

THE PARK BENCH

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11

Advent is a time of expectant waiting and preparation. We are waiting and preparing for the celebration of Christ's birth that occurred over 2,000 years ago. How wonderful is the anticipation and the preparation! For four weeks, our Sunday worship services will include a reflection that emphasizes the four traditional themes of Advent: Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy. As part of our private celebration, we may keep an Advent calendar and pray a daily devotional. We decorate our homes with an Advent wreath and most certainly display a Christmas tree with ornaments and lights. Our celebration will culminate in gift giving, and gatherings with our families and friends.

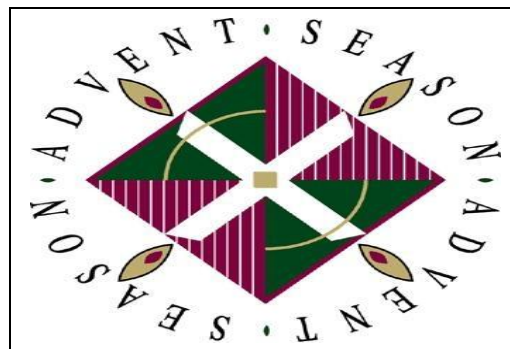
We know the Christmas story so well. From Luke's telling of events in chapter 2, to Matthew's recitation in chapter 1 of events leading up to His birth, and later in chapter 2 where Matthew tells us of events that followed his birth. We know of the angels, the shepherds, and the wise men who were witnesses to, this obscure yet great event.

Because of the grandeur and emphasis that we give to celebrating Christ's birth, we too frequently neglect the second aspect of Advent – it is also a time when we wait and prepare for the return of Christ at his Second Coming. Jesus himself taught that he would return someday. His teaching was reinforced by others who told of his return. In fact, after Jesus resurrection and his ascension into heaven, his disciples stood staring into the sky. In Acts 1:11, we are told *"They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."*

We don't know when Jesus will return. We are told *"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your LORD will come. Matthew 24:42* So, let's use this time of Advent to also wait and prepare for our Lord's return.

Yours in Christ,

Scott Cunningham



Retired
Ministers &
Missionaries
Offering
2020

Hope for Today Hope for Tomorrow

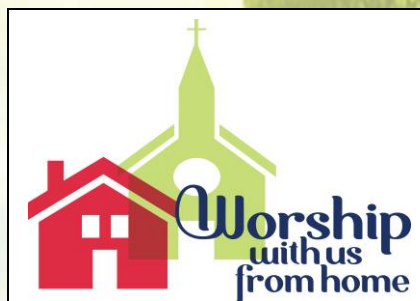


Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO)

In 1977, the American Baptist Churches launched the RMMO to lend support for retired ministers, missionaries, their widowed spouses and elderly clergy within our churches.

During the month of December, we will collect your offerings and gifts and remit them to the RMMO. The amounts collected are used to meet basic needs among those who might otherwise be neglected or neglect themselves. This provides comfort and dignity to those who may have spent their most productive years giving of themselves in order to promote the worship of God and understanding of the Gospel.

Traditionally, we've used our Christmas Eve service to collect for the RMMO. With the uncertainty ahead in this month, everyone is encouraged to be sure to designate your Christmas Eve offering along with your regular tithes and offerings.



Facebook – Livestream

During December, all of our Sunday morning services will be available for viewing via livestream on Facebook. The 10:30 AM worship service will be broadcast live. The service will also be recorded and available for viewing at any time thereafter.

Our November 22nd service was viewed 249 times (and the number is still increasing)! Our Easter Sunday service from this year was viewed 359 times. The service from June 14, 2020, was viewed 379 times – the most of any of our livestreamed services!

Becoming An Angel

When you ask someone to think of an angel, most people will think of Gabriel- the divine messenger- whose most important assignment was announcing the coming birth of the Son of the Most High to Mary. This Christmas family and friends cannot “get in” to see residents in care facilities or to visit those living alone. Thankfully, cards, caring thoughts, expressions of warm memories and good wishes can still “get in”. Please send a card- perhaps with a handwritten personalized note- to everyone on Our Church Family Shut-In list. Just think- if each person who receives this newsletter sent a card to everyone on the list - those most isolated by the virus would not feel so all alone. So-o-o this year, this Christmas, you have an unprecedented opportunity to become an angel- a divine messenger!



- 17 Mike Jones
- 18 Luke Merriman (his 12th !)
- 24 Justin Worst
- 26 Ruth Cunningham (her 94th !)
- 26 Dan Douglass
- 27 Eli Liebenguth (his 4th !)
- 28 Tom McNaughton
- 28 Nathan O'Leary (his 13th !)
- 29 Jenny McGahee
- 29 Richard Worst



For December, 2020

- Dec. 6 – Rev. Wray Fanton
- Dec. 13 - Rev. Dr. Donald Scandrol
- Dec. 20 – Rev. Tara Fanton
- Dec. 27 – Mr. H. Scott Cunningham

Prayer needs and updates

Sue Snyder, daughter of Mary Eberhardt, continues in God's hands as she battles cancer, a stroke and treatments over the past many years and months. She did however, recently speak out to her husband, Bob, after not being able to speak or move for quite some time. Praise God !

Pam Frazier is receiving pain management medication at home after having colon surgery. Please pray for comfort and safety and a complete recovery for her.

Karen Ott asks for several prayer needs in their family. Her **Aunt Carol** had a melanoma lump removed from her forehead and is waiting for biopsy results; **Carol's husband** is in hospice and non-responsive but not allowed visitors due to this virus. **Karen's mom** has been diagnosed with Parkinson's and very distraught over the diagnosis. **Karen's dad** was to come home from the hospital after learning to walk with his prosthetic leg. The family is very appreciative of all your prayers.

Cory, friend and co-worker of Erik Kolodziej, underwent extensive breast cancer removal surgery and recovery will be at least 6 weeks.

Darlene Dennis is doing well after eyelid surgery. She thanks everyone for their cards and concerns.

Janet Tehois has tested positive for the Covid virus but is not experiencing any symptoms; Cards would be appreciated at the Transitions Facility, 90 Humbert Lane, Apt. 104, Washington, PA. 15301.

Eleanor Mooney asks for prayer for her granddaughter, **Madison**, 17, who is waiting more surgery, and her daughter in law, Carrie's father, **Dave Miller**, having to undergo surgery on a broken leg/hip after several falls. Please remember them for strength and support.

Those currently undergoing treatment: Anthony Voit, 17 year old high school senior, is the son of Dave Spurling's cousin with classic Hodgkins Lymphoma. He will begin radiation after completing 4 cycles of chemotherapy. Please continue to pray for Anthony's strength & tolerance to his treatments. **Lowin Willoughby**, 4 ½, continues treatment and procedures to shrink a brain tumor and it's effects on her health. She will begin another round of chemo on December 4.

Our Church Family Shut-ins

Jean Downing	June Elder	Janet Eberhardt	Lois Exton	Gloria Meinert
Eleanor Mooney	Pete Neely	Bill Smith	Janet Tehois	Shirley Wright

^ **Prayers for all the families** dealing with this pandemic and the continued results. Also for our loved ones on the front lines dealing with the situation everyday. Please keep them safe and protected.

Continued Concern For: Colin McRobert's friend Bill and his family, Marge Douglass, Janet Hofstetter, Marion Wolbert, Erik Kolodziej's Uncle Mike, Mary Fisher, Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Johnson, Larry Cusak and his wife Dolores, Charlotte Hamm, Dave Bell, Matthew Valente, The Scott family, George Kriever, Lois Titus, Lauren Slick, Mary Glassburn, Katie Jones, Edith Yockel, Christians around the world who are being persecuted. **Prayer for all** the first responders who are in danger as they are out there doing their job. Especially, **Shawn McNaughton** who is a member of this church family and a police officer in Cecil Township. **Those With Cancer:** Tom Duffola, Mary Ann Yoder.

SPECIAL DATES IN DECEMBER, 2020

- Second Sunday of Advent, *December 6*
- Third Sunday of Advent, *December 13*
- Fourth Sunday of Advent, *December 20*
- First day of winter, *December 21*
- Christmas Eve, *December 24*
- Christmas Day, *December 25*

Our Church Council
will
hold their monthly
meeting on

**Monday,
December 14, 2020
at 6:30 p.m.**

**Congregational Care
Corner**

**Sometimes the Lord calms
the storm; and sometimes
He lets the storm rage and
calms His child.**

*And the peace of God, which
transcends all understanding, will
guard your hearts and minds
in Jesus Christ.*

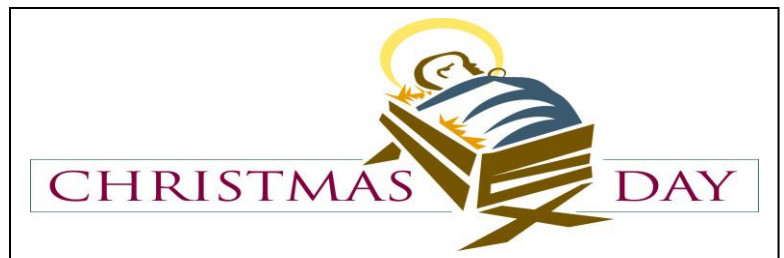
Philippians 4:7 NLT

Christmas Morning Prayer

Loving Father, help us to remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds and the wisdom of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.

Deliver us from every evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clean hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be Thy children and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven for Jesus' sake. Amen

Robert Lewis Stevenson

**Christmas Dinner Blessing**

*Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace,
Your love brought the Christ child to
earth and keeps us together this day.
Despite these challenging times, let our
hearts be overflowing with love and
gratitude. Bless this meal before us and
all those present at this table. May this
Christmas day and all the days of the
New Year be filled with gratitude for
Your amazing gift of Jesus. Amen*

‘How The Great Guest Came’

An annual tradition in the church my family attended when I was a child was to gather all the Sunday School classes (from toddlers to seniors) together on Christmas Sunday. After everyone settled in the chapel, hot cocoa and Christmas cookies were served.

The church matriarch would then share a story- poem entitled “**How The Great Guest Came**” by Edwin Markham.

It is a story about a cobbler named Conrad. Conrad was a very devoted man who loved Jesus. One night he had a dream that Jesus was going to visit him the next day in his small cobbler shop. The dream was so real that he bought the best food he could afford for this great occasion and he cleaned his modest shop and covered it with green boughs so it would be beautiful for the great guest when He came.

But as the day wore on there came an old man, a beggar. His shoes were worn through from trampling the streets. His feet were cold and bloody. Conrad, out of this great heart of love, gave him a pair of the best and sturdiest shoes he had made.

As the hours passed by an old woman came by, bearing a heavy load of firewood. She was tired and hungry. The good cobbler gave her some food he had prepared for the Christ.

Then along towards evening there came a little child, lost and frightened and weeping on the city streets. Conrad took the little child into his arms and dried his tears, asking where he lived. Then he took him home across the city and delivered him safely to his mother, all out of his great heart of love. Conrad hurried back to his shop

Twilight gave way to darkness. Conrad became sad and cried out,

‘Why is it, Lord, that your feet delay?

Did you forget that this was the day?

Then soft in the silence a voice he heard:

“Lift up your heart, for I kept my word.....

Three times I came to your friendly door.

Three times my shadow was on your floor.

I was the beggar with bruised feet.

I was the woman to whom you gave something to eat.

I was the weeping child on the homeless street.”

Christmas Blessings to you and those you love,
May you always welcome the Great Guest,
Elizabeth, Congregational Care

**If you need a church directory please email
or call the church office.**

Please add :

Revs. Wray and Tara Fanton

Colin and Robin McRoberts

Tawnee Koch

Elizabeth Murphy

Members we have lost this year :

Ann Dobson and Lois Gobrecht

INTER-CHURCH CHRISTMAS CARDS



After all the challenges of 2020 this is a chance to let your church know we are still “a family “. Cards can be brought to the church where a bin will be in the back under the big awning for you to drop them off . Please take care in writing your cards (hand wash, hand sanitizer) and put them in a ziplock bag in alphabetical order. Deadline for drop off is **December 18th.**

Please call the church office if you would like your cards picked up 724-935-3950. Cards will be ready for pick up on the 21st. If we are not be able to be together they will be available all that day under the awning or delivered/mailed to your home that week. One person has volunteered to sort the cards which means limited contact. They will be in ziplock bags for everyone’s protection. Merry Christmas.--

Remembering Our Shut-ins at Christmas

Mrs. Gloria Meinert
2915 Salisbury Court
Wexford, PA. 15090 - 9672

Mrs. Eleanor Mooney
221 Chickasaw Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA. 15237 - 4706

Mrs. Shirley Wright
105 Burgess Drive
Trillium House Room 215
Zelienople, PA. 16063

Mrs. Janet Eberhardt
Concordia of Franklin Park
1600 Georgetown Drive
Sewickley, PA. 15143

Mr. Bill Smith
Concordia of Franklin Park
1600 Georgetown Drive
Sewickley, PA. 15143

Mrs. Janet Tehois
Transitions Healthcare Facility
90 Humbert Lane Apt. 104
Washington, PA 15301

Mr. Earl Neely
319 Browns Mill Road
Evans City, PA. 16033 - 7735

Mrs. Jean Downing
2245 Montgomery Road
Sewickley, PA. 15143

Mrs. June Elder
292 Line Street
Ellwood City, PA. 16117

Mrs. Lois Exton
Paramount Senior Living at
Cranberry
500 Seven Fields Blvd.
Mars, PA. 16046

Christmas Cards

