

The Vineyard

*A publication to encourage and motivate participation in the family of God
and an aid in ministry for the members of Myerstown United Church of Christ.*



December 2022

Volume 41, Issue 12

editor: Lee Ann Kurash

from the Pastor... **“Somehow, the Word Got Through”**

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Fulfill.
Promise.
Strengthen.
Signs. Foreboding.
Redemption. Coming.
Prepare. Purify. Long.
Proclaim. Straighten. Sing.
Rejoice. Renew. Remove. See.
Restore. Trust. Peace. Repent.
Question. Expectation. Magnify.
Blessed. Mercy. Filled. Good. Womb.
Darkness. Light. Wonderful. Counselor.
Mighty. Everlasting. Establish. New. Tell.
Grace. Appeared. Salvation. Birth. Glory. News.
Great joy.
Amazed.
Ponder.

These are the strong words of Advent. From prophetic proclamations to joyous psalms, to apostolic encouragements, to the woe and weal recalled by the four evangelists, Advent’s words and themes are deep, rich, and intense. They are words of hope for communities of faith that had to face great challenges. Though different in time, place, and culture, the human dynamics and faith dimensions of prophets, psalmists, apostles, and evangelists, and the faith communities they addressed, are the same for us. The world weighs us down. Hope lifts us up. Redemption is always at hand.

Advent propels us again into the tension between past and future, fulfillment and promise, mystery and miracle. Advent invites us to consider what it means to live in between the once and future Christ. Advent reminds us as a faith community and as individuals that we are not alone on our journey through tumultuous times and uncertain days, empty abundance and abundant emptiness, cultural complexities and confounding conflicts. Ours is not the first faith community challenged and concerned about what tomorrow may bring.

We would do well to view this interim time as our own Advent. Just as the Spirit broke through an ancient empire and entrenched establishment by means of a humble birth, the Spirit breaks through our own pretensions of empire and establishment by means of humble rebirth. In spite of the power and pretensions of empire, tetrarchs and high priests, as well as long-calcified creeds and customs, somehow the Word of God got through. In spite of our best efforts and worst behaviors, the Word still gets through. God works with us when possible and in spite of us when necessary! Ponder the mystery. Engage the questions. Embrace the hope. Prepare the way of the Lord!

Advent and Christmas Blessings!
+ Bruce Greer, Interim Pastor

FROM THE PULPIT IN DECEMBER

ADVENT 1 – NOVEMBER 27

“What Goes Around Comes Around”

Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11-14;
Matthew 24:36-44

ADVENT 2 – DECEMBER 4

“The Strong Word(s) of Advent”

Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7,18-19;
Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

ADVENT 3 – DECEMBER 11

“Blooming with Joy”

Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 1:46b-55;
James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

ADVENT 4 – DECEMBER 18

To be announced

Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7,17-19;
Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

CHRISTMAS EVE – DECEMBER 24 (6 PM)

A Candle Light Service of Lessons and Carols

Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20

**** NO SERVICE ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25TH ****

REV. GREER'S SCHEDULE


Bruce is usually in Myerstown Sundays (8A-Noon), Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. He works at home in Baltimore on Mondays (feel free to contact him there). The “Pastor’s Day of Rest” is Friday. The Church Office will be advised of any changes to his schedule. Drop by to say “Hello!”

Bruce’s Contact information:

Email: revbgreer@gmail.com

Cell: 617.599.6305

(calls, texts, 24/7)



‘O Holy night, the stars are brightly
shining
It is the night of the dear Savior’s birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth’
from the hymn ‘O Holy Night’



The United Church of Christ says THANK YOU!
to the members of Myerstown UCC for your
2021 Contribution of \$12,650 in support of
‘Our Church’s Wider Mission’ of Changing Lives!

John C. Dorhauer
Gen. Minister and President
United Church of Christ

Thank you for being a 5 for 5 Congregation of the
United Church of Christ in 2021!
5 for 5 Congregations support Our Church’s Wid-
er Mission, Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of
Sharing, The Christmas Fund, and Strengthen the
Church Special Mission Offerings of the United
Church of Christ.

Rev. Dr.Carolyn Call
Penn Central Conference



Lebanon County Christian Ministries

December Wish List

We are in need of winter clothing for all.

We are in dire need of the following personal care items

- ~ size newborn 1, 6 and 7 diapers
- ~ shampoo
- ~ deodorant
- ~ body wash
- ~ tissues
- ~ shaving cream
- ~ feminine hygiene products
- ~ laundry detergent
- ~ paper towels
- ~ conditioner
- ~ toilet paper
- ~ bar soap
- ~ disposable razors

Current Wish List

- ~ oatmeal variety pack
- ~ Chunky/Progresso soups (ready made—no water added)
- ~ chicken broth
- ~ whole grain products
- ~ pancake mix
- ~ cooking oils
- ~ Jello/pudding
- ~ mayonnaise
- ~ mustard
- ~ 24 oz. tomato sauce
- ~ cold cereal
- ~ baked beans
- ~ bagged pasta
- ~ canned potatoes
- ~ gravy
- ~ ketchup
- ~ instant brown rice

Lebanon County Christian Ministries continues to operate as a help agency for Lebanon County.

Thank you for your ongoing support. Remember that besides food and clothing, other services are available at LCCM. If you have a need, please call LCCM at 717/272-4400.



Important! Mailboxes are set up in the Gathering Area for in-house Christmas cards. Please use only for those members who attend regularly. Thank you!

Our December Outreach will be The Christmas Fund

In December, our outreach focus will be The Christmas Fund. The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas 'Thank You' gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. A ministry of the Pension Boards, the offering has traditionally been received here in Myerstown on Christmas Eve but this year, since many member may be giving electronically, we invite you to contribute anytime during December. As always, simply indicate the amount you wish to donate on the 'special' line of an envelope.

Important!

Myerstown Women's Club will meet **Monday, December 5th** at 7:00 pm in the social hall.

December Council meeting will be held on **Tuesday, December 13th** at 6:30 pm in the Library.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 6:00 pm

New Horizons will not meet in December—Celebrate the true meaning of Christmas with family and friends!

Sunday, January 1st, 2023 9:00 am Worship Service/Communion

****If you receive the Vineyard electronically and would like a copy of our Members-In-Care list for your Christmas card list, please email the office at myerstownucc@comcast.net and I will forward you a copy.**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

December

- 1—Annabel Hemperly
- 2—Christine Wolfe
- 4—Jarod Rosen
- 5—Bill Brown
- 6—Tyler Faust
- 7—Gavin Bicher
- 8—Ted Batdorf, Brian Gibbel
- 10—Ritz Lentz
- 15—Doug Bohannon
- 16—Joyce Mitstifer
- 19—Mary Beth Diehm
- 20—Travis Bicher, Megan Thomas
- 21—Marsha Eisenhauer, Sheryl Runz
- 22—Marion Houtz
- 23—Trey Faust
- 25—Fritz Firestine,
Richard Wartluft
- 28—Kara Frantz
- 29—Gia Zimmerman
- 30—William Behney

Julius Muthengi Update

Dear Friends at Myerstown UCC,

Greetings in the matchless name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I trust this e-mail finds you doing well. Agnes and I are grateful to God for his grace, goodness and kindness to us and our family. We thank our God for friends like you who are committed to supporting us both in prayers and finances. Indeed, things would be really difficult without such support! We believe that you play such a role as a demonstration of your love for Christ, and commitment to advancing his kingdom globally.

We count it a privilege to serve the God of gods and Lord of lords! With regard to the ministry at the university, I praise God for enabling me to teach our students. In one of my courses today, we covered the books of 1&2 Chronicles. It was great to see God's faithfulness to his people, even when they were facing insurmountable challenges! As we shared with our partners earlier this year, our graduation is around the corner! Lord willing, it will take place on Saturday, November 19th, 2022. Please pray for those scheduled to graduate as they get into the ministry of fulfilling the Great Commission of our Lord, in Africa and beyond. Continue praying for our village ministry, especially for Agnes as she plans to minister to the women on Friday, November 25th, 2022. Pray particularly as she will be sharing God's word with the ladies, and also giving them foodstuffs. This is critical because many of our people are facing a drought, which has not been experienced in 40 years!

Thank you so much once again for standing in the gap. . . We acknowledge with sincere gratitude your support contribution of \$1160 which you sent through Grace Community Church in November, 2022. Please know that ours is to pray for God to bless you and the work of your hands. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, 2023! Thank you so much beloved.

In Christ's ministry,

Julius and Agnes Muthengi

