

Myerstown United Church of Christ

The Second Sunday in Advent

December 8, 2019

Worship Time 10:00 am

“Repeat the Sounding Joy:” Loving Joy

EXPANSION OF OUR HEARTS

A Time of Reflection to Prepare for Worship

We gather together to worship the One Who Is Joy and as we come together, our hearts are expanded. We remember that the heavens declare God’s praise as the sun rises and light multiplies. And we witness that all of nature (including us) yearns to reach and expand toward the Light so that all might know joy.

Prelude

Veni Emmanuel

Heathcote Statham

Welcome

Second Sunday Sharing

Community Meal

Mark Herr

Announcements

[will all who are able please stand]

***Advent Hymn**

#154 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL

Loving Joy

“Heaven and Nature Sing”

Gwen Sears, Cantor

Sing a new song to the Lord
Lift your hearts with gratitude

**Sing a new song to the Lord
Lift your hearts with gratitude**

Sing a new song to the Lord
Lift your hearts with gratitude

**Sing a new song to the Lord
Lift your hearts with gratitude**

And Joy,
Loving Joy

**And Joy,
Loving Joy**

Your steadfast love and faithfulness
Is ever present in our lives

**Your steadfast love and faithfulness
Is ever present in our lives**

Your steadfast love and faithfulness
Is ever present in our lives
With Joy,
Loving Joy

**Your steadfast love and faithfulness
Is ever present in our lives
With Joy,
Loving Joy**

Advent Prayer

Let us pray together.

All: We make a joyful noise to the Beloved. All the earth breaks forth into grateful song and sings praises! Yes, Beloved, we sing songs of praise extolling Love’s way, lifting our hearts with gratitude and joy! Come, Christ Child of Bethlehem! Come! Amen.

We sing

We sing

We sing

We sing

Joy to the World

Joy to the World

Heaven and nature sing

Heaven and nature sing

Joy to the World

Joy to the World

Heaven and nature sing

Heaven and nature sing

With Joy,

With Joy,

Loving Joy

Loving Joy

The Wreath

Candle Lighting Prayer

Let us pray:

Holy God, you are the source of love. You are the joy that runs deep and wide underneath all of life. You are the one that helps us reach out in love, especially to those whose fear makes it hard for them to love. Help us when our fear gets in the way of joining the chorus of joy.

Let us repeat the sounding joy in our hearts this day.

Let us repeat the sounding joy in our church this day.

**Let us repeat the sounding joy in the world this day in the name of Love.
Amen.**

We sing

We sing

We sing

We sing

Joy to the World

Joy to the World

Heaven and nature sing

Heaven and nature sing

Joy to the World **Joy to the World**
Heaven and nature sing **Heaven and nature sing**
With Joy, **With Joy,**
Loving Joy **Loving Joy**

Excerpts Psalm 98

[will all who are able please stand]

***Song of Joy**

#179 *Joy to the World* [verse 2 only]

ANTIOCH

***Offering Loving Joy**

Pastor: May you have loving joy.

People: May you also have loving joy.

RECEPTION OF GOD'S WORD

As we open to receive the Word and interpret its meaning for our lives, we connect to the depths of our being where the River of Joy is always flowing. We have only to dip into it for, we have the "joy, joy, joy, joy, down in our hearts."

The Children's Time to Lead Us

Pastor:

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy
Down in my heart, down in my heart, down in my heart
I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy
Down in my heart, down in my heart to stay.

Scripture

Isaiah 2:1-5

God will judge between the nation, and settle disputes of mighty nations. Then they will beat their swords into iron plays and their spears into pruning tools. Nation will not take up sword against nation; they will no longer learn how to make war. Come, house of Jacob, let's walk by the Lord's light.

[will those who are able please stand for the reading of the gospel.]

Matthew 3:1-11

Hear the good news of Jesus Christ as it is found in the 3rd chapter of Matthew beginning with the 1st verse and following.

Praise be to the Christ Child for whom we wait.

While Jesus was living in the Galilean hills, John, called "the Baptizer," was preaching in the desert country of Judea. His message was simple and austere, like his desert surroundings: "Change your life. God's kingdom is here."

John and his message were authorized by Isaiah's prophecy: Thunder in the desert! Prepare for God's arrival! Make the road smooth and straight!

John dressed in a camel-hair habit tied at the waist by a leather strap. He lived on a diet of locusts and wild field honey. People poured out of Jerusalem, Judea, and the Jordanian countryside to hear and see him in action. There at the Jordan River those who came to confess their sins were baptized into a changed life.

When John realized that a lot of Pharisees and Sadducees were showing up for a baptismal experience because it was becoming the popular thing to do, he exploded: "Brood of snakes! What do you think you're doing slithering down here to the river? Do you think a little water on your snakeskins is going to make any difference? It's your life that must change, not your skin! And don't think you can pull rank by claiming Abraham as father. Being a descendant of Abraham is neither here nor there. Descendants of Abraham are a dime a dozen. What counts is your life. Is it green and blossoming? Because if it's deadwood, it goes on the fire.

"I'm baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. The real action comes next: The main character in this drama—compared to him I'm a mere stagehand—will ignite the kingdom life within you, a fire within you, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He's going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He'll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he'll put out with the trash to be burned."

This is where the reading ends. It is the gospel of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***The Word in Music**

#156 *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*

PUER NOBIS

Message

TRANSFORMATION OF OUR LIVES

A Time of Reflection to Prepare for Prayer

Connecting with our deepest selves, we are able to accept that all of life resides within joy's possibilities—not only the happy moments, but also the sorrows and difficulties of life. Like the work of our hearts, all that flows in can be given new life and pumped back out with renewed oxygen, giving us strength and courage for all circumstances.

Invitation to Prayer

#162 *like a child* [verse 3 only]

LIKE A CHILD

Prayers of the People

Who needs a message of love in your life? In the world?
Why do we ration love as if it isn't never-ending, ever-green?
Like the tree adorned with ornaments,
with what outward messages do we adorn our own lives?
What messages of love and joy can we repeat? How?

Prayer of Our Savior

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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Extending Gratitude

Offertory

We Greet Thee, Heavenly Dove

Austrian Carol

**Offertory Response*

#184 *What Child Is This* [verse 3]

GREENSLEEVES

*COMPASSION FOR THE WORLD

*A Time of Reflection to Go Out into the World

Connecting to Joy can compel us to want this connection for all beings. We leave this place "with passion" (com-passion) for adding our love, peace, hope, and joy to the world.

*Going Forth

*Closing Song

"We're Gonna Bring Joy to the World"

Feelings that might bring us down, Sunlight hidden by the clouds,
It may seem that there's nowhere we can turn
Yes, the days will come and days will go, But deep within our souls we know
When we wake up, There are lessons to be learned

**We're gonna bring joy to the world, hope to the people.
We're gonna give love that's for everyone—unconditionally!
We're gonna make peace in our world, God's voice through us be heard.
As we look to one another, a glimpse of holy we might see!**

People who can't seem to be, Willing to sing harmony,
Forgetting that we each play different parts
For its' when we join our hands and voice, Making love our only choice,
Then together, We can birth a brand new start

**We're gonna bring joy to the world, hope to the people.
We're gonna give love that's for everyone—unconditionally!
We're gonna make peace in our world, God's voice through us be heard.
As we look to one another, a glimpse of holy we might see!**

Crowded border, busy streets, The neighbors we don't care to meet,
And we wonder, Where have we gone wrong?
When we look beyond dividing lines, With open hearts and open minds,
Our differences Won't seem so big at all.

**We're gonna bring joy to the world, hope to the people.
We're gonna give love that's for everyone—unconditionally!
We're gonna make peace in our world, God's voice through us be heard.
As we look to one another, a glimpse of holy we might see!**

Joy, hope, peace, love...

**We're gonna bring joy to the world, hope to the people.
We're gonna give love that's for everyone—unconditionally!
We're gonna make peace in our world, God's voice through us be heard.
As we look to one another, a glimpse of holy we might see,
a glimpse of holy we might see,
a glimpse of holy we might see.**

Benediction

*Recessional Response

"We're Gonna Bring Joy to the World" [cream-colored cardstock]

*Personal Reflection on Loving Joy

*Postlude

Toccata on 'Savior, of the Nations Come'

Paul Manz

Acknowledgements

We thank Gwen Sears for being with us again this morning as our Cantor.

The church is adorned with the poinsettias that will heighten our joy through Christmas Eve.

The Conversational Time in the Gathering Area is provided by Steve & Marianne Fritsch. We thank them for this opportunity to continue the fellowship begun during worship following the service.

There are four *movements* in each of our Advent and Christmas Eve services. They are transitional moments in what is happening. We come to worship and feel the *expansion of our hearts*. Then we *receive God's word* and are *transformed as we pray*. The service comes to a close expressing *compassion for the world* as we journey back into our daily lives. You are invited to participate in the gestures that accompany them during the Benediction.

Liturgy and music for this service was reprinted with permission from Worship Design Studio [<http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/landingpage.cfm>]

Announcements

JOY TO THE WORLD ORNAMENTS: are available for purchase. Each congregation members is encouraged to take 2 beveled, 2 disc, and one set to sell to your neighbors and friends. There are 2 lists: I Purchased and I Took On Consignment. Please complete the information requested. This helps the office keep track of the inventory.

CHURCH DIRECTORIES AVAILABLE: Copies of an updated church directory are available on the Information Counter. Please take one home with you. If you

have any corrections, please add them to the Communication Book, also on the Information Counter or contact the church office.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES OFFERING: Regardless of which service you attend and where that service is held, it is important to use an envelope for the offering and ***not place cash in the plate***. We ask that you use a purple Veterans of the Cross envelope or any envelope with the words Veterans of the Cross on it. Since we are partnering with Friedens Lutheran for these services, the envelopes are the only way to make sure that the contributions reach the appropriate congregation.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS are still needed for the Christmas Eve, 6:30 pm service. If you will be attending that service and willing to participate, please contact Marie Hibshman as soon as you can.

CHURCH COUNCIL ACTION: At the December Council meeting, they accepted the resignation of Mark Herr as the Family and Community Ministry (formerly Christian Education Coordinator) position at Myerstown UCC. We thank him for the time he spent in that position over the past few years. The future of this position is being considered by Council and Personnel. No worries - he is staying on as our Worship Music Coordinator and Organist.

GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER: Thank you to all who placed gift cards orders during 2019. I am pleased to report that we raised over \$700 through this simple fundraiser. A special thank you to the Patrick, Fritsch, and Yoder families who participate just about every month! If you have any questions or are interested in participating, there is information on the Counter in the Gathering Area or contact Emily Frantz.

COMMUNITY MEAL COORDINATOR VOLUNTEER: We are seeking an individual or individuals to volunteer to coordinate the community meals held at Myerstown UCC in the Spring and Fall. Duties include planning the menu, shopping for food, and directing the preparation of the food. There is a large group of volunteers for this ministry who are already in place and ready to help. Please contact the church office or any member of Church Council if you are interested by January 15, 2020.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED: The Church office will be closed on Tuesday, 24 December 19 with no pastoral office hours. It will be closed Monday, 6 January 20, in order for staff to receive training on the new membership and financial software.

DECEMBER 29, 2019: There will be only **one service at 10:00 am**. Rev. Dr. Rodney Shearer will be here to sing us through a Festival of Lessons & Carols. The "kitchen committee" has agreed to provide a breakfast that morning which

will begin at 9:00. Serving will end at 9:30 am in order for everyone to prepare for morning worship.

SIGNUP TODAY: There are 2 new sign up sheets on the Information Table. One is for *Better Families* and the other for *Conversational*. There are also 2 Sundays this month available on the Conversational schedule. Please be attentive to these opportunities.

LEBANON COUNTY CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES: The fund raising event held Nov.21 was a success. Thanks to the generosity of the congregation, two baskets containing various gift cards were auctioned and were among the highest bids. Thank you so much for your donations to a worthy ministry.

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS are on the table at the entrance to the Gathering Area. There are two items to complete the entire season. **Please take both.**

THE PRAYER TEAM will meet each week in the prayer room from 8:45 until 9:45 starting next Sunday. Anyone is welcome to come and join Wanda Rabold and Sally Kulp to pray for the world, our community, members of our church family, and anyone whose needs come to our attention. A prayer box will be placed just inside the prayer room if anyone would like to place a prayer request slip in the box. We will also welcome anyone who would like to stop by in person and receive prayer. We know that the Bible tells us that wherever two or three are gathered in God's name that He is present in the midst of them. Please pray for this special ministry.

2019 CONTRIBUTIONS: The last day to submit church offering to be credited in 2019 is Friday, January 3, 2020. The church is upgrading to new software the first week in January. Financial statements will be produced from the old system.

MANUAL LABORER NEEDED: There is a project in the church office that can be done sitting at the table. The project is punching holes in folded paper. Only one person can help at a time. There is no urgency; at the same time, the sooner-the-better. If interested, put a note in the communication book on the Information Table. The church secretary will get in touch with you.

MEMBER IN CARE VISITORS: If you are a visitor for a Member in Care, pick up a gift bag in the gathering area and deliver it sometime in December. The contents of the bags are all alike so it doesn't matter which bag you take, but PLEASE SIGN the list so we know that all Members in Care have been visited.

CHRISTMAS CARDS: The internal Christmas Card collection continues. See Suzie Wartluft for questions. There is a small envelope for you to express your gratitude for the money you saved on stamps.

THE ANGEL TREE: Our annual Angel Tree in support of LCCM has been placed

in the Gathering Area. Please refer to the November Vineyard for more information.

WILL YOU DONATE ONE HOUR?: We need ringers for 1 pm, 2 pm, and 3 pm. Please sign up for this annual outreach on the part of the Salvation Army to support persons in our area.

CHOIR MEMBERS: The next choir rehearsals will be held on Dec 18, 22 and 24. They are to prepare for Sunday, Dec 22, and Tuesday, Dec 24th.

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Prayer List

|                   |                           |                 |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Nancy Brown       | Russ Kahl                 | Rosene Duffy    |
| Ellen Goodyear    | Ruthann Snoke             | Joyce Mitstifer |
| Ralph Woynarowski | Jewel Fessler             | Linda Feaser    |
| Bill Gracely      | Rosalla Hollenbach        | Joanne Frantz   |
| David Mock        | Heather & Elvin Perez     | James Haines    |
| Steve Norford     | Family of Arlene Spangler | Suzanne Fritsch |

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Worship Assistants for December 15, 2019

8:00 am Service **Open Church:** Marcia Bicher
Greeters: Lindy Bennetch **Worship Leader:** Wanda Rabold
10:00 am Service **Sound:** Bob Dash
Greeters: Ed & Candy Hibshman **Worship Leader:** Marianne & Steve Fritsch
Ushers: Marie Hibshman, Darryl Brown, Bob Dash, Kenny Patrick
Counting Team: Lois Werner, Sara Zeller, Sally Kulp
Advent Wreath: Dave, Jen, Noah, & Jacob Blystone

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Calendar for This Week

Today, Sunday, December 8      **The Second Sunday in Advent**  
 8:00 am      Brief Worship Service  
 8:45 am      Small group meetings.  
 10:00 am      Traditional Worship Service  
 11:00 am      Church Council [Library]

Monday, December 9  
 8:30 am      Strong Bones [social hall]  
 9:00 am - 2:00 pm      Church Office Open  
 5:00 pm      Lebanon Choral Society Rehearsal

Tuesday, December 10  
**8:30 am - 12:30 pm**      Pastor Office Hours [preferably by appointment]

Wednesday, December 11  
 9:00 am - 2:00 pm      Church Office Open  
                                  Scouts

Thursday, December 12  
 8:30 am      Strong Bones [social hall]  
 9:00 am      Community Meal Prep  
 4:00 pm      Community Meal

Friday, December 13  
 9:00 am - 2:00 pm      Church Office Open

Saturday, December 14  
 9:00 am      Lebanon County Choral Society Rehearsal  
 6:00 pm      Scout Spaghetti Supper

Sunday, December 15      **The Third Sunday in Advent**  
 8:00 am      Brief Worship Service  
 8:45 am      Small group meetings  
 10:00 am      Traditional Worship Service  
 11:00 am      Church Council Meeting [Library]  
 1:00 pm      Lebanon County Choral Society Rehearsal  
 3:00 pm      Lebanon County Choral Society Concert with Reception

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Christmas Eve

4:00 Service with Holy Communion at Friedens Lutheran, Myerstown
 6:30 pm Service with Holy Communion at Myerstown UCC
 11:00 pm Service with Holy Communion at Friedens.

Welcome to Myerstown United Church of Christ

Church Office: 304 West Main Avenue, Myerstown , PA 17067-1023

Phone: 717/866-5252 myerstownucc@comcast.net

website: myerstownuccchurch.org

Kory Leppo----- 717-269-6033 ----- Council President
 Marie Hibshman 717-343-3247 ----- Elder
 Jim Yoder----- 252-258-4268 ----- Bridge Pastor
 Emily Frantz----- 717-383-1147 ----- Parish Administrator
 Mark Herr----- 717-572-7734 -Family & Community Ministry Coordinator
 Lindy Bennetch----- Financial Administrator
 Jim Yoder----- Church Secretary
 Elicia Frank----- Custodian

Worship Assistants

Appreciation to the following who participated in today's service:

Organist Mark Herr

8:00 am Service

Open Church: Bill & Betty Arnold

Greeter: Bill & Betty Arnold **Worship Leader:** Bill Arnold

10:00 am Service

Greeter: Ted & Carol Batdorff **Sound:** Paulie McQuate

Worship Leader Margo McQuate

Ushers Travis, Angie, Gabby & Hank Bicher, Kenny Patrick

Counting Team Marie Hibshman, Kathy Grose, Charlie & Carolyn Williams

Advent Wreath Lighting: Travis, Angie, Gabby & Hank Bicher

Stewardship Report for Sunday, December 1, 2019

General Fund	\$3,892	OCWM	\$380
Church Improvement Fund			\$900
Attendance 8 am:	14	Attendance 10 am:	42