



The CHIMES

MUHLENBERG: A WELLSPRING OF GRACE

Muhlenberg Lutheran Church strives to be a Wellspring of God's Grace in Jesus Christ.

Open ✚ Authentic ✚ Relational ✚ Serving

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December 16, 2018

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

WHAT'S THE BUZZ

CELEBRATING MUHLENBERG'S ANNIVERSARY

TODAY we will celebrate the 170th Anniversary of Muhlenberg Lutheran Church.

It was on Sunday, December 17, 1848 that a small group of Lutherans gathered in Harrisonburg and signed a document requesting the formation of a congregation under the leadership of Pastor John J. Suman. This event was reported to the Virginia Synod in May 1849, the year in which the church was officially incorporated.

The congregation's first building from 1850 was a white frame structure on North Main & Wolfe Street. When Pastor Suman resigned in 1853, the church consisted of 48 members and the Sunday School had an enrollment of 100 children. The synodical minutes from 1853 noted that the church held a weekly lecture, a monthly concert, and prayer meetings. For its first seventy years, the synod played a major role financially in keeping the congregation solvent. The church survived difficult times as most pastors stayed for only a few years and as Harrisonburg and the nation encountered many challenges.

In June 1949, one hundred years after its incorporation, the congregation broke ground for a new church at our present location. The choir sang, the synodical superintendent (bishop) gave the blessing, and a neighboring pastor from Winchester preached. The cornerstone was set in place in April 1950 and the church dedicated in 1952. The cornerstone of our present church contains items from the cornerstones of the original 1850 white frame structure and from the 1889 brick church built on the same site.

During recent years, Muhlenberg has experienced sustained growth in the midst of changing times. We are not bound by the limitations of our heritage but strive to make the gospel of Jesus Christ relevant for our time. As we prepare to celebrate our Lord's coming, we joyfully thank God for the faith and commitment of the saints of Muhlenberg who preceded us. To God alone be the glory!



TODAY AT MUHLENBERG

A NEW HYMN FOR MUHLENBERG ON ITS 170TH ANNIVERSARY

Today we celebrate Muhlenberg's 170th anniversary. Pastor Paul has written a new text and tune for our congregation that we will sing today to celebrate this Anniversary. It is modeled on our mission to be a "Wellspring of God's Grace" and depicts the four words that describe our mission: open, authentic, relational and serving. Though Pastor Paul wrote the tune itself years ago, it will be used for the first time with this new text and carries the name, MUHLENBERG.

The wellspring of God's saving grace flows freely as we pray:

God's undeserved and boundless love brings life and joy this day.

How wonderful to share this grace with every child of God,

We open wide our hearts to all and love as we are loved.

The source of life, the fount of love, is found among us here:

In word and water, wine and bread, God's saving grace appears.

That grace, descending from the cross, forgives our sinful deeds:

Your love, O Jesus, fills our hearts with comfort, hope, and peace.

Come, Holy Spirit, live in us through faith by grace alone:

Unite our wills to serve in love that all may be your own.

Then let our voices join the hymn that streams through endless space:

"O God, the wellspring of all love, we sing your wondrous grace!"

FINANCIAL NEWS

LAST WEEK'S ATTENDANCE

8:00 Worship	67	Wed. Noon	9
9:30 Worship	134		
11:00 Worship	<u>135</u>		
Total	336		

FINANCIAL REPORT

Through October 2018			
	Y-T-D Actual	Y-T-D Budget	Y-T-D Last Year
Gifts & Offerings	\$629,570	\$727,886	\$654,335
Total Receipts	\$717,730	\$816,245	\$740,839
Expenses	\$766,109	\$881,741	\$764,851
Excess Income/ (Expenses)	(\$48,379)	(\$65,496)	(\$24,012)

Giving in support of our Spending Plan	\$	8,994.17
Giving to Other Designated Funds	\$	<u>6,550.00</u>
Total Giving for the Week	\$	15,544.17

See Connection Center notebook for details.

November Thrivent Choice Dollars: \$234



To give online, scan here →

*For additional financial news,
see page 4.*

WELCOME GUESTS

We are blessed to welcome our guests today. We have a gift waiting for you at the Welcome Desk in the Gathering Area (main church entrance) and ask that you complete a blue guest card and/or sign our guest register. If you prefer, you may scan this QR code or to securely register online visit us at www.muhlenberglutheran.org.



TODAY AT MUHLENBERG (CONT'D)

PHOTO DIRECTORY UPDATE

An updated directory will assist Pastor Lauren during her transition. We encourage all members to participate in the directory update. **TODAY** photographers will be in the lower level of the Gathering Area. It only takes about 5 minutes to complete/update your information and take your photo!

SECOND HOME FOOD COLLECTION

TODAY we collect *graham crackers* for Second Home. Place donations in the designated bin in the Gathering Area. If you wish to help and prefer to make a cash donation, designate *Second Home food* on your check and envelope.

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM & HYMN SING with Minister of Music Emeritus Don Smith



Christian Formation classes (ages 2–5th grades) will present a Christmas program at **4:00 pm** in the sanctuary. Afterward, Don will provide music for an old-fashioned hymn sing. Our children and the Christian Formation team are excited to present this program and hope you will attend this evening of Christmas joy. Afterward, refreshments will be available in the Gathering Area.

THIS WEEK AT MUHLENBERG

GO-GO GROUP BREAKFAST

Are you 55+ and enjoy fellowship with others? Join the Go-Go Group at Thomas House in Dayton **THIS Tuesday, December 18, 8:30 am**. Contact Dan Werner at 433-3912 for more information about the group and its activities.

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

NEW PASTOR

Through the work of the Holy Spirit, Muhlenberg has new pastoral leadership. Pastor Lauren Miller has accepted the call to become our new Senior Pastor. She will begin at Muhlenberg January 1, 2019.



SAYING GOODBYE TO OUR INTERIM PASTORS

We are transitioning into a new call in 2019, and that also means we'll give great thanks and heartfelt blessings to Pastors Mark and Paul. They have been a joy to the life and ministry of our congregation during our call process, and trusted mentors to Council. Together, with Pastor Lauren, they've agreed to step away starting January 1 and allow Pastor Lauren to find her way, but they'll be close enough to provide support as trusted colleagues.

Pastor Lauren is excited to begin a new life in ministry among us and I believe we are prepared for what God's plan is for us. We're working on a proper blessing and sending for Pastor Mark and Pastor Paul as well as a formal way for us to thank them, so stay tuned!

Tim Peifer, Congregation Council President

CONTACTING OUR PASTORS

Reach our pastors at any time by calling the church office (434-3496).

- During office hours, ask to speak with Linda Depoy. She has the pastors' schedules and can assist you.
- After hours leave a message on their voicemail and it will be immediately forwarded to their respective cell phones. They will respond as soon as possible.

REMEMBER/HONOR LOVED ONES

ALTERNATIVE OPPORTUNITY

If you wish to remember a loved one during this Holy Season, we offer a local opportunity in **Our Community Place** (OCP – a community center dedicated to serving those who are struggling) and a global opportunity in **ELCA Disaster Response** (an ELCA mission – see *Connection Center for details*).

1. **Sign up** in the notebook at the Connection Center (**blue forms in the front of the book**).
2. **Make your contribution.** Ensure correct credit/designation by indicating “**OCPC Christmas Gift**” or “**Disaster Response Christmas Gift**” on the memo line of your check. Place your check in the offering plate or bring it to the church office.

We will publish the name of your loved one(s) in an insert during the Christmas season (as we do for poinsettia donations). **Deadline is TODAY.**

MUHLENBERG NEWS

CREATION CARE TIP

Wrap presents in gift bags. Once you tear the wrapping paper off a holiday gift it ends up in the recycle bin, but gift bags can be reused. Use the comics section of the newspaper, outdated maps, or paper grocery bags to wrap gifts. Look for gift bags made with recycled content or use plain paper bags and decorate them yourself with recycled holiday cards.

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

If you have not had the opportunity to respond to our stewardship emphasis, you may place your time/talent inventory and commitment card in the box at the Connection Center in the Gathering Area where stewardship materials are still available. *Stewardship Ministry Team*

FINANCE NEWS

CHURCH FINANCIAL UPDATE

Our overall gifts and offerings in 2018 are about \$25,000 less than 2017. The Church staff and ministry teams have done a solid job reducing expenses (about \$12,000 less than 2017) but we are still operating at a significant deficit of \$46,000. For the first time in many years, we have to dip into our “cash reserves” in order to pay the operating expenses for the church. As we close out 2018, please prayerfully consider a step up in your giving to help with our financial situation.

The Finance Committee

SIMPLY GIVING NOTICE

If you are enrolled in our Simply Giving program and wish to make a change in your giving for 2019, please put a note in my box or send me an email. I will make the changes the first of the year.

Janet Simmons (gandjsimmons@gmail.com)

END-OF YEAR-GIVING

If you are 70½, you can give to Muhlenberg from your IRA with no tax liability. Have the check sent directly to MLC from your IRA and there will be no tax to pay on this withdrawal. **A great way to support Muhlenberg!** Call *Terry Looney (437-0038)* or *Janet Simmons (434-5258)* with any questions.

ANNUAL REPORTS DUE

Attention Committee/Ministry Chairs: If you have not already, please send your annual report to Parish Administrator Linda Depoy (depoy@mhlenberglutheran.org) as soon as possible. If a copy of your 2017 report would be helpful, email or call Linda (434-3496) and she will be glad to provide it.

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

The Ministry teams of Christian Formation and Local & Global Mission are offering many opportunities to make your Advent and Christmas a time of sharing with others. By providing these different opportunities, we hope you find one that touches your heart. Another way you and your family can take part is by praying for those who are in need in our world! Contact Diane Bayer (bayer@muhlenberglutheran.org or 434-3496) with any questions about these projects

ALTERNATIVE ADVENT

Do something different as part of your Advent devotions. Pick up a box (available in the Gathering Area) and during your daily devotions, put something in the box (a can of soup or vegetables, a bar of soap, a toothbrush or toothpaste, etc.). Return your box **December 23**. We will bless the boxes on Christmas Eve and then share them with those in need.

GOOD GIFTS ADVENT TREE

And Advent Devotional Calendars

The Caring Corner has a small tree with ELCA Good Gifts ornaments which provide different opportunities to give to World Hunger. Remove an ornament and make a donation to **ELCA World Hunger** by visiting ELCA.org/goodgifts. You can make a general gift by writing a check to Muhlenberg and designating World Hunger in the memo line! ELCA World Hunger Advent Devotional Calendar are available in the Gathering Area.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

FAMILY DEVOTIONALS

Devotional calendars and offering boxes are available on the tables in the Gathering Area. Make time each day for devotions as we all prepare and wait for God's most precious gift to be given – His own son Jesus Christ our Lord. Return **offering boxes to the Gathering Area by Christmas Eve**.

ADVENT EMAIL DEVOTIONAL

Advent, the season of the church in which we wait for Christ to be born, is represented by four major words: Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. During Advent we invite you to participate in spiritual growth as you connect to those four words and four important words to Muhlenberg: Open, Authentic, Relational, and Serving.

Sign up for daily emails on our website: Member Pages > Advent Devotions 2018

CHRISTMAS EVENING DINNER

For several years, First Presbyterian Church has hosted a Christmas dinner for local people experiencing homelessness, or anyone looking for food and fellowship. This year, First Presbyterian is unable to host the meal, so it will be held in the MAC. Muhlenberg members are invited to help with meal and games. *Exact time and details to follow next week.*

For the Christmas worship schedule and additional information, see page 6.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

OFFICE CLOSED

The church office will be closed Dec. 25 & 26.

NO NOON SERVICE DEC. 26

Wednesday, December 26 is a holiday for staff, so there will not be a noon service that day.

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

O COME, LET US ADORE HIM

Once again this year we will gather around the manger of our Lord and worship the Christ who was born to save. All three of our services this Christmas will be resplendent with carols, special music, the Christmas story from Luke, and Holy Communion as we celebrate the presence of Christ in our midst.

On Christmas Eve, the 4:30 pm service will include a special children's message and homily by Pastor Mark. Pastor Paul will preach at the 6:30 and 9:00 pm liturgies with Kathy Thompson telling the gospel story at the 6:30 service. All three services will begin with the centuries old Proclamation of Christmas pronounced by our pastors and conclude with candle lighting and the singing of *Silent Night*.

At 10 am on Christmas Day, the Nativity of Our Lord, we will celebrate the birthday of our King with a special service. Worship on Christmas Day is one of the highlights of our faith as we quietly reflect on the deeper meaning of the coming of God as a child. A children's message and homily will be shared by Pastor Paul on the gospel reading from John 1, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth."

On December 30, the First Sunday after Christmas, our celebration will continue with a service of readings and carols with a final homily given by Pastor Mark. This service will mark the conclusion of the ministry of our interim pastors as we anticipate the arrival of Pastor Lauren on January 1.

As we share farewells and leave 2018 behind, with all the gifts and experiences that God has

given us to share, we look forward in anticipation to a New Year of God's grace under the leadership of our new pastor! Thank you, Pastor Mark and Pastor Paul!



12/24 – Christmas Eve Services
4:30, 6:30 & 9:00 pm

12/25 – Christmas Day Service
10:00 am

**12/30 – First Sunday after
Christmas**
8:00, 9:30 & 11:00 am

SECOND HOME NEWS



A busy November ended with our Thanksgiving family meal and our 13-member *Girls on the Run* team participating in a 5K at Skyline Middle School. Although December is a short month for us, it is packed with activities and excitement:

We participated in the Holiday Parade on December 7.

Our 5th grade students are learning about music as they write their own songs. Students are learning the importance of following directions and polishing their small motor skills as they make seasonal crafts and ornaments. The musical team is hard at work, starting auditions this week for different parts for our next musical.

A big, red-dressed fellow and his wife are preparing to visit Second Home students on December 21, just in time for the holidays! He and his wife travel from Richmond every December to bring us some holiday cheer. Each child receives a gift, can pick out books to take home and we celebrate with crafts and cookies. For some of our students these may be the only gifts they receive for Christmas. We are so grateful to our supporters who donate the toys and Santa and Mrs. Claus who donate their time and love each year!

Would you like to learn more or get involved? Contact Executive Director Krisztina Szekely at 2ndhomedirector@gmail.com or 432-7989



YOUTH & CAMPUS NEWS

For more information, contact Mycah McNett (mcnett@muhlenberglutheran.org or 434-3496).

CHRISMON DECORATING

Alpha Teens (6th - 8th grade youth) are invited to stay after church **TODAY at 12:15** to help Muhlenberg get ready for Christmas by putting up and decorating the Chrismon Tree! When we're done, we'll have hot chocolate and cookies.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION NEWS

Contact Christian Formation Minister Diane Bayer (434-3496 or bayer@muhlenberglutheran.org) for more information.

Pick up a green Christian Formation brochure from the Connection Center. It contains information about classes for children and adults.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

During the 11:00 service children 3-7 years old are invited to Children's Church. It is held the 1st & 3rd Sundays each month. After Children's Time with a pastor, children are escorted downstairs to the Nielsen Room. Children return to their parents in the Sanctuary during the Sharing of the Peace.

THIRD SUNDAY SERVICE PROJECT

Today and every third Sunday of the month, K-3rd graders are undertaking a service project in the MAC. We invite parents to participate in this activity with their children.

A REMINDER TO PARENTS

TODAY students Pre-K – 5th grade will be in the MAC practicing for our Children's Christmas Program scheduled for **THIS AFTERNOON at 4:00 pm** in the Sanctuary. There will be no Children's Church **TODAY**.

JOYS, THANKS & CONCERNS

This is the space for sharing joys, thanks, and concerns of our congregation, our synod, and the wider church. Please lift these up as a part of your daily prayers. To share joy, thanks, or concern (e.g. birth, illness, injury, or death of an immediate family member; thank-you and congratulatory notes, etc.), contact Parish Administrator Linda Depoy (434-3496 or depoy@muhlenberglutheran.org). Submissions will be printed with consideration for space and appropriateness at the discretion of the editor and pastors.

✚ We offer sympathy to the families of the following members who died recently:

- Jimmy Garber died unexpectedly November 20 while visiting family in Charlotte, NC. A service was held at Kyger Funeral Home.
- Maxine Dean died December 7 at Bridgewater Retirement Community. A service was held at Lantz Chapel.
- Marie “Anne” Harter died this past December 10. A service was held Friday, December 14 at Muhlenberg.

✚ Thanks Be to God for the birth of Tanner Robert Runion on December 5. Tanner is the son of Andrew & Kacey Runion and grandson of Bob & Johanna Runion. (Andrew & Kacey’s address: 3517 Mallard Drive, Bridgewater, 22812)

✚ The JAMers thank everyone who helped with the Salvation Army Santa Bags, from those who brought in items to those who sorted and filled the bags. Children, youth and adults working together using “Our hands to do God’s Work” filled 40+ bags that will bring joy to seniors in our community!

We also thank all who brought gifts for the Salvation Army Tree. Your spirit of giving and generosity will help to make this Christmas brighter for children in our area.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

PRAYING OUR FAITH TOGETHER!

For individual and family use. Scripture citations taken from ELW’s 3-Year Daily Lectionary, p. 1143- 1153, (Year C).

Mon. Hebrews 13:7-17 Thu. Hebrews 10:10-18
Tue. Acts 28:23-31 Fri. Hebrews 10:32-39
Wed. Luke 7:31-35 Sat. Luke 13:31-35
Sun. Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

WEEKLY CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

December 17-23, 2018

Mon. 2:00 pm Weekly Staff Meeting
6:30 pm Congregation Council Meeting

Tue. 8:30 am Go-Go Group Breakfast
4:45 pm SonShine Singers
5:30 pm Cherub Choir
6:30 pm Celebration Singers
7:00 pm Gloria Dei Ringers

Wed. 12 noon Holy Communion
7:15 pm Sanctuary Choir

Sun. Fourth Sunday of Advent
8:00, 9:30 & 11:00 am Holy Communion
9:30 am Christian Formation

The weekly deadline for routine articles for *The Chimes* is Thursday at 8 am. Requests for a series, inserts or full-column articles should be made two weeks in advance. Submit information to Linda Depoy (depoy@muhlenberglutheran.org/434-3496).

Additionally, requests to utilize space in the **Gathering Area on Sunday or post information at the planned**, but no later than Thursdays at 8 am.

Check bulletin boards for community information.

Like us at [facebook.com/muhlenberglutheran](https://www.facebook.com/muhlenberglutheran)