

Myerstown United Church of Christ

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 22, 2019

Worship Time 10:00 am

“Make the Nations Prove:” Peaceful 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

King of Glory

Wayne Wold

Welcome

Search Committee Update

Announcements

[will all who are able please stand]

*Advent Hymn

#185 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

MENDELSSOHN

Peaceful Joy

Introduction

“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
And Joy,
Peaceful Joy

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,
Peaceful Joy

Your steadfast love and faithfulness

Your steadfast love and faithfulness

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

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

Advent Prayer [Leader/All]

Let us pray together.

Let the sea laugh, and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it!
Let the waters clap their hands; let the hills ring out with joy before the
Beloved, who radiates Peace to all the earth. For Love reigns over the world
with truth and justice bringing order and balance to all of Creation. Come,
Child of Bethlehem. Come quickly. 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,
Peaceful Joy	Peaceful Joy

The Wreath

Understanding Peaceful Joy

Candle Lighting Prayer

Holy God, we await again the arrival of Your son, the Prince of Peace. We long for the peaceful waters of joy that run deep and wide underneath all of life. When we feel the chaos of life bearing down on us, help us to remember that it doesn't have to be this way. Help us to step into a slower rhythm that is your Peaceful Joy.

Let truth and grace rule our hearts this day.

Let truth and grace rule our church this day.

Let truth and grace rule the world this day ... in the name of Peace. 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,**
 Peaceful Joy **Peaceful Joy**
Listening to the Psalmist from Psalm 98

***Song of Joy**

[will all who are able please stand]

#179 *Joy to the World* [verse 4 only]

ANTIOCH

***Offering Peaceful Joy**

May you have Peaceful Joy today and every day.

May you also have Peaceful Joy today and every day.

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

Scripture

Isaiah 7:13-15

“Then Isaiah said, “Listen, house of David! Isn’t it enough for you to be tiresome for people that you are also tiresome before my God? Therefore, the Lord will give you a sign. The young woman is pregnant and is about to give birth to a son, and she will name him Immanuel. He will eat butter and honey, and learn to reject evil and choose good.”

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

**Matthew 1:18-25*

Hear the good news of Jesus Christ as it is found in the 1st chapter of Matthew beginning with the 18th verse and following.

Praise be to the Christ Child for whom we wait.

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. When Mary his mother was engaged to Joseph, before they were married, she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband was a righteous man. Because he didn’t want to humiliate her, he decided to call off their engagement quietly. As he was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child she carries was conceived by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” Now all of this took place so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled:

Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, And they will call him, Emmanuel.

When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife. But he didn’t have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. Joseph called him Jesus.

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

Thanks be to God.

The Word in Music

Waiting for Bethlehem’s Light Dale Peterson & Charles McCartha

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

Carol

#171 To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary [verses 1-4]ANNUNCIATION

Mistletoe
Prayers of Confession

Let us name our inadequacies as one voice.

Lord, we confess that we are rushing headlong into Christmas. It's only two days away, and we still have so much to do. Our preparations are far from complete, and we are exhausted. We wish this whole thing were over so that we could rest. Forgive our shortcomings and our short-sightedness. You have poured upon us blessing after blessing, daily reminding us of your love and presence; yet we have chosen to jump onto this "greased slide" into Christmas. Give us patience. Slow us down. Remind us of the ways in which you are present with us--not in the wrapped packages, the abundance of food, but in the love and compassion that is brought to all. Forgive us, we pray. Make us truly ready to receive your love and the gift of the Christ Child. Amen.

A Time of Silence
Assurance of God's Compassion

The light of God's love shines upon each of us in the gift of God's love, Jesus Christ.

This is given for us. We rejoice! We are loved by God, now and forever. Amen.

Prayers of the People

How can we take a deep breath and, like Joseph, be open to discover what may be an unexpected gift in the midst of a difficult situation?

What will help us choose peace and serenity instead of joining chaos when we encounter it?

How are we contributing to chaos instead of the reign of truth and grace?

Who in your life or community needs a "kiss" of peaceful joy and the spirit of Christ?

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

Fling Wide the Door

Robert Buckley Farlee

**Offertory Response*

#178 *Emmanuel, Emmanuel* [sing 2 times]

**Prayer of Dedication*

Let us prayer together.

Holy God, you bless us with many gifts, you retrieve us from despair and fear, you visit us with surprising proclamations, and you intend for us good things. We thank you for your steadfast love, for sending signs of assurance, and for the gift of faith. Use our gifts to bring comfort and justice to those in need, reforming the ways of our world for the sake of new life. Amen.

***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 Carol**

#159 *The King of Glory Comes*

PROMISED ONE

***Benediction**

***Recessional Response**

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

***Personal Reflection on Hopeful Joy**

***Postlude**

Glory to God

David Paxton

Acknowledgements

We thank Gwen Sears for being with us again this morning as our Cantor. And for her presence each week in Advent. We hope that she and her family will have the most blessed Christmas feeling all of the joy she helped us experience.

Better Families is sponsored by Steve & Marianne Fritsch.

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

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.

The lessons for Advent and Christmas Eve are from the Common English Bible. The CEB is an English translation of the Bible whose language is intended to be at a comfortable reading level for the majority of English readers. The translation was begun in late 2008 and was finished in 2011.

Liturgy and music for this service was reprinted with permission from Worship Design Studio [<http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/landingpage.cfm>], as well as from Ministry Matters: Worship Elements for December 22, 2019. Nancy Townley. <https://www.ministrymatters.com/worship/entry/4444/worship-connection-december-22-2019> and from Westminster John Knox Press from *Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion*. Copyright 2013.

Announcements

2020 CHURCH ENVELOPES have not arrived yet. They are not expected before the beginning of 2020. The suggestion of the church office is to use plain envelopes until they are available. It is important to put your name on the envelope and write the breakdown of your giving into the usual categories: general fund, OCWM, church improvement fund.

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 8:30. Serving will end at 9:30 am in order for everyone to prepare for morning worship.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED: The Church office will be closed on Tuesday, 24 December 19 with no pastoral office hours. It will be closed the entire first week in January for staff to receive training on the new membership and finance software. It will be necessary for people to schedule an appointment for any business that needs to be accomplished. Staff will not be able to stop what they are doing to respond to questions or requests. We hope you understand the importance of the staff learning together. If there is someone who would like to take phone messages and receive information from persons who come to the office, the staff would greatly appreciate it. Please communicate with the Church Secretary or use the Communication Book on the Information Table.

CHURCH OFFICE OPEN: The Church office will be open on Thursday, 26 December 19 from 9:00 am to noon.

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 envelop or any envelop 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.

FLOWER SPONSORS are needed for January 5th and 19th. If you would like provide flowers for either Sunday, please contact the church office.

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.

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.

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.

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.

~~~~~

Prayer List

|                   |                       |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Nancy Brown       |                       | Russ Kahl       |
| Linda Herr        |                       | 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     | Grace Brubaker        | Suzanne Fritsch |

~~~~~

Worship Assistants for Christmas Eve

6:30 pm Service
Open Church: Jim Yoder **Sound:** Bob Dash
Greeters: Jim & Beth Diehm **Worship Leaders:** Marianne & Steve Fritsch
Ushers: Suzie Wartluft, Marianne Fritsch, Jim & Beth Diehm, Kenny Patrick
Communion Servers: Marianne Fritsch, Suzie Wartluft, Ed & Candy Hibshman, Charlies & Carolyn Williams
Advent Wreath: The Frantz family

Worship Assistants for December 29, 2019

10:00 am Service **Open Church:** Ed & Candy Hibshman
Greeters: Dawn Hassler **Worship Leader:** James Yoder
Sound: Bob Dash

Ushers: Ed & Candy Hibshman, Terry & Suzie Schott, Kenny Patrick
Counting Team: E & Candy Hibshman, Terry & Suzie Schott

~~~~~

Calendar for This Week

Today, Sunday, December 22 **The Fourth Sunday in Advent**  
8:00 am Brief Worship Service  
8:45 am Small group meetings.  
10:00 am Traditional Worship Service

Monday, December 23  
9:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open

Tuesday, December 24 **Christmas Eve**  
**Church Office Closed; No Pastor Office Hours**  
4:00 pm Children's / Family Service; Friedens Lutheran Service of Word & Sacrament  
5:00 pm Instrumental Ensemble Rehearsal  
5:30 om Choir Rehearsal  
6:15 pm Pre-Service Music Begins  
6:30 pm Service of Word & Sacrament; Myerstown UCC  
11:00 om Service of Word & Sacrament; Friedens Lutheran

Wednesday, December 25 **Christmas Day**  
**Church Office Closed**

Thursday, December 26  
9:00 am - 12:00 pm Church Office Open

Friday, December 27  
9:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open

Saturday, December 28  
12:00 pm – 6:00 pm Social Hall Reserved

Sunday, December 29 **The First Sunday After Christmas**  
**No Early Service**  
8:30 am Continental Breakfast  
8:45 am Small group meetings  
10:00 am Traditional Worship Service

# 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](http://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:** Fritz Firestine

**Greeter:** Nancy Weaber **Worship Leader:** Sally Kulp

### 10:00 am Service

**Greeters:** Terry & Suzie Schott **Sound:** Bob Dash

**Worship Leaders:** Kristi Fields, Darryl Brown

**Ushers** Kory & Ryan Leppo, Bob Dash, Kenny Patrick

**Counting Team** Ed & Candy Hibshman, Terry & Suzie Schott

**Advent Wreath Lighting:**

Jeremy, Gia, Camilla, Beckett, & Evangeline Zimmerman

## Search Committee Report:

We are excited to announce that at the Sunday, December 15 meeting, Council voted and passed unanimously to move forward in the process to hire a part-time pastor. **Rev. Paul R. Cronin** was approved in the role as a **Designated Pastor** for a three-year term and, hopefully, after three years we would be able to make it a full-time position.

Paul resides with his wife and family in Bernville, PA. Paul was ordained October 13, 1985 and his current standing is held in the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference by the PS Covenant Association. Pastor Paul is a 1976 graduate of LaRoche College with a degree in Religion/Psychology and a 1985 graduate from Lancaster Theological Seminary with a Masters of Divinity. Paul has served in five different congregations since 1983. He spent three years at United Church of Roscoe in New York, twelve years at First Congregational in Walton, NY, and twelve years at Faith Unity/New Creation UCC in Easton, PA. Paul has a lot of knowledge and experience and a few of his strengths are church growth and size transition, preaching, children sermons and connecting with the community.

The Trial Sermon will be held on **Sunday, January 5** with one service beginning at **9:00 A.M.** Following the service, Rev. John Fureman will be leading the congregation in a vote. All active member who are present that day are invited to vote. Additionally, a "Meet and Greet" will be held on **Saturday, January 4** in the Social Hall beginning at **6:00 P.M.** Paul will be introduced and then he will share his background, experience and excitement of becoming the new part-time pastor of Myerstown United Church of Christ. We will have an opportunity for a question and answer session and will conclude the evening with light refreshments.

If you have any questions, please direct them to the Search Committee or any member of Church Council.

## Stewardship Report for Sunday, December 15, 2019

|                         |         |                   |       |
|-------------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|
| General Fund            | \$4,775 | OCWM              | \$190 |
| Church Improvement Fund |         |                   | \$105 |
| Attendance 8 am:        | 18      | Attendance 10 am: | 55    |