

Bethany Presbyterian Church
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News of Bethany

Straw for the Manger:

Creating a Matthew 25 Advent Season

Our 2019 Advent Devotional will be *Straw for the Manger*, from the creators of Presbyterians Today. It is written by the Rev.

Sherry Blackman, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church of the Mountain, in Delaware Water Gap. The devotional will let us explore the ways that we as individuals of all ages and as faith communities can be a “touchable God,” offering one another the gift of God’s presence and living our faith through the actions we do in Christ’s name.

Copies of *Straw for the Manger* will be available on Sunday mornings from the ushers or on the table in the Narthex. One copy will be available for each household in our congregation. This will be a wonderful opportunity for you and/or your family to join with other members of our congregation, as together, we journey through Advent to Christmas!

Mission Statement:
Bethany Presbyterian Church is a church making an impact on the lives of all people through the love of Jesus Christ.

A Christmas Carol Celebration:

A Cantata for Choir & Congregation

On Sunday morning, December 8, during morning worship, our Chancel Choir and Chamber Orchestra will present *A Christmas Carol Celebration: A Cantata for Choir & Congregation*. Brimming with fresh arrangements of favorite carols by Benjamin Harlan, with a creative narration written by Ragan Courtney, *A Christmas Carol Celebration* offers a unique and poetic perspective of the Birth of Christ. The Rev. Dr. Erin Cox-Holmes will be our guest narrator. Plan now to invite your family and friends to join you for this very special performance of the music of the season. You, and they, will be enriched by this beautiful musical experience!



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Bethany News & Notes



Special Dates in December 2019

1 Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 1

2 Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 8

3 Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 15



First Day of Winter
Saturday, December 21

4 Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 22

Christmas Eve
Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Day
Wednesday, December 25



New Year's Eve
Tuesday, December 31



Fifth Annual Advent Luncheon

On Sunday morning, December 8, Bethany Presbyterian Church will hold its Fifth Annual Advent Luncheon. The Luncheon will begin immediately following Worship, which **begins at 10:30am that day. Please note time change.**

Members are asked to bring either a salad, vegetable, or dessert to serve eight. The main entree this year will be turkey. Beverages will be provided by The Presbyterian Women. Items for the luncheon may be brought to the kitchen on Sunday morning before Worship. Donegal Hall will be open on Saturday, December 7, so that the tables may be decorated by individuals or families who wish to do so. Mark your calendars and join us for this time of festive food and fellowship as we celebrate the Advent Season.

The Giving Tree



Once again it's time to put up the giving tree. This year we are again assisting residents of Conestoga View. These are individuals who most likely would not receive a gift at the Holidays without our contributions. We also have chosen to provide gifts to a family from La Iglesia de Resurreccion.

As usual we will have tags on the Christmas tree with gift ideas. Please watch for the tree to appear and help "un-decorate" it by choosing a tag and supplying a gift. By doing so you are truly sharing God's love in this community. **Gifts are due no later than Sunday, December 15.** Please be sure to label your gifts for either Conestoga View or La Iglesia de Resurreccion.



From Pastor Kent's Desk

I'm listening to Christmas music as I write this. I vowed I'd wait until after Thanksgiving before I did, but how can you write about Christmas without Christmas music playing in the background? We've got more than 200 Christmas recordings on CD's and vinyl in our collection. Some go back to the 1960's but still sound great! Being musical purists, the collection is divided into Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany recordings. We're heavy on English cathedral choirs – there's nothing like the boy choir sound to make the season bright!

More than any other season of the church year, music plays an integral role in the celebration of the Advent/Christmas/Epiphany cycle. The carols, the hymns, the cantatas tug at our hearts and send them soaring. Each of us has our favorites, and the season wouldn't be complete if we didn't hear our "special music." It reminds us of Christmas' past, when we were children and our families were gathered all around the tree early on Christmas morning. We couldn't wait to open our gifts, and before we knew it, the wrapping paper was strewn all over the living room floor and we were busily playing with or assembling our "big gifts," as Christmas music played in the background.



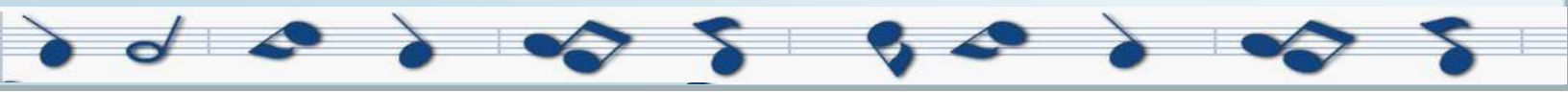
More than likely, we'd been at the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at church the night before. It was an opportunity to sing favorite carols and hear glorious anthems from the choir. When you were young, you snuggled-in next to your folks and dozed-off while the minister preached the obligatory Christmas Eve Sermon. It was the only other time during the year that the church was packed, and the minister had to make a good impression on the visitors! (I know that from experience!)

Our memories are wrapped-up in the music, and when I hear it, they come rushing back again. I know the Christ Child is the "reason for the season," but it is much more complicated than that. It becomes even more so with age. But lest we dwell only in the past, let's live fully into this season.

As we gather at Bethany for the Advent/Christmas/Epiphany cycle of 2019, let's make new memories. The Christ Child is the reason for the season – we must never forget that! Our hearts and minds are renewed each time he comes, and our lives take on new meaning for the coming year. So, here's to the music of the spheres as the angels join in chorus once again to announce the royal birth. The Babe of Bethlehem has come again to a waiting world!



A Very Merry Christmas to All! *Kent*





**WINTER PRAYER
REQUESTS**

**Anne Sensenig Eva Lauer Polly Snyder
Paul Siegler Judy Maier Agnes Taylor**



December Birthdays



12/12	Derek Martin	12/26	Anne Trach
12/19	Beverly Birk	12/27	Betty Gehman
12/22	Robert Rine	12/27	Robert Walker
12/25	Douglas Smith	12/30	Kelly Rine

Presbyterian Giving Catalog: Looking for gift ideas for the person who has everything. Copies of the Presbyterian Giving Catalog are on the literature display in the C.E. corridor. Gift suggestions include ways to help feed the hungry, comfort the broken-hearted, and share our faith with young and old, while letting your gift recipient know of your thoughtfulness in their name.



Homebound of Bethany



Betty Gehman
Homestead Village,
1800 Village Circle
Lancaster, Pa. 17603

Agnes Taylor
65 Mill Pond Dr.
Lancaster PA 17603

Adeline Henderson
The Glen Room 310
635 Willow Valley Square
Lancaster, Pa. 17602

Helen Cumpston
Mennonite Home
202B Jackson Run
Lancaster, Pa. 17601





SPECIAL OFFERINGS CHRISTMAS JOY

Christmas Joy Offering Helps Retired Minister Live with Dignity & Joy



Grocery shopping had become an anxiety-filled experience for the Rev. Gloria Casusus-Urrutia. Ten years after her 2006 retirement as organist at her church, Porta Coeli in San German, Puerto Rico, she found herself thrust into severe financial hardship. “I had to write down the price of each item and add everything up to make sure I had the money.”

I bet there are probably people in this room who know what that feels like, and it’s not good.

Her situation forced her to move four times over two years, and she struggled to find a safe and affordable place to live. Then, to make matters even worse, Hurricane Maria struck.

As we’ve all heard, much of Puerto Rico was devastated, and it isn’t hard to believe that Gloria was beset by a bevy of mental anguish and physical problems. “I had a panic attack, I had bronchitis, my arm was dislocated, and as if that wasn’t enough, my puppy had to be hospitalized for several days.”

But as a woman of faith, she was never in total despair. “I suffered a deep depression, but there was something that was not affected — my faith and trust in the God of love and mercy that we preach so much.” She prayed for people who suffered severe setbacks from the storm and gave thanks for the meager provisions she had.

But soon, God opened a door. Isn’t that so often the way? Gloria became aware that help might be available when she contacted the church’s Board of Pensions seeking an income certification letter so she could apply for government benefits. Her pension was small because she entered ministry later in life and served small congregations with limited financial resources. Maria Perry, a Board service specialist, took note of Gloria’s extremely modest income and urged her to apply to the Assistance Program.

“I saw light at the end of the tunnel,” Gloria said. Her life was about to become less of a struggle thanks to a grant from the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions. The Assistance Program is supported by gifts from congregations, just like ours, to the Christmas Joy Offering.

Gloria says her life “has taken on a new turn.” The grant enabled her to get her car fixed, and her grocery shopping is no longer such a worrisome chore.

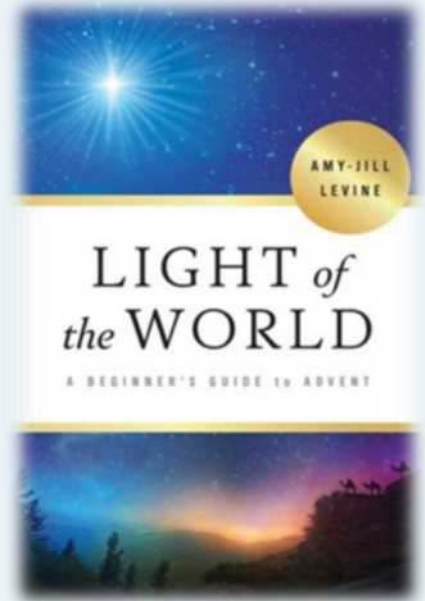
Gloria is so grateful for the gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering and for the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions they support. Gloria especially wants her Presbyterian family to know that she faithfully places her tithe in her congregation’s offering plate to share the blessings that she received. She said the generosity of Presbyterians and the work of the Board of Pensions bears witness to the care of the “Good Shepherd.”

2019 Advent Study

We will be exploring Advent in new and exciting way during Advent 2019. Our guide will be a new book by author, professor, and renown biblical scholar, Amy-Jill Levine. The title of the study is *Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent*. Dr. Levine is the University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School.

In the study, we will be focusing on the biblical texts surrounding the story of the birth of Jesus. We'll join Dr. Levine as she traces the Christmas narrative through the stories of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary, the journey to Bethlehem, and the visit from the Magi. These stories open conversations around connections of the Gospel stories to the Old Testament, the role of women in the first-century Jewish culture, the importance of Mary's visitation, and the revolutionary implications of Mary's Magnificat, the census and the stable, and the star of Bethlehem and the flight to Egypt.

Our study will begin on Wednesday morning, November 27, at 10am in Memorial Parlor. Copies of the book will be available in the Narthex, or from Rev. Holmes. Plan on joining us for what will be an intellectually stimulating and spiritually nurturing experience! It will be a wonderful addition to your Advent preparations.



Thank You from Pack 4

Pack 4 thanks all the people of Bethany who donated used ties for our craft project. We made tie snakes to fit with our theme of creepy crawlers. Thank you so much and we hope you enjoy seeing just one sample of the end result of your ties.

The Scouts & leaders of Cub Scout Pack 4



WORSHIP



December 1, 2019 @ 10:00 a.m. - First Sunday in Advent
 The Message: "Keeping Awake" Scripture: Matthew 24:36-44
 Preaching: Rev. Holmes

December 8, 2019 @ 11:00 a.m. - Second Sunday in Advent
Christmas Carol Celebration: A Cantata for Choir and Congregation
 Chancel Choir & Orchestra & Advent Luncheon Following Worship

December 15, 2019 @ 10:00 a.m. - Third Sunday in Advent
 The Message: "In the Wilderness" Scripture: Matthew 11:2-11
 Preaching: Rev. Holmes

December 22, 2019 @ 10:00 a.m. - Fourth Sunday in Advent
 The Message: "Sounds of the Season"
 Music for Piano/Four-Hands: Derek Martin & Kent Holmes

December 24, 2019 @ 7:00 p.m. - Christmas Eve
 Candlelight & Carols The Message: "The Night Before Christmas"
 Preaching: The Rev. Dr. Erin Cox-Holmes



December 29, 2019 @ 10:00 a.m. - First Sunday After Christmas
 The Message: "Out of Egypt" Scripture: Matthew 2:13-23 Preaching: Rev. Holmes

January 5, 2019 @ 10:00 a.m. - Epiphany of the Lord
 The Message: "From the East" Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12 Preaching: Rev. Holmes
 Celebration of the Lord's Supper



	December 1	December 8	December 15	December 22	December 24	December 29
Greeters	Jim Grossman	Susie Paxson	Sylvia Doyle	Jim Grossman		Eva Lauer
Fellowship	Jim Grossman		Sylvia Doyle	Jim Grossman		Eva Lauer
Ushers	Elaine Bornstein Sylvia Doyle	Joyce Richards Diane Ashba Jim Grossman	Willa Pedrick Gail Feigley	Sue & Fred Fetterman	Jim Grossman Eva Lauer Larry & Sylvia Doyle	Pete Paxson Larry Doyle
Liturgists	David Schwartz	Lori Pickell	Judy Maier	Elaine Bronstein		Sue Fetterman

December 2019



Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 1 Sunday in Advent 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:30 A.M. Resurrection 2:00 P.M. Oromo	2 6:45 P.M. Scouts 7:00 P.M. Cub Scouts	3 7:00 P.M. Troop Committee Meeting	4 10:00 A.M. Light of the World 8:00 P.M. Al Anon	5	6 All Saints' Day 7:00 P.M. AA 8:00 P.M. Al Anon	7 8:00 A.M. Men's Breakfast
8 2 Sunday in Advent 10:30 A.M. Worship & Advent Luncheon 11:30 A.M. Resurrection 2:00 P.M. Oromo	9 6:45 P.M. Scouts 7:00 P.M. Cub Scouts	10 7:00 P.M. District Roundtable Meeting	11 10:00 A.M. Light of the World 8:00 P.M. Al Anon	12	13 7:00 P.M. AA 8:00 P.M. Al Anon Scout Camp Out	14
15 3 Sunday in Advent 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:30 A.M. Resurrection 2:00 P.M. Oromo Scout Camp Out	16 5:30 P.M. Scout Christmas Party	17 7:00 P.M. Pack Meeting	18 10:00 A.M. Light of the World 8:00 P.M. Al Anon	19	20 7:00 P.M. AA 8:00 P.M. Al Anon	21 First Day of Winter 6:45 P.M. White Deer Run
22 4 Sunday in Advent 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:30 A.M. Resurrection 2:00 P.M. Oromo	23	24 Christmas Eve 8:00 P.M. Service 	25 Christmas 	26	27 7:00 P.M. AA 8:00 P.M. Al Anon	28
29 10:00 A.M. Worship 11:30 A.M. Resurrection 2:00 P.M. Oromo	30	31 New Year's Eve 		Office Hours: Tues - Thurs 9:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.		