

BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018

Hours: Mon, Tues and Thurs. 9:30-1:30

Church Office: 610-868-4441 Fax: 610-868-7918

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Pastor Todd Fennell

Matt Miller, Consistory President

Susan Wright, Director of Music



December 5, 2021 Second Sunday of Advent

"Moving Forward United in Faith"

"Committed to Christ, United by Love. We are about God, Christ, the Word, and the Future. No matter who you are or where you are on Life's journey, you are welcome here. We are Bethany United Church of Christ."

BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

December 5, 2021

10:45 AM

If you are looking for a church home, we invite you to become part of the community of faith and mission here at Bethany. As per the Consistory decision, we will return to wearing masks for all services and meetings here at Bethany. We will continue to monitor the situation and make changes when appropriate.

**(*) PLEASE STAND AS YOU ARE ABLE
(Bold Text is said or sung by everyone)**

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

JOYFUL NOISE Bethany Children's Home

PRELUDE: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel!" ...Plainsong
Handbell Choir

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: This is the season of anticipation and expectation.

P: The season of Hope, Peace, Love and Joy.

L: May our souls magnify God's name and may our spirits rejoice in God our Savior!

P: Let us rejoice for God comes in the Holy Birth of Jesus!

*HYMN: #158 Blessed Be the God of Israel

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

O Living Christ, You were, You are, You come. Clothe us with garments of celebration, that we may be prepared for the feast of Your reign. Keep us wakeful, that our lamps may ever burn in the vigil of Your coming. Give us sight, that we may recognize the signs of Your coming. And give us strength to stand in Your presence. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE (*with waves and prayer hands*)

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also, with you.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (unison): #159 Refrain
vs.1 Refrain

The King of glory comes, the nation rejoices. Open the gates before him, lift up your voices.

Who is the King of glory: what shall we call him? He is Emmanuel, the promised of ages.

The King of glory comes, the nation rejoices. Open the gates before him, lift up your voices.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: Lisa & Jenna
Nguyen "Straighten Out"

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: #175 Vs. 1&3

We light the Advent candles against the winter night, to welcome our Lord Jesus who is the world's True Light, to welcome our Lord Jesus who is the world's True Light.

We light the second candle, and show us the true way, it tells us, cling to Jesus, prepare to meet your Lord, it tells us, cling to Jesus, prepare to meet your Lord!

READING OF SCRIPTURES

Malachi 3:1-4

Philippians 1: 3-11

* Luke 3: 3-17

Leader: This is the Good News

People: Thanks be to God

SERMON: "The Gift of Change"

OFFERING INVITATION

OFFERING OF OUR TITHES and GIFTS

OFFERTORY: "Hark the Glad Sound" ...C. Curry
Chancel Choir

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE: #34 Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host: praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

God of Justice and Love, transform these offerings, that they may be gifts of justice and love for a world in need of hope and help. Let love flow through these offerings, that they may become gifts of love for the world.

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

CALL TO PRAYER - PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 sins as we forgive those who sin 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.

*HYMN: #152 Prepare the Way, O Zion

*BENEDICTION

*CHORAL BENEDICTION: #178 Emmanuel, Emmanuel
Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel. God with us, revealed in us, his name is called Emmanuel.

*POSTLUDE

Our worship ends, our service begins!



FLOWERS: are presented by Barbara Backensto and family.

BULLETINS: In honor of all those who work behind the scenes to keep Bethany open.

GREETERS: Gail Correll & Kathy Knoll

USHERS: John & Kathy Knoll, Gail Correll, Tom Hoffert

LAY READER: Debbie Brown

AUDIO & VIDEO RECORDINGS If you or anyone you know would like to receive the link to the audio recording of the worship service, please let Bill Rumble know at wrumble@ptd.net. A copy of the bulletin is included with the audio link. Thank you, Bill, for making sure we are able to see and hear the services.

Scriptures

Malachi 3: 1 - 4 NRSV

The Coming Messenger

3 See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. **2** But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; **3** he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver,

until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

Philippians 1: 3 - 11 NRSV

Paul's Prayer for the Philippians

³ I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴ constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵ because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷ It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸ For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰ to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹ having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Luke 3: 3 - 17 NRSV

³ He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

⁵ Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth;
6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

7 John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 9 Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

10 And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” 11 In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” 12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” 13 He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” 14 Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

15 As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, 16 John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”



Bethlehem Emergency Shelter

As the weather grows colder, we need to remember those who have no home and rely on the shelter for a place to stay and a warm meal. Bethany has signed up to provide and serve a meal on Friday February 11 and Tuesday March 8. We need 10 – 15 people each night so please let Wendy Glassic or the office know if you are willing to help. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex.

Bethlehem Live Nativity

Join us as we celebrate Christ's birth in the Rose Garden December 11 & 12. Anyone is welcome to join the Chancel Choir when we sing at the Live Nativity on Saturday Dec. 11 and Sunday Dec. 12. The prelude begins at 1:45 pm and the program concludes in approximately one hour. Come see us perform!

Daily Bread

We have received the new issues of Our Daily Bread. They are located in the rear of the sanctuary. A \$1 donation is appreciated

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

We are continuing the tradition of donating money to Bethany in lieu of sending our Bethany Friends Holiday Cards. This Holiday Season, a \$10 donation to Bethany will forego sending out cards to Bethany Members/Friends wishing them a Merry Christmas. Your donation must be received by December 12th. Your name will appear in the bulletin on December 19th and Christmas Eve. Please make the check payable to "Bethany UCC" with greetings in the memo line. Thank You.

POINSETTIA ORDERS

Poinsettia Orders are due on Sunday December 12th. Order forms are in the back of the Sanctuary. We will once again get our flowers from Cierech's Greenhouse for a cost of \$10. Please help us decorate our sanctuary with these beautiful flowers on Christmas Eve and then take them home to enjoy!

Oils of the Bible

All are invited to attend a presentation on "The Oils of the Bible" by Jean Fennell. The focus will be on the scriptural accounts of oils connected with the Christmas Story of Jesus. This will be held in Fellowship Hall on Sunday December 19th at 9:30am.

The Bach Choir is presenting Bach's Christmas Oratorio on Saturday December 11th at 8pm. They will perform at first Presbyterian Church in Allentown. They will also perform on Sunday December 12th at 4pm. This performance will be at First Presbyterian Church in Bethlehem. The Bethlehem Concert will be live streamed as well. Tickets are available.

The Bethlehem Interchurch dart league is having a season. Have you ever wondered about the doors in fellowship hall that are on the wall? That is our dart Baseball board. Our matches are on Monday nights at Bethany and other churches in the city. It is a get together for fun and fellowship with a little bit of competition. Our Bethany team has a new Captain/Manager this year so if you have any questions contact Steve Tarasuk, (610) 554-0125 (call or text), steve.tarasuk@gmail.com. Watch the bulletin for more information about a fun get together after the holidays to meet the team and have a chance to throw against them. The last time our guests beat the team.

THIS WEEK AT BETHANY

TODAY SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5 Second Sunday in Advent

10:45AM Worship in the Sanctuary with Handbells.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6

9AM ? Nut Making in Fellowship Hall

9:30AM 1:30PM Office Hours

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7

9:30AM 1:30PM Office hours

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9

9:30AM 1:30PM Office Hours

7PM Consistory in Fellowship Hall

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11

1:45PM Prelude begins for Live Nativity in the Bethlehem Rose Garden.

NEXT SUNDAY DECEMBER 12 Third Sunday in Advent

10:45AM Worship in the sanctuary as we continue our advent celebration. Candy will be available for pick up. Poinsettia orders and Christmas greetings are due!

1:45PM Prelude begins for Live Nativity in the Bethlehem Rose Garden.

Looking ahead.... Instrumental Ensemble rehearsal after worship Sunday December 19 and Wednesday December 22nd 6:30 p.m. for the Christmas Eve service.

158 Blessed Be the God of Israel

Unison

1 Blessed be the God of Is - rael, who comes to set us free,
 2 Now from the house of Da - vid a child of grace has come,
 3 On all by death im - pris - oned the sun be - gins to rise,

who vis - its and re - deems us, and grants us lib - er - ty,
 a Sav - ior who will lead us to our e - ter - nal home,
 the dawn - ing of for - give - ness up - on the sin - ner's eyes,

The proph - ets spoke of mer - cy, of free - dom and re - lease;
 Be - fore him goes the her - ald, fore - run - ner in the way,
 to guide the feet of pil - grims a - long the paths of peace;

God shall ful - fill the prom - ise to bring our peo - ple peace.
 the proph - et of sal - va - tion, the har - bin - ger of day.
 O bless our God and Sav - ior with songs that nev - er cease!

WORDS: Michael Perry (1942-1996)

MERLE'S TUNE
7A.7

Prepare the Way, O Zion

1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near!
 2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove.
 3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sav - ior's rule em - brace.

Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.
 His rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.
 His tid - ings of sal - va - tion pro - claim in ev - ery place.

Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.
 Lift high your praise re - sound - ing, for grace and joy a - bound - ing.
 All lands will bow be - fore him, their voic - es will a - dore him.

Refrain

Oh, blest is Christ that came in God's most ho - ly name.

WORDS: Frans Mikael Franzen (1772-1847); tr. composite.

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HER
 2.6.7.6.7.