



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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February 7, 2021

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

WHAT'S THE BUZZ

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Congregation Council President Karen Thomsen highlighted overall 2020 accomplishments, including the following:
 - incredible work of the pastors & staff to pivot to digital/virtual services and music & Christian Formation opportunities
 - hiring Communication Minister Christian Perritt
 - many Property Committee endeavors
 - grant received by the Care Committee and subsequent ministry to our elderly
 - work of Treasurer Bill Vance to obtain PPP funding through the CARES Act
 - Council's work to create a Strategic Plan to carry out the Mission of Muhlenberg
 - Human Sexuality & Racism Table Talks
 - heroic efforts of Parish Administrator Linda Depoy and Administrative Assistant Crystl Whitmire to keep everything moving forward as veteran leaders left and new leaders came on board in addition to navigating all of the challenges posed by the pandemic
- Bill Vance shared the financial status of Muhlenberg via video.
- Karen encouraged everyone to read the 2020 Annual Report and be aware of the incredible

work done in the past year. It is available on our website, in the *Connection Box** outside the Gathering Area, and by request.

- Bob Kolodinsky, Gary Calleo, Vicki Heitsch and Cynthia Page were elected to serve on the Nominating Committee.
- Karen Thomsen, Greta Willis, Russell Presnell, Sarah Sunde, Bruce Hamilton, Sandra Blade and Diane Bayer were elected to serve as Synod Assembly Delegates.
- Greta Willis recognized outgoing Financial Secretary Janet Simmons for over 25 years of service, outgoing Congregation Council President Gary Calleo, and outgoing Council members Vicki Heitsch and Phil Perry.
- Gathering Together Task Force update
- Looking forward, Council will have a virtual retreat February 6, we still need a Treasurer and Financial Secretary, and we will serve our neighbors in love by providing food for Open Doors February 1-7 and through our Habitat Faith Build.
- Karen thanked the pastors for their leadership in ministry and providing many meaningful faith formation opportunities.
- Pastor Lauren shared plans for Lent and for a promising year as we continue to carry out our mission of living out Christ's love.

**We have renamed our pick-up/drop-off box outside the Gathering Area. It's now called the "Connection Box."*

TODAY AT MUHLENBERG

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:

1/24	8:30 Communion	20
	11:00 Total Live Views	118
	Total Views this Week	482
	Hours Viewed this Week	144.4
1/31	8:30 Communion	17
	11:00 Total Live Views	116

FINANCIAL REPORT

Through December 2020			
	Y-T-D Actual	Y-T-D Budget	Y-T-D Last Year
Gifts & Offerings	\$650,777	\$862,300	\$725,476
Total Receipts	\$827,662	\$968,616	\$822,089
Expenses	\$814,332	\$969,616	\$825,435
Excess Income/ (Expenses)	\$13,330	(\$1,000)	(\$3,346)

Giving in support of our Spending Plan	\$	6,758.00
Giving to Other Designated Funds	\$	6,708.00
Total Giving for the Week	\$	13,466.00

To give online, scan here →



Muhlenberg is not suspending its ministry through this unprecedented time, and we ask you not to suspend your financial contributions either. We are committed to maintaining our ministries, even if they are in a different form for now. We also want to be able to continue to support the needs of the most vulnerable in our community.

You can make a one-time or recurring donation through the [donation page](#) on our website, or mail your check to the church:
281 E. Market Street, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

TODAY AT MUHLENBERG (CONT'D)

SOUPERBOWL COLLECTION



Traditionally we would host our annual friendly competition to see if Muhlenberg members can predict the Super Bowl winner by donating food that goes to Patchwork Pantry. We can't meet in person to physically donate, but food insecurity is still real.

We hope this year you will participate by donating funds. Indicate *SuperBowl* and the name of your team (if you like) on the memo line of your check or electronic payment. Your generous support will help feed our hungry neighbors! Thank you.



THIS WEEK

MINISTRIES NIGHT

Monday (2/8) Evening, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Join us via [ZOOM](#) tomorrow evening – all are welcome! You may also join us by phone:

Meeting ID: 833 4118 0538

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,83341180538#

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](#).

HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER

Wednesdays at 7:00 pm, this service is livestreamed on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#). It will be recorded and available to view any time.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

PASTORS' BOOK CLUB

The Pastor's Book Club will have an expanded conversation this month! Please see the Lent information for more details on our five-week conversation on Ibram X. Kendi's book *Stamped from the Beginning*. See page 4 for more information.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

COVID-19 VACCINE

Love Your Neighbor As Yourself

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen time and time again that avoiding in-person gatherings and wearing a mask are currently the best ways to "love your neighbor" as Christ commanded. Over the coming months, many of us will have the opportunity to heed Christ's call to "love yourself" by receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. Visit the website below to sign up online for information about when a vaccine will be available to you, and also receive an email when it's time to register:

<https://vdh.jebbit.com/amkwk6m1?L=Owned+Web&JC=Vaccine>

If you qualify as a Category 1a or 1b vaccine recipient but don't have reliable internet access, contact Pastor Alex (540-309-2414) for assistance registering online.

LENT AT MUHLENBERG



LENT 2021: *UNEXPECTED*

Throughout the season of Lent, the texts from the gospel of Luke appointed by the Narrative Lectionary point us to unexpected situations, unexpected stories, and unexpected results as Jesus is journeying toward Jerusalem. We will explore how the gospel subverts our expectations and calls us to unexpected discipleship and unexpected grace. Some of the ways you can engage in our Lenten Journey this year are detailed below, with more information to be found at www.muhlenberglutheran.org/Lent2021.

WEDNESDAYS IN LENT

Join your friends **Wednesdays beginning February 24** for connection and formation via **ZOOM**. We invite you to make a five-week commitment to learn and grow together in faith, by participating in the following opportunities:

1 **Book Study of *Stamped from the Beginning* with Pastor Alex ~ 7:00 – 8:30 pm**

Repentance is central to the season of Lent and racism is a sin. As we seek to repent from the sin of racism that manifests in personal and systemic ways throughout our nation and lives, we must learn how we got here. *Stamped From the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram X. Kendi will serve as our guide to these conversations. We will bring the lens of faith and repentance to conversation around racism in our history and our present. The book is divided into 5 sections which we will cover each week.

2. **Prayer and Contemplative Practices with Linda Alley ~ 7:00 – 7:30 pm**

Would you like something fresher and deeper for your prayer time? Learn about five types of contemplative prayer and practice them during this 5-week workshop. Most types encourage more listening than speaking and more spacious rest than effort. Led weekly by Linda Alley, each half-hour session will include teaching, practice and feedback, beginning with Breath Prayers on week one.

~continued on next page~

LENT 2021: *UNEXPECTED* (CONT'D)

3. **Wednesday Morning Bible Study with Pastor Lauren ~ 10:30 – 11:45 am**

Explore the parables Jesus tells on his journey to Jerusalem. Pastor Lauren leads this discussion-based group in a deep dive into the gospel of Luke. (This Bible Study is available using the link below: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/200491556>)

WEDNESDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP ~ 6:30 – 7:00 PM

Sign on to the same **ZOOM** link as our Wednesday classes **for conversation and fellowship**, with classes beginning at 7:00 pm. *There will be no Holden Evening Prayer during Lent.*

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Lent is a 40-day season of preparation for the resurrection of Jesus. Throughout the season, our Daily Digital Devotionals will focus on Lenten Micropractices. Through our *Muhlenberg Digital Devotionals* **FACEBOOK GROUP** or **IN YOUR EMAIL INBOX**, you'll find a new practice to guide you each day on your journey of preparation. Some practices can be done on the spot, some during the day, and others will take some time and/or prep work. Traditionally, there are three pillars of Lent: praying, fasting, and alms giving, which come to us from Matthew 6:1-18. Our micropractices rotate through these themes, along with additional practices that don't fit neatly in one of those categories ("more"). You're encouraged to share photos or reflections in our Facebook Group or on Social Media using #UnexpectedLent with how these Lenten Micropractices revealed *Unexpected* grace.



MUHLENBERG NEWS

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTORS

We made it to 2021! However, so did COVID-19. We are in the midst of a surge in cases in the Harrisonburg/Rockingham area. Even though we are all weary of pandemic restrictions, **it is more important than ever that we care for one another** through distancing, mask-wearing, and quarantining.

We want to remind you of the important work of our Gathering Together Task Force, which has implemented thoughtful guidelines for our congregation. **Over the next few months, it's crucial for us to be aware of, and follow, these guidelines:**

- **Please do not come to the church building unless it is absolutely necessary.** All of the staff really does want to interact with you, but it must be through the phone or video conferencing as much as possible!
- **Staff is working from home as much as possible to keep themselves and others safe.** Each staff member has instructions on how to reach them on their church voice mail or are notified immediately when they receive a new message.
- If you need to come into the church building, **please DO NOT come to the office wing.** Feel free to **use the phone in the Gathering Area** to buzz back to the office to see if someone is available to assist you.
- If you need to come into the church building, **please ONLY use the glass Gathering Area doors.** Do not use the back, red doors which are reserved for the Day Care.

The Task Force also implemented NEW guidelines regarding special services. Until further notice, **baptisms and weddings are suspended. Funerals and memorial services will be conducted digitally ONLY.** Pastors will not conduct in-person services.

Though these restrictions are difficult, it is vital for us to do everything we can for the sake of everyone's safety. As vaccines become more widely available, and the COVID positivity rate decreases, we will resume in-person ministries. Until then, **we continue to love and support one another from a distance!**

In Christ,
Pastor Lauren and Pastor Alex

CREATION CARE TIP

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

Your kitchen is the environmental "hot spot" of your house. It's where you use significant amount of energy (in cooking, refrigeration, food processing, microwaving, and dish-washing), where you create the most garbage (remember the mess of plastic and paper left after you unpacked last week's groceries?), and where you probably store toxic chemicals (cleaners, polishes, bug sprays, etc.). Virtually everything you do in the kitchen affects the environment one way or the other with significant impacts on your own health.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY NEWS

STATEMENTS AND ENVELOPES

2020 contribution statements were mailed last week and 2021 envelopes were mailed in December. If you expected either mailing and did not receive it or have any questions, please contact Tim Wessel at twessel@aol.com or (803) 528-0239.

MUSIC MINISTRY NEWS

For details, contact Music Minister Elizabeth Williams (williams@muhlenberglutheran.org or 434-3496).

ADULT CHOIRS

Celebration Singers & Sanctuary Choir meet via Zoom every other **Tuesday, 7:00 - 8:00 pm:**

February 16

March 2, 16 & 30 April 13 & 27

CHILDREN'S CHOIRS

Tuesdays via Zoom:

Tweens and Teens ~ 5:00 – 5:30 pm

For grades 6 - 8, led by Miss Elizabeth.

Cherub Choir

The Cherub Choir is taking a break from online Zoom rehearsals until we can meet again in person, hopefully in September. I want to thank all parents for their support this past season and our awesome Director Rachel Peters for keeping our littlest of singers "singing." We will be back soon!

LOCAL & GLOBAL MISSION NEWS

HABITAT FAITH BUILD

As you know, Muhlenberg, along with Community Mennonite, Bridgewater Church of the Brethren, and Shalom Mennonite are participating in the Faith Build of a Habitat for Humanity duplex on 658 and 660 Virginia Avenue. The foundation work is underway and it is exciting to see the progress as you drive past the site.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed monetarily to our Habitat Faith Build. \$740.00 was raised during the Advent alternative giving in December. Along with funds from two other Muhlenberg ministries, we have raised \$7,840.00 toward our \$10,000 faith promise for this build.

If you have not yet had an opportunity to contribute to our Faith Build you may do so from our website where Tim Wessel has set up a tab on the giving page specifically for our Habitat Faith Build. You may also send your check to the church, designating Habitat Faith Build. Please feel free to contact Karen Thomsen (kethomsen25@gmail.com or 540-421-4431) if you have any questions about our Habitat Faith Build.

BRIDGE OF HOPE

Bridge of Hope is seeking a half-time case manager who will provide support for 3 - 4 families and foster relationships with neighboring volunteers.

Bridge of Hope seeks to engage Christian faith communities in ending family homelessness through neighboring relationships that demonstrate Christ's love.

If you or someone you know is interested, please find more information here:

hr.bridgeofhopeinc.org/job-opportunities

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

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

STORIES & ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE

PreK – 5th Grade Students

Check out Muhlenberg's website for the stories and activities you can download and print for your child/children for January – March.

JAMERS

Meet **NEXT Sunday, February 14, 12:30-1:30, Westover Park at Pavilion #2** on the hill. We will make blankets for our homeless brothers and sisters. Masks must be worn, and we will be social distancing.

Please note: check the temperature, if it is below 40 degrees, we will not meet.

7TH DAY

All those in 5th and 6th grade, mark your calendars for **Saturday, March 6, 9:00 – 1:00** so you can take part in 7th Day, the Virginia Synod Youth event for YOU. We will gather with friends from across the state via Zoom for faith, fun and fellowship. This promises to be a good time! Watch *The Chimes* for more information to come.

JOYS, THANKS & CONCERNS

✚ Thank you so much for the gift card and special recognition at the annual meeting. I want each member to know that it was a pleasure to be your Financial Secretary for 27 years. Thinking of each of you and hope you stay healthy. *Janet Simmons*

WEEKLY CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

February 8-14

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

- Mon. 2:00 pm** Weekly Staff Meeting
7:00 pm Ministries Night
via [ZOOM](#)
- Wed. 10:30 am** Wed. Morning Bible Study
via [ZOOM](#)
7:00 pm Holden Evening Prayer
via [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)
- Sun. [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](#)
12:30 pm JAMers

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@muhlenberglutheran.org/434-3496

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