



# the Voice parish newsletter



*Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. –Matthew 2:11*

Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany are in view. We look forward to these celebrations. In Advent, we anticipate; when Christmas arrives, we celebrate. Epiphany centers on the Wise Men bearing gifts and the news of Christ's love for the world. We will worship at 8:30 AM and 10:00 AM on the Sundays of Advent (December 1, 8, 15, 22). On Christmas Eve (December 24), there will be three liturgies: 5:30 PM (for children and families); 7:30 PM (with the Voice Choir); and 10:00 PM (with members of the Voice Choir). Advent Mid-Week devotions will be offered virtually this year on three Wednesdays (December 4, 11, 18). They will be posted on our Facebook page and You Tube channel at 7:30 PM on these nights.

Our Advent Mid-Week devotions will focus on stewardship. Resources, received through the Stewardship for Life Institute on our Gettysburg seminary campus and generously provided through the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod Stewardship Ministry, will be used. The Wednesday devotion broadcast schedule is as follows...

<b>December 4 (7:30 PM)</b>	<b>A Gift for a King (Matthew 2:11)</b>
<b>December 11 (7:30 PM)</b>	<b>The Gift of Light (Isaiah 60:1-2)</b>
<b>December 18 (7:30 PM)</b>	<b>God's Gift of Creation (Matthew 2:1-2)</b>

Advent is a season of hope; Christmas, a time of joy. Epiphany is a grand announcement that Christ came into the world to save everyone. As we wait for Christmas and Jesus' Second Coming, let us make the effort to be present in worship, attuned to our calling from God to be stewards of the gospel and of all that we've received in life.

Advent means 'coming' or 'arrival' and its theme is hope. Christmas will soon be here, God arriving in the flesh, a newborn. Mark your calendars and be present in worship during Advent and at Christmas. Join the church on Wednesday nights in Advent for the mid-week virtual devotions. A blessed Advent, Merry Christmas, and joyous Epiphany to all!

Peace in Christ,  
Pastor Doug Heagy



**December, 2024**

**Mt. Lebanon United Lutheran Church**  
975 Washington Road Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania 15228



# FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

## Advent: Preparing for the Light

*By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*

—Luke 1:78-79

You need only watch the news to know that we are, indeed, a people who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Ignorance, hatred, politics, war, famine, greed, crime, apathy – all of these are rampant. We need the light of the dawn from on high to break upon us. We need to be guided in the way of peace.

Our primary stewardship responsibility is to live in such a way that our hearts, minds and spirits are aligned with God's purposes. How else can we become the people God wants us to be? For centuries, Advent was a time for Christian reflection and soul-searching; of asking God to show us anew what areas of our lives are still in darkness and in need of God's light.

Read the above passage from Luke 1, which captures the essence of Advent. Read it again, but slowly, as you would savor a fine chocolate with complex sweetness and luxurious texture. Go ahead. What new meanings do you discern? What nuances?

The four weeks of Advent help bring us into the proper spirit to receive "the dawn from on high" that will "give light" to us who sit in darkness. Advent worship is rich in symbolism.

**The colors in church are deep blue, the color of the sky before dawn, when it is no longer night but not quite morning.**

**With its five candles, the Advent wreath provides a visual representation of the gathering dawn. We light one candle the first week of Advent, two the second week, three the third, and four the fourth. At Christmas, we light all five because the dawn of Christ has come.**

Each candle and each week of Advent has a theme. Each expresses the gifts of God we have in the miracle of Christmas. Make this Advent a time for prayer, devotion, meditation and focus on the light of Christ, which is coming anew into your heart – and the world! May it dispel all our darkness!

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# MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

## JEREMIAH

7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

This **8-session** course explores selected passages from Jeremiah and one from the book of Lamentations.

1. Has God Called Me? (Jeremiah 1:1-19)
2. Why Has God Done All These Things to Us? (Jeremiah 5:1-31)
3. Where Is the Disconnect? (Jeremiah 7:1-8:3)
4. What Makes God Cry? (Jeremiah 8:14-9:1)
5. Can God Love Rags? (Jeremiah 13: 1-14)
6. How Certain Is Our Future? (Jeremiah 31: 27-40)
7. Can You Imagine a Different World? (Jeremiah 31:27-40)
8. Will God Turn to Save Us? (Lamentations 3:1-39)

*Each participant will receive a learner's guidebook for personal use. Bibles will be provided or bring your own. Led by Pastor Heagy, we will discuss key passages from the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations. All are welcome. This study group continues through December and will conclude in January.*



# THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

## THE BOOK OF ACTS

10:00 am- 11:00 am

**This 8-session course explores selected passages from Acts.**

- 1. The Spirit Creates Community (Acts 2:1-47)**
- 2. The Empowering Spirit (Acts 4:1-37)**
- 3. The Spirit on the Margins (Acts 8:1-40)**
- 4. The Conversion of Peter (Acts 10:1-48)**
- 5. World Upside Down (Acts 17:1-34)**
- 6. A Riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-41)**
- 7. On Trial for the Resurrection (Acts 24:1-27)**
- 8. And So We Came to Rome (Acts 28:1-31)**

*Each participant will receive a learner's guidebook for personal use. Bibles will be provided or bring your own. Led by Pastor Heagy, we will discuss key passages from the book of Acts. All are welcome. This study group continue through December and will conclude in January.*





## Musical Musings

December, 2024



### *Veni, veni Emmanuel* (O come, O come, Emmanuel)

This venerable Advent hymn has its origins in the Middle Ages. In monasteries as early as the ninth century, the seven “O” antiphons were sung beginning eight days before Christmas. In our hymnal (Hymn # 257), the December dates to sing each antiphon appear at the bottom of the page. Each stanza of this hymn is a pleading prayer for the Second Coming of Christ. We call on Jesus to return; to usher in the life that truly is life.

Various names for the Messiah are used in each stanza to express the fulfillment that Christ brings. The plainsong melody is often sung by a soloist or choir with the congregation joining at the refrain with the word “Rejoice!” In our church, however, the choir and congregation sing two stanzas in unison each Sunday while Advent candles are lit. This hymn helps us prepare for Christmas and heaven, giving us yearning words and a tune that remind us this world is not our true home. We live here temporarily. Join us for the Sundays of Advent this year and sing this hymn as a prayer to God. *Veni, veni Emmanuel* was composed long ago to be sung as prayer during Advent.



### SERVER SCHEDULE —December, 2024



If you cannot serve as scheduled, please switch with another server.  
If you cannot get a substitute please call the church office or Pastor Doug.

	8:30 am	10:00 am
December 1 Crucifer	Easton Darcy	Nico Provins
December 8 Crucifer	Henry Keplar	Jack O'Brien
December 15 Crucifer	Isla Gentzel	Luke Frankovich
December 22 Crucifer	Ewan Keplar	Dylan Solomon
December 29	Chase Lutz	Ella Mayer
	<u>5:00 pm</u>	<u>7:30 pm</u> <u>10:00 pm</u>
December 24— Christmas Eve	Milo Bucher	Xavier Graybill      TBD
December 25— Christmas Day	10:30 AM - TBD	



The worship links to Facebook & You Tube can be found on our website:

[www.mtlebanonlutheran.org](http://www.mtlebanonlutheran.org)



## **Sunday's 8:30 AM & 10:00 AM**

*Virtual Worship 8:30 AM Facebook LIVE*

*Posted later on our YouTube channel*

## **THE WORD of the LORD**

December 1	Advent I
Jeremiah 33:14-16	
Psalm 25:1-10	
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13	
Luke 21:25-36	
December 8	Advent II
Malachi 3:1-4	
Luke 1:68-79	
Philippians 1:3-11	
Luke 3:1-6	
December 15	Advent III
Zephaniah 3:14-20	
Isaiah 12:2-6	
Philippians 4:4-7	
Luke 3:7-18	
December 22	Advent IV
Micah 5:2-5a	
Psalm 80:1-7	
Hebrews 10:5-10	
Luke 1:39-45	
December 29	First Sunday of Christmas
1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26	
Psalm 148	
Colossians 3:12-17	
Luke 2:41-52	
December 24	Christmas Eve
Isaiah 9:2-7	
Psalm 96	
Titus 2:11-14	
Saint Luke 2:1-20	
December 25	Christmas Day
Isaiah 62:6-12	
Psalm 97	
Titus 3:4-7	
Saint Luke 2:1-20	

## **DECEMBER WORSHIP NEWS**

*Prepare for Christmas by joining in the  
Advent Mid-Week Virtual Devotions  
on the following Wednesdays (posted on our Facebook  
page and You Tube channel at 7:30 PM)*

Wednesday, December 4

Wednesday, December 11

Wednesday, December 18



## **2024 Advent Wreath Candle Lighters**

*Thanks to the following members who will light the  
candles of the sanctuary Advent Wreath at worship  
during the four week Advent season.*

### **Sunday, December 1**

8:30 AM Eric & Karen Pfeil

10:00 AM David Loboda

### **Sunday, December 8**

8:30 AM Dave & Denise Hrinak

10:00 AM The Timmons Family

### **Sunday, December 15**

8:30 AM The Ultsch Family

10:00 AM Joe, Alexandra & Genevieve Carroll

### **Sunday, December 22**

8:30 AM Michael, Brittany & Kennedy Coleman

10:00 AM Gregor, Katie & Louis Saulsbery

*The Advent wreath is a way the Church counts time  
until Christmas and the Second Advent of Jesus Christ  
on the Last Day.*





## WE REMEMBER in our prayers:

**Great God, our healer, by your power, the Lord Jesus healed the sick and gave hope to the hopeless. As we pray, look upon us with mercy and bless us with your healing Spirit. Bring comfort in the midst of pain, strength to transform weakness, and light to illuminate darkness. We pray for our family members and friends, asking in the name of the crucified Lord Jesus that restoration and wholeness may come to:**

Craig Elias; Linda Larkin; Bill Young; Bishop George Bashore

*NOTE: Please contact the church office if there are any changes for the prayer list. Names will remain on the prayer list for **one month**. If a person is to remain on the prayer list or to be added, just call the church office and let us know.*

**NEWSLETTER ARTICLES** for the January issue of the *Voice* are to be submitted by Sunday, December 15th. Articles may be left in the church office or email: [mtleboluth@aol.com](mailto:mtleboluth@aol.com).

### *You're Invited...To the Sunday Morning Fellowship*

Each Sunday worshippers have the opportunity to greet one another and welcome visitors at our: **Sunday Morning Fellowship** in the Foyer. Join us in between the early and late Liturgies to share greetings and conversations with friends and visitors. Refreshments are available for all.

The Sunday Morning Fellowship also provides opportunities to volunteer:

\*Sponsor the Coffee Project of Lutheran World Relief, helping small growers, their families and communities through the fair trade of coffee.

\*Volunteer to set up and clean the Fellowship refreshments table. It's easy to do and a member of the Hospitality Committee will show you how. Also, written instructions are available.

\*Provide sweet (or healthy) treats for all to enjoy. (Gluten free and nut free treats are also welcomed)

If you'd like to help you can sign up for 2025— the sign up sheet is located in the foyer, or contact the church office.

## Offering Envelopes and Stewardship.....

The 2025 Offering Envelopes are now available. They are available in the Narthex. Or call the office to schedule a pick up time. Time and Talent Sheets and giving cards can be mailed to the church office. All financial information provided to the financial secretary will be kept confidential. The third quarter giving statements have been mailed. If you notice any discrepancies, please contact Allan Copenheaver, Financial Secretary - [allancope@yahoo.com](mailto:allancope@yahoo.com).

**GLOBAL LINKS**  
*Sharing Surplus. Saving Lives.*

**Global Links**—Wednesday, December 11 at 1-3:00 pm.

Please sign up in the Narthex—or call the church office to RSVP.

## 2024 Thanksgiving Basket Project

Thanks to everyone for your generous donations and support for the Annual Thanksgiving Basket Project. This year's project served 25 families using St. Michaels & Dormont Pantries. Each family received a tote bag with a Giant Eagle gift card, non-perishable food items, and crafts made by our Sunday School children. Much appreciation to those who attended November 3rd event to assemble bags. Thanks to Pastor Doug Heagy, Kris Malia, MB Trivilino, Dave Hazlett, Vedette, Eric Henry & Ewan Keplar, Debbie Lutz, and Sara Dougherty. Special Thanks to our Sunday School children who helped Sundays at the Giving Market. We would also like to recognize Thrivent for providing a grant to supplement the food and supplies for the project and Congregational event.

Giving Market Helpers: Grant Kegel, Samantha Croom, Edith Koval, Leo Bucher, Kyle Timmons, Madelyn Nichols, Annabelle Kegel, and Liliana Croom.

Yours in Christ,  
Deb Hazlett



### Welcome to the Lord's Family!

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered during the 10:00 liturgy on November 10, 2024.

We rejoice with the family of Genevieve Grace Carroll. Genevieve is the daughter of Joseph & Alexandra Carroll, and was born September 7, 2024.

**Sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the Cross of Christ forever, may Louis know God's love, sense the Father's purpose for him and mature into a disciple of our Lord Jesus.**

### Welcome to the Lord's Family!

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism was administered during the 10:00 liturgy today.

We rejoice with the family of Louis Thomas Saulsbery. Louis is the son of Gregor & Katie Saulsbery, and was born August 1, 2024.

**Sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the Cross of Christ forever, may Louis know God's love, sense the Father's purpose for him and mature into a disciple of our Lord Jesus.**

### Dr. George Schein II



May 12, 1940

November 9, 2024

It has pleased Almighty God to call unto himself his faithful servant, Dr. George Schein II, at the age of 84. Dr. Schein was the beloved husband of the late Diana Schein, and survived by his sister Britta and many adoring family members.

The funeral was held at our church Tuesday, November 19th at 11:00 AM. Internment was private.

*Our congregational family continues to remember Dr. Schein's family in prayer.*

### Welcome New Members....



On Christ the King Sunday, November 24, new members were received into our congregational family. Please welcome Gregor, Katie & Louis Saulsbery. Be sure to introduce yourself and greet them at the worship services.



**Youth Group Meeting:**  
**December 15th 4-6:00 pm**  
**We will meet in the**  
**Youth Room.**  
**See you there!**



### Holiday Baking Items Drive for Dormont Free Pantry



We will be helping Dormont Free Pantry with a **"baking items drive"** this month. If you would like to participate, please bring nonperishable baking donations to the Narthex by Sunday, December 15. Items you might donate include flour, sugar, salt, baking soda, brown sugar, vanilla, chocolate chips, baking powder, food coloring, sprinkles....there are too many to list!

Thank you for remembering those in need during this holiday season.







## Angel Tree for Glade Run Foundation



Each year, Glade Run Lutheran Services (Glade Run) provides life changing services to over 4,000 individuals throughout Western PA. Children, adults and families being served by Glade Run often have many challenges in addition to mental and behavioral health issues and autism. During this special time of year, Glade Run is grateful that we can help secure not only gifts for the youth but also the basic necessities and tools that make a difference in the lives of those in their care. Our gifts will support the children and families who would otherwise do without. More than just a present under the tree, donated items received through the annual drive provide joy, relief and comfort all throughout the year — well beyond Christmastime. Some gift requests may seem strange but all are incredibly needed and will mean so much to the youth and their families.

*We will once again be participating in the Angel Tree project supporting our friends at Glade Run Foundation in Zelienople, PA. The Angel Tree will be set up in the narthex starting Sunday, December 1-the first week of Advent . We will have 75 tags to choose from plus there will also be the on-line version available again this year. As always, the need is great and all our support is truly appreciated.*

*All gifts need to be returned UNWRAPPED under the tree in the narthex by Sunday, December 15 as they will be delivered to Glade Run the next day.*

\*\*\*If you prefer to shop on-line and send the gifts directly to Glade Run, follow the links below. This is a type of registry program where you pick the gift from their list, purchase it and it will ship directly to Glade Run. This was very successful last year so Glade Run is repeating it again this year.



Continued...

To purchase gifts on line: Shop our Wish List on Amazon or Walmart & Ship Directly to Glade Run

Amazon — Visit [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com)

Sign into your account.

Under Accounts & Lists, scroll down to AmazonSmile Charity Lists, in the Search Bar, type in “Glade Run Lutheran Services” and then choose “Glade Run Holiday Drive” and start shopping!

Walmart — Visit <https://rb.gy/kbqevk>

Sign into your account and shop.

*Also, if you would rather, Glade Run is always in need of gift cards and those can be brought to the church and I will deliver them with the gifts.*

Suggested gift cards: Walmart, Target, Giant Eagle, Aldi, Amazon, Dollar Tree, Dollar General, The Home Depot, Lowes, Sheetz, Walgreens, Dick’s Sporting Goods

Any questions, contact Sara Dougherty 412-523-1499 or [tjdsjd@verizon.net](mailto:tjdsjd@verizon.net)

## The History of the Angel Tree



Along with the familiar Red Kettles, the Angel Tree program is one of the highest profile Christmas efforts each year. Angel Tree was created in 1979 by Charles and Shirley White when they worked with a Lynchburg, Virginia shopping mall to provide clothing and toys for children at Christmas time.

The program got its name because the Whites identified the wishes of children by writing their gift needs on greeting cards featuring pictures of angels and placing them on a Christmas Tree at the mall. Thanks to the Whites, 700 children had a bright Christmas that first year.

Three years later, when the Whites moved to Nashville, Tennessee, Angel Tree was launched in Music City during the 1982 Christmas season. WSM radio, which airs the Grand Ole Opry, came on board that year as the first Angel Tree co-sponsor in the U.S.

Because of the on-air promotion on WSM in Nashville, as well as national publicity on other networks, Angel Tree spread across the country. Since that time, the program has grown to be a yearly holiday tradition in many churches.

# ONLINE GIVING

*Is now available in association with*



[www.mtlebanonlutheran.org](http://www.mtlebanonlutheran.org)

## WHAT IS myEoffering?

myEoffering is a service we've teamed up with to give you the ability to send your offerings online in the same way that many of you already pay bills and purchase products. We chose to use myEoffering because they are part of a trusted, Christian family-owned company, who have been serving the needs of churches for nearly 100 years. Their product is solid, secure, easy, and convenient.

## WHY SHOULD I USE myEoffering?

Many of you already pay for most of your purchases electronically, whether online or with a credit or debit card. So we have decided to offer this service as a convenience to you - you can stop writing checks or having to remember to bring cash every Sunday. Simply log in to our service and set up your offering. You can set the donations to match your pay periods, and even send your one-time donations to the special offerings we may have from time-to-time. This new service allows you to give any amount, at any time, from home or on the road, with your computer or even your mobile device. Now you can control how and when you give your tithes.

## HOW DOES IT HELP?

Online giving is the future. In the lifetime of our young people, we will see electronic payments overshadow traditional methods of paper payments. In order to position ourselves to continue doing the work of God in the future and to make it as convenient as possible to be a cheerful giver to God's work, we have decided to offer online giving to you. In addition to easier access to giving and more engagement with young stewards, online offering has many benefits for the church. It allows us to more easily track contributions for budgeting. It saves us from manually tracking those contributions every week. It saves us from large fees on check processing and allows us to more accurately forecast expenditures and needs.

## HOW DO I SIGN UP?

Signing up is as simple as going to our church website listed above and look for the green computer mouse icon. That button will take you to the myEoffering page for our church. Simply sign up and begin giving online today! Or scan the code to the right with your mobile device to get started now.



SCAN THIS  
CODE WITH  
YOUR MOBILE  
DEVICE NOW



## Tax Reform Act May Make QCD's More Appealing

Several years ago, Qualified Charitable Distributions became an option for IRA holders, who are at least 70 ½, to donate directly to qualified charities. This has several possible good tax outcomes for the IRA holder. In cases where the taxpayer is taking the standard deduction, direct contribution will keep the IRA distribution out of taxable income, lowering taxes if you do not itemize. This also reduces Adjusted Gross Income that may reduce taxes on Social Security benefits and may reduce the taxpayer's Medicare premiums.

While nothing changed in 2023 as far as these rules, the near doubling of the standard deduction makes it more likely that taxpayer's will be taking the standard deduction. Taking an IRA distribution that goes into taxable income may not be offset by an itemized deduction for charitable contributions, increasing taxes. In short, contributions to MLULC (or other charities) may be more tax effective if donated directly from an IRA to the charity rather than being distributed to the taxpayer and then contributed to the charity. "Qualified charitable distributions count towards your required minimum distribution, if you have one this year."

If this is of possible interest to you, please contact me. I can explain further and give you account information for our brokerage account that can accept QCD's.

Dave Lendt, Treasurer

You are cordially invited to the  
Annual Advent Pageant & Congregational Lunch  
Sunday, December 8, 2024, at 11:15 am

On stage in the Social Hall:

**"Destination Bethlehem" by Steve Trott**



**Take a Road Trip filled with Christmas journeys.**  
*Lunch after performance for participants and attendees.*  
*Please bring a dessert for Grandma's Sweet Shop Table.*

**Don't miss out on this family adventure!**  
Sign-Up in the Narthex or email the Church Office  
at [mtleboluth@aol.com](mailto:mtleboluth@aol.com) or call the office at **412-563-0300**  
by December 1.

*Volunteers needed after lunch to help with clean-up.*



## **Last Call for Volunteers!**

### **Annual Advent Pageant "Destination Bethlehem"**

**Sunday, December 8, 2024, after Late Liturgy  
Pageant at 11:15, followed by Lunch**

#### **Calendar Dates and Times**

**Saturday Rehearsal: December 7  
9:30-11:00 am**

**Sunday School Rehearsal: December 8  
9:30 – 11:00 am**

**To participate or help please contact: [MBTrivilino@verizon.net](mailto:MBTrivilino@verizon.net)**

#### **Thanks to:**

**Julia Nelson** (Director and Set Design)  
**Mary Beth Trivilino** (Script editing and Casting)  
**Carol Vogeley and Barb Heagy** (Music)  
**Melodie Frankovitch** (Publicity and Decorations)

**Volunteers are needed to help with the Luncheon set up on  
Saturday December 7th at 11:00 AM  
Help is also needed with serving and clean up on December 8th.**



**Annual Advent Pageant and Lunch**  
**"Destination Bethlehem"**

**Sunday, December 8 at 11:15 am, Social Hall**

**Lunch menu includes:**  
**pulled pork sandwiches, macaroni and cheese, salad**  
\*\*\*\*\*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Number Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Adults \_\_\_\_\_ Children

I/We will bring a dessert: yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

**Hot and cold drinks will be provided.**

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**Please RSVP by December 1 in one of the following ways:**

Sign-up in the Narthex

Email the Church Office at [mtleboluth@aol.com](mailto:mtleboluth@aol.com)

Call the office at 412-563-0300



## *Special Holiday Coffee Hour*

**Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, in the Foyer**  
**Coffee, Cupcakes**



**...and Creches**

**Browse a display of creches in the café**  
**while enjoying a treat.**



## Advent Devotionals for all Ages

**Advent Devotions are available in the Narthex.**

Adults have 4 choices:

***O Come O Come Emmanuel*** offers quiet moments of encouragement inspired by Scripture and the insights of Henri Nouwen.

***A Season of Peace*** Advent Devotions for Seniors are appropriate for adults of all ages that appreciate **Large Print**. They highlight the message of having peace in the Lord always, and to share with younger generations the reason for our peace— Jesus.

***Let Your Light Shine*** is a pocket-size booklet for those on the go. It offers daily prayers to look to Jesus, the Light of the Word, to overcome darkness with peace, hope, joy, and love.

***Just Add Jesus: Reflections, Remembrance and Recipes for Holiday Gatherings.*** These help us remember that Jesus make each gathering special and always has a special place at our table.

For families with children, ***Time for a Savior*** includes daily devotions that remind children of the good news of God's Son is delivered to us right on time. These were distributed in Sunday School rehearsals and are also in the Narthex.

For Youth, ***Lighten Up for Advent*** offers a Daily Devotions for Teens and Young adults that are based on the four Advent Candles and the message each one share. These were distributed in Catechetics and Youth Group, and included in care packages to college students. Please email the Church office with your college student's mailing address.

**PLEASE JOIN US ON SATURDAY,  
DECEMBER 21, AT 10:00 AM TO  
HELP DECORATE THE SANCTUARY  
FOR CHRISTMAS. INDIVIDUALS,  
FAMILIES AND CHILDREN ARE  
WELCOME!**



## The Jesse Tree of Advent

Just as the Christmas Season has its own special tree, so Advent has its special tree: the Jesse Tree. It is in a prominent place in our Narthex so it can be seen up close.

It is a bare, and not particularly attractive tree, because in Advent, we are reminded of the incompleteness of the fulfillment of God's promises in the Old Testament.

In Advent, we wait for their fulfillment. Many of our Advent hymns, include the favorite "Oh, Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel," speak of the "strong branch of Jesse."

*But who is this Jesse of whom Jesus is called the "Branch" and whose name is given to the Advent tree?*

Jesse was the father of King David. The Gospel of Saint Matthew begins with the words "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David." The Gospel of Saint Luke is also careful to establish that Joseph was of the "house and lineage of David" and it was for that reason that he went to Bethlehem, the city of David, for the census. It was there, of course, that Jesus was born.

Since Jesse was David's father, Jesus was also a descendent of Jesse. He was the "Branch" or "Rod" which grew from the stump of Jesse. So the Jesse Tree is a kind of family tree of Jesus, which gives all of our congregational family an opportunity to appreciate the mighty acts of God in preparation for the fulfillment of the prophetic promise in the birth of Jesus.

The decorations on the Jesse Tree, which have been made by the children of our Sunday School, symbolize the important people, and events of the Old Testament leading toward the birth of Jesus. They include a globe symbolizing creation, the serpent and an apple from the Garden of Eden, the ark which Noah built and the rainbow sent by God, the flaming torch and burning firepot, the lamb and the blade from the near-sacrifice of Isaac, Jacob's ladder, Joseph's coat of many colors, the burning bush through which God spoke to Moses, and the lamp of Samuel.

Please take time this Advent to look closely at the Jesse Tree in the Narthex and remember our loving God's work to redeem His creation.



## Christmas Poinsettias and Fine Arts Fund Donations



The beautiful poinsettias which adorn our Sanctuary for the celebration of the Holy Nativity of our Lord [Christmas] and the Epiphany of our Lord [the arrival of the Magi at the birthplace of Jesus] as well as contributions to the Fine Arts Fund, are the memorial and honor gifts of our congregational family. \*

You are invited to participate by contributing a poinsettia[s] or to the Fine Arts Fund by placing the form below in the offering plate, or by mailing to the Church Office *to arrive no later than Sunday, December 1st.*

Poinsettia Plants  
Fine Arts Fund

Acknowledgements will be made as desired in an insert to the worship bulletins for Christmas Eve/Day and on the Festival of the Epiphany of our Lord.

We will be decorating our Sanctuary on Saturday December 21st at 10:00 am. All are welcome.

*\* Artificial trees are the generous gift from the Seiler family, and artificial wreaths were purchased from last year's donations.*

## ALTAR FLOWER CHARTS

**Altar Flower and Bulletin Reservation Charts** for the Year 2025 are available in the Narthex. *If you have a particular Sunday or Festival Day on which you wish to reserve Altar Flowers or bulletins, please **reserve early** to avoid disappointment. You can also call the church office to be placed on the chart.*

The cost of donating is \$30.00 per vase of Altar Flowers, or \$25.00 per Sunday or Festival Day for worship bulletins.

- *No reminder notices are sent* and so you must be responsible for paying for the items you reserve.
  - If both vases are already taken for the Sunday you would have preferred, please find another date. [Do not simply add your name to a name already there.]
- Call the Church Office by Tuesday with the exact wording you prefer for the acknowledgment.



I/We wish to donate:

# Christmas



### Quantity

# \_\_\_\_\_ Poinsettia[s] 6" pot \$10.00 each (*Choose color: red—white—pink*)

# \_\_\_\_\_ Poinsettia[s] 8" pot (*comes with 3 plants with tricolor mix*) \$23.00

# \_\_\_\_\_ Poinsettia[s] 8" pot (*comes with 4 plants-red/white mix*) \$26.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Fine Arts Fund for Christmas Music \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donor: \_\_\_\_\_

Acknowledgement: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





I would like you to consider participating in a our online giving designed to simplify weekly giving in our congregation.

Electronic giving will enable every household or individual to make their church offering using electronic funds transfer or credit card. You may already be using online bill pay for your mortgage, car payment, or insurance premium through an automatic withdrawal from your checking or savings account. Many of you also have used your credit cards to purchase goods online through Amazon, eBay, or a number of other sites.

We have teamed up with myEoffering to enable you to use the same process to give your offering electronically from your bank account, credit or debit cards.

There is no cost to you for this new giving option. If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. And when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, this program will allow your weekly offerings to continue uninterrupted.

You can participate in the electronic giving program immediately. Just visit our church website and look for the "Donate Now" button.

Thank you for considering this new giving opportunity.



Merry Christmas  
& a very Blessed  
New Year!

from the Staff at  
Mt. Lebanon United  
Lutheran Church



## *Blessed Christmas*

### *A Table Liturgy for the Feast of the Holy Nativity of Our Lord*



**Speaker 1:** Blessed are You, Lord our God, who has gathered us together at this our Christmas feasting table.

**Speaker 2:** As we light our candles on the feast of light, may the eternal light of God that shines with splendor in the stars shine upon our table and fill our home.

**All:** May the Spirit of God that shone in the star of Bethlehem surround our table and fill our food and our hearts with its holy light.

*[The candles are lit.]*

**Speaker 1:** Let us each, on this great and holy feast of the birth of our Savior, pause now and in silence, lift up our hearts to God in gratitude.

*[Pause for silent prayer.]*

**Speaker 2:** Lord of all gifts, our home is filled with joy and great beauty on this feast of Christmas.

**Speaker 1:** We each come to this our Christmas feast with eagerness and a happy heart. As a family, we thank you for the gifts of food upon this table, mindful that You, our God, make every day of the year a Christmas wherein we are gifted by You. We thank you that we are together to share in the happiness of this holy day.

*[We thank you for the presence of our guests who by their being present in our home have added to the brightness of our celebration.]*

Lord of all gifts, Holy Father of our Savior Jesus, with fullness of heart we now ask your holy blessing upon our food, and upon our family and guests.

May your blessing be upon us all, in the name of the Father, and of the Son [+ ] and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**All:** Merry Christmas!

# December 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1 Advent 1</b> 8:30 & 10:00 Worship 8:30 Live Virtual Worship Flower Orders Due Advent Pageant RSVP Due	<b>2</b> 9:00-2:30 ESL 7:00 Bible Study	<b>3</b> 3:30 Catechetics 1	<b>4</b> 3:30 Catechetics 2	<b>5</b> 10:00 Bible Study	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 9:30 Advent Pageant Rehearsal-Social Hall 11:00 Advent Pageant Set Up
<b>8 Advent 2</b> 8:30 & 10:00 Worship 8:30 Live Virtual Worship 9:30 Pageant Rehearsal 11:10 Advent Pageant & Luncheon	<b>9</b> 9:00-2:30 ESL 7:00 Bible Study	<b>10</b> 3:30 Catechetics 1	<b>11</b> 12:30 ESL 1:00 Global Links 3:30 Catechetics 2 6:15 Midweek Devotions 7:00 Choir	<b>12</b> 10:00 Bible Study	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15 Advent 3</b> 8:30 & 10:00 Worship 8:30 Live Virtual Worship 9:30 Holiday Coffee Hour In the Foyer 10:00 Sunday School <b>ANGEL TREE GIFTS DUE</b> <b>Baking Items Drive Due</b>	<b>16</b> 9:00-2:30 ESL 7:00 Bible Study	<b>17</b> 3:30 Catechetics 1	<b>18</b> 12:30 ESL 3:30 Catechetics 2 6:15 Midweek Devotions 7:00 Choir	<b>19</b> 10:00 Bible Study	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 10:00 Sanctuary Tree Decorating
<b>22 Advent 4</b> 8:30 & 10:00 Worship 8:30 Live Virtual Worship 10:00 Sunday School	<b>23</b> 9:00-2:30 ESL	<b>24 Christmas Eve</b> <b>5:00 Worship</b> <b>7:30 Worship</b> <b>10:00 Worship</b>	<b>25 Christmas Day</b> <b>10:30 Worship</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29 Christmas 1</b> 8:30 & 10:00 Worship 8:30 Live Virtual Worship	<b>30</b> 9:00-2:30 ESL	<b>31</b>				

# *December 25*

## *Happy Birthday Jesus*

*To you is born this day in the city of David  
a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.*

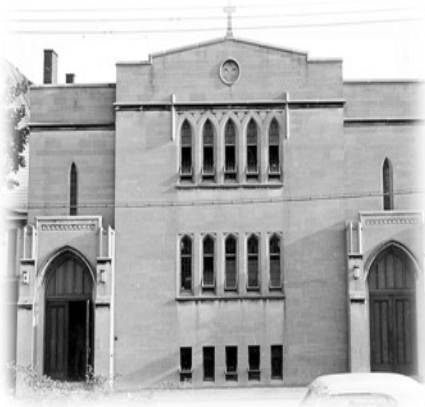
*Luke 2:11*



# 2025 Marks Our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

2025 will be a year to celebrate our past and look to the future as we continue to worship and serve the Lord. As announced at the 2024 Congregational Annual Meeting, Mt. Lebanon Lutheran Church will commemorate our first 100 years in the community and continue our Christian mission and Lutheran tradition for centuries to come.

Be on the lookout in 2025 for historical information, expanded programs, and some “signature” events for the entire congregation. 2025 will be a year to remember!



**LEFT:** Our original church home on Washington Road and Academy Avenue. (Photo courtesy of the Mt. Lebanon Historical Society)



**RIGHT:** We moved to our current location in 1954. Construction of the worship space was completed in 1957.

Our 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary activities are being planned by various Committees of the Congregational Council and the 100<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary Committee. Please contact the Church Office or 100<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary Committee Chair Alan Trivilino ([alantrivilino@yahoo.com](mailto:alantrivilino@yahoo.com)) if you would like to volunteer. All are welcome! All skills are welcomed and needed. These include archivists, hospitality, and more!



## Mt. Lebanon United Lutheran Church

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**The Reverend Elizabeth A. Eaton**

Presiding Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**The Reverend Kurt Kusserow**

Bishop

Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod

**The Reverend Douglas M. Heagy**

Senior Pastor

**Dr. Christopher Keenan, DMA**

Director of Music and Organist

**Mr. Larry Allen**

Director of Music and Organist Emeritus

**Mrs. Kris Malia**

Parish Secretary



## **Festive Worship Celebration of The Nativity of our Lord Candlelight Worship Liturgies Christmas Eve – December 24 5:00 PM, 7:30 PM and 10:00 PM**

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**Festive Worship for Christmas Day (December 25) — 10:30 AM**

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**Festive Worship for the Epiphany of our Lord**

**Sunday, January 5 at 8:30 AM and 10:00 AM**

*Commemorating the arrival of the Magi at the birthplace of Jesus.*

(Note: We're celebrating Epiphany early! January 6 is the traditional Epiphany date)

