COUGH DROPS, VICKS VAPO RUB. WE ALSO GLADLY ACCEPT DONATIONS OF CASH AND GIFT CARDS TO PURCHASE THESE SUPPLIES.

THIS WEEK AT MESSIAH

Today: -Fourth Sunday of Advent.
-9:15 a.m., Sunday School/Catechetical Class.
-10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion/Children's Christmas Program. (Worship Leader: Stephen Rodgers).

Monday: -7:00 p.m., Christmas Eve Prelude Concert with Justin Aurand, pianist.
-7:30 p.m., Christmas Eve Service of Carols, Communion, and Candlelight.

Tuesday: -HAVE A BLESSED AND MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Friday: -NEWSLETTER DEDLINE.

Sunday: -First Sunday of Christmas/Healing Service.
-Food Pantry Sunday.
-9:15 a.m., Sunday School/Catechetical Class.
-10:30 a.m., Worship/Communion/Junior Church. (Lay Worship Leader: Andrea Cameron).