



The CHIMES

MUHLENBERG: A WELLSPRING OF GOD'S GRACE

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

Open † Authentic † Relational † Serving

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January 3, 2021

SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

WHAT'S THE BUZZ

GENEROSITY MATTERS: YEAR-END GIVING

Now is the time for year-end giving! We've had to pivot more than once this year in how we do church, but the growth we've seen and connections we've made online continue to make a difference in the lives of people around the Valley and beyond. A year-end gift helps us continue to equip all people to live out the love of Christ wherever they are. Invest in the mission of the church by giving here: www.muhlenberglutheran.org/give.

We will accept 2020 offerings through **TODAY, January 3, 2021**. Date your check and envelope for 2020. Please do not include 2020 & 2021 offerings in the same check.

For members who participate in **Simply Giving** and are changing the amount for 2021, document the change and email it to me.

2021 offering envelopes have been mailed. (We ordered fewer for 2021 - people with previous envelope numbers 276-300 have been changed to a new, lower number.) Contact me with any questions.

Tim Wessel twessel@aol.com or 803-528-0239

GENEROSITY MATTERS: THANK YOU!

Thank you, Muhlenberg, for your generous response to the fall Generosity Matters campaign! To date, we've received a 12.5% increase in the number of pledges from last year (from 71 to 80), with an 18% increase in totals (over \$50,000 more pledged in 2021!) It's not too late to submit an Estimate of Giving at <https://forms.gle/V6tnk3W46MwqfHNN6>.

COUNCIL OFFICERS ELECTED

We are blessed to have the following officers elected to serve in 2021:

President: Karen Thomsen
Vice-President: Greta Willis
Secretary: Jenny Gibson
Treasurer: Bill Vance*

*Bill continues as our Treasurer until March 2021. (see article on page 3)

We give thanks for these leaders and their willingness to serve! A special thanks to our outgoing president, Gary Calleo, for his faithful and dedicated leadership the past two years.

Even though it's the first Sunday, we will NOT have a parking lot special event today. We invite you to participate in Epiphany **services THIS Wednesday, January 6**. See p. 3 for details. Join us for a parking lot service next Sunday, January 10 at 4:00 pm.

TODAY AT MUHLENBERG (CONT'D)

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Join your Muhlenberg friends and family for education and fellowship via [ZOOM](#) each Sunday from 8:30 – 11:00 using this link:

[HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/84731416878](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84731416878)

8:30 – 9:00 Communion Service via Zoom
 9:00 – 11:00 “Coffee Hour” Fellowship
 9:30 – 10:00 K - 3rd Grade Class
 9:30 – 10:00 4th - 5th Grade Class
 9:30 – 10:30 Adult Faith Lens Class
 9:30 – 10:30 Adult 40-Day Journey Class
 10:15– 10:30 Pre-K Story Time
 11:00 Worship on [Facebook](#),
[YouTube](#), Wellstream Phone

- **Pastoral Care** ~ If you would like a private word with the pastor on call, we will provide a breakout room for you.
- **Small Group Fellowship** ~ Want to catch up with a small group of friends? We have private breakout rooms for that!

If you don't have a reliable internet connection, call in on Sundays at 1-301-715-8592 and enter the Meeting ID: 84731416878.

WELLSTREAM PHONE

We want all members to have the opportunity to “participate” in worship and hear The Word. **Wellstream Phone is a service that works from your home or cell phone — no internet required. Simply call the number below and select an option. Information will be available by 11 am each Sunday.** Contact Linda Depoy (434-3496) with any questions.

Wellstream Phone Number:

1-434-205-8777

FINANCIAL NEWS

RECENT ATTENDANCE

Here are some interesting statistics from our recent online viewership:

12/20	8:30 Communion	15
	11:00 Total Live Views	113
	4:00 Children's Christmas Prog.	45
	7:00 Longest Night	101
12/24	4:30 Total Live Views	72
	7:00 Communion	60
	9:00 Total Live Views	50
	4:30-midnight Total Views	365*

12/20-12/26	Total Views	2,241
	Total Hours Viewed	582.3

12/27	11:00 Total Live Views	89
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Month of December:

Total Unique Viewers	10,220
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*People watched the Christmas Eve service at the time that worked for them. From 4:30 – midnight, 365 screens participated. A large number of those screens had more than one or two people behind them as many of families gathered to watch. Using Synod guidelines, if we average just 2 people per screen, that means that the total number of Christmas Eve worshippers we had this year was more than last year's total attendance of 701. Pretty cool!

FINANCIAL REPORT

Through November 2020			
	Y-T-D Actual	Y-T-D Budget	Y-T-D Last Year
Gifts & Offerings	\$561,483	\$778,337	\$624,790
Total Receipts*	\$719,884	\$877,902	\$715,607
Expenses	\$727,723	\$891,130	\$748,891
Excess Income/ (Expenses)	(\$7,839)	(\$13,228)	(\$33,283)

Giving in support of our Spending Plan	\$ 11,470.00
Giving to Other Designated Funds	\$ 85.00
Total Giving for the Week	\$ 11,735.00

To give online, scan here →



THIS WEEK

EPIPHANY WORSHIP JANUARY 6

Every year on January 6, the twelve days of Christmas come to a close and the church celebrates the revelation of Christ to all nations as represented by the magi (wise men) who come to worship Jesus. Many cultures have specific traditions around Epiphany, including gift giving and blessing of homes for the new year. At Muhlenberg, we will celebrate Epiphany through a special livestreamed Holden Evening Prayer service, **Wednesday, January 6, at 7:00 pm** on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#). Join us!

The Virginia Synod is also hosting an Epiphany service on [Zoom](#) at **7:00 pm**. Several members of Muhlenberg will be sharing in storytelling in this service. The Zoom Meeting ID is 835 0408 1651; the passcode is "Epiphany."

If you can't decide which service to attend, feel free to do both! Worship on Zoom at 7:00 pm, then go to YouTube to watch the video of Muhlenberg's service.

WEDNESDAY AM BIBLE STUDY

Wednesdays at 10:30 am, participants study the Narrative Lectionary text for the upcoming Sunday. All are welcome to join via [ZOOM](#) using the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/200491556>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

VIRGINIA INTERFAITH CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Day for All People January 18-21

Join people of faith and goodwill from across Virginia to make your voice heard on economic, racial, social, and environmental justice issues. Learn the issues from dynamic speakers and workshops, meet with legislators and engage with advocates in your region. Register at tinyurl.com/dfap2021.



ONLINE WINTER CELEBRATION

January 22-24, 2021

Registration Now Open

Winter Celebration is Virginia Synod's annual weekend faith-formation retreat for youth in 9th - 12th grades and adult leaders. This year we will gather online for large group experiences with lots of singing, skits and fun, and small group experiences with lots of new friends, games, conversation, and faith sharing! **Deadline to register is January 5, 2021.** To register after this date, please contact Rev. Dave Delaney (delaney@vasynod.org or 540-529-6893). For more information and to register online, visit

www.vasynod.org/event/winter-celebration.

MUHLENBERG NEWS

UPDATED GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL SERVICES

The Gathering Together Task Force has put into place new guidelines for weddings, funerals and baptisms. As the local COVID numbers continue to rise, we will abide by the Governor's limit of no more than ten people at a gathering, indoors or outdoors. (Parking lot events allow for larger gatherings because people can remain in their vehicles.) You can read the complete Muhlenberg Gathering Together guidance at muhlenberglutheran.org/covid19.

TREASURER NEEDED

Our Treasurer, Bill Vance, will be moving to North Carolina this spring. We are grateful for all Bill has done to manage our finances this year! We are now looking for a new Treasurer, and it would be ideal to identify this person before Bill moves so he can help train them. Duties include preparation of monthly financials, bank reconciliation and journal entries; preparation of federal and state quarterly payroll reports and annual W-2's and Form 1099; preparation and presentation of the annual spending plan; and serving as a voting member of the Executive Committee, Finance Committee, and Congregation Council. Duties are shared with an Assistant Treasurer. Ideally, the Treasurer will be someone with education and experience in accounting. The time commitment is approximately 10-15 hours a month. Contact Congregation Council Past President Gary Calleo (vnccall@yahoo.com or 540-421-5463) if you would like to learn more.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Each year, representatives from all ELCA congregations in the Virginia Synod gather to experience and express what it means to be called to be church together as the Body of Christ, through attending to necessary items of business, experiencing corporate worship, and engaging in fellowship and faith formation.

This year's Synod Assembly will be held **Friday, June 11 — Saturday, June 12**, at Roanoke College. Muhlenberg may elect up to 6 voting members to attend the assembly; we will hold this election at the Congregational Meeting **Sunday, January 24**. If you are interested in attending Synod Assembly or would like more information, *please contact Pastor Lauren or Council Vice-President Greta Willis.*

CREATION CARE TIP



Creation Care offers a simple tip that will help you protect God's earth. Contact Ramona Sanders for more information: 433-1165 or rsanders97@verizon.net.

The fastest, most effective way to protect the planet is to mobilize the most powerful consumer force in the world---women. Women spend eighty-five to ninety-two percent of every dollar in the marketplace. When we harness the power of our purse---either by buying less or buying green---manufacturers respond. Women have a whole planet full of power. During 2021, Creation Care Ministry (CCM) will suggest simple and quick environmental lifestyle changes each one of us can make regardless of how much money we spend. CCM will offer sensible, time-saving, and immediate strategies for green living that we all can incorporate into our daily life.

You are invited to a ...

Congregational Meeting

Sunday, January 24

beginning at 12:15 via [ZOOM](#)

(same Zoom link we use Sunday mornings)

Annual Meeting Agenda:

- + Review 2020 Year-End Reports
- + Elect Nominating Committee
- + Elect Synod Assembly Delegates*
- + Recognize Outgoing Council President
- + Recognize Outgoing Council Members
- + New Business

**See page 4 for
details about Synod Assembly.*



Watch The Chimes for participation instructions.

JOYS, THANKS & CONCERNS

✚ We extend sympathy to the family of Jackie Kiser who died on December 26. Jackie and much of her family have been long-time members of Muhlenberg.

Our hearts are full of gratitude for the calls, emails, cards, visits, flowers, gifts, food, and other kindnesses extended to us since Lee's cancer diagnosis, during treatments, and after his death. We felt the constant thoughts and faithful prayers from afar - each a daily reminder to Lee that he was cared for and loved by his Muhlenberg family!

The support from Pastors Alex, Lauren and Briehl during difficult times was appreciated! Thanks to all who worked to include Lee in the paper chain links in the Sanctuary and celebrating, and remembering him during All Saints Sunday services...it meant a lot to us!!!

The contributions being made to REFI for the scholarship established in memory of Lee will be a part of helping a Broadway High School senior with a financial need pursue an interest in music, accounting, business. All three, and caring for others, were "near and dear" to Lee's heart...and so to our hearts too! Thank you so much for your generosity!!!

I personally appreciate the meals brought to me when I was moving and the hands helping "pack up my kitchen." My new address is:

**391 Silver Oaks Drive
Rockingham, VA 22801**

Come to see me when COVID-19 conditions allow for safe visiting!

Lisa and Amanda join me in sending love and prayers for those facing health challenges and mourning the loss of loved ones. Stay safe from this virus! Blessings, Brenda Branner

WEEKLY CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

January 4-10

If viewing electronically, you can click the links below to access meetings and services.

- Mon. 2:00 pm** Weekly Staff Meeting
- Wed. 10:30 am** Wed. Morning Bible Study via [ZOOM](#)
- 7:00 pm** Epiphany Holden Evening Prayer via [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)
- Sun. Baptism of Our Lord**
[Sunday am ZOOM link](#)
- 8:30 am** Communion Service
- 9:00 am** "Coffee Hour" begins
- 8:30 am** Communion Service
- 9:00 am** "Coffee Hour" begins
- 9:30 am** K – 3rd Grade Class
- 9:30 am** 4th - 5th Grade Class
- 9:30 am** Faith Lens Class
- 9:30 am** 40-Day Journey Class
- 11:00 am** Service Livestreamed via [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)
- 4:00 pm** Parking Lot Service

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 Parish Administrator Linda Depoy:*

[\(depoy@muhlenberg.lutheran.org/434-3496\)](mailto:depoy@muhlenberg.lutheran.org/434-3496)

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

Here is a message Pastor Lauren sent via email this week:

TEN THOUSAND!

Here's an amazing statistic: In the month of December, over **10,000 people** viewed one or more of Muhlenberg Lutheran Church's posts on Facebook and YouTube.

10,000!!! If you had told me a year ago that our online ministry would reach 1,000 people, I would have laughed, but here we are -- TEN times that!

We all eagerly await the return to worship together in the sanctuary -- but we obviously aren't standing around until then. The lives we touch online grow more and more each day. We are a vital ministry, one that reaches out with the love of Christ in the Valley and far beyond.

BUT this year's disruptions have also impacted the financial support we've received. We are currently about \$10,000 below what we need to cover our ongoing ministries. This is where you come in.

A special year-end gift from you would allow us to continue our mission in equipping all people to live out the love of Christ wherever they are. It would allow us to reach new audiences we haven't even thought possible. It will allow us to expand operations as long as we need to in this digital age.

You can provide this critical support simply by going to our website at: www.muhenberglutheran.org/give [or mailing your offering to the church]. Donations received by January 3 will be credited to your 2020 giving statement (and will qualify for the CARES Act \$300 above-the-line tax-deductible charitable contribution.)

Thank you for your continued support and service to Muhlenberg Lutheran Church! **Your generosity really matters.**

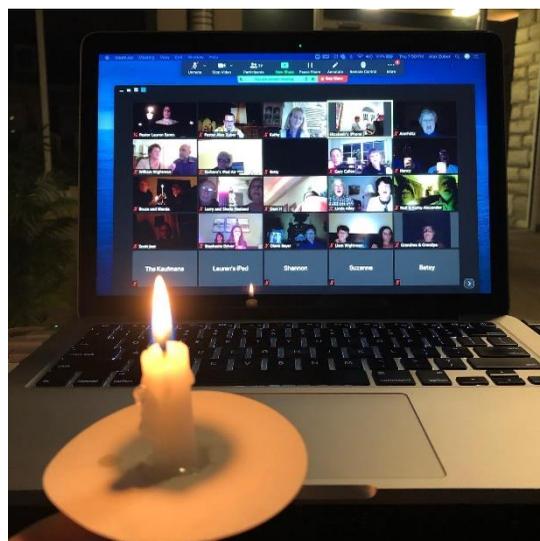
Some images from Christmas Eve worship...



Pastor Lauren in the Sanctuary on Christmas Eve.



Pastor Alex took good care of members who dropped off /picked up items on Christmas Eve.



The 7:00 Zoom Christmas Eve service with everyone singing Silent Night.