



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

Published Weekly by Muhlenberg Lutheran Church

281 East Market Street, Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801 † Phone: 540-434-3496

E-mail address: info@muhlenberglutheran.org † Website: www.muhlenberglutheran.org

Senior Pastor Lauren Eanes: eanes@muhlenberglutheran.org Associate Pastor Alex Zuber: zuber@muhlenberglutheran.org



August 29, 2021

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

WELCOME ASHLEY SAUNDERS



We are excited to announce that Ashley Saunders has accepted the position of Children's Minister! Ashley brings 20 years' experience in early childhood education to this ministry. She grew up in a non-denominational church in the Midwest and

moved to Virginia after marrying her husband Grover in 2003. She has three children and three cats. Her family has attended Muhlenberg for the last four years. When not working, Ashley enjoys trying new foods and watching The Great British Baking Show.

Ashley officially begins her new role September 1, but you can meet her at the Children's Ministry table at the *Equipping the Saints Day* event today! Welcome, Ashley!

† Join us for the first *Equipping the Saints Day*, 1:00 – 3:00 **TODAY!** See page 3 for details.

† Gathering Together Task Force Update, see pages 4-5.

WELCOME PASTOR DANIEL HESS

While Pastor Lauren is on extended medical leave, the Virginia Synod has appointed Pastor Daniel Hess to serve in a pastoral support capacity at Muhlenberg. Beginning August 30, Pastor Daniel will help lead worship, provide pastoral care, and lead our Wednesday Morning Bible Study on a 15 hour/week schedule.



He was raised just north of Richmond, and after graduating from Bridgewater College, he attended United Lutheran Seminary in Gettysburg, PA. He and his wife, Pastor Sarah, served together as vicars in 5 churches across two multi-point parishes in Southwest Virginia. After graduating, Pastor Daniel served as pastor at Ebenezer Lutheran Church in Marion, VA. He and Sarah have two dogs, Luna and Max. Recently they moved back to the Shenandoah Valley as Pastor Sarah begins serving at Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp & Retreat Center. Pastor Daniel looks forward to meeting the people of Muhlenberg in the coming weeks! Meet him at the Pastoral Care table at the *Equipping the Saints Day* event.

TODAY AT MUHLENBERG

WORSHIP SERIES

Today we continue our worship series, “I’ve been meaning to ask... Today’s question: **What do you need?** The questions in this series aren’t surface level; they invite us to tell our stories, share our pain, care for one another, and dream about a new way forward together.

Through vulnerability and authenticity, may our courageous conversations lead us to glimpse hope, joy, and beauty and to become the community God created us to be.

A study guide/daily devotional is available in print from the Connection Box, and online by clicking [HERE](#).



BACK TO SCHOOL BLESSING



TODAY at all services we will offer a blessing for our students and educators as a new school year begins. We pray for a safe, healthy and productive school year for all who return to the classroom. Students can pick up a blessing tag for their backpacks at the 10:00 service, at the Children’s Ministry table at *Equipping the Saints Day* or from the Connection Box this week.

FINANCIAL NEWS

RECENT ATTENDANCE

Here are some interesting statistics from our recent online viewership:

8:30 Communion (in person-19 + Zoom-10)	29
10:00 Outside/Communion	39
11:00 Total Live Views	45
Total Views this Week	267
Hours Viewed this Week	60.5
8/22 8:30 Communion (in person-28 + Zoom-10).....	38
10:00 Outside/Communion	48
11:00 Total Live Views	45

FINANCIAL REPORT

Through July 2021			
	Y-T-D Actual	Y-T-D Budget	Y-T-D Last Year
Gifts & Offerings	\$324,075	\$470,326	\$333,574
Total Receipts	\$387,348	\$525,881	\$432,960
Expenses	\$457,127	\$565,080	\$451,756
Excess Income/ (Expenses)	(\$69,779)	(\$39,199)	(\$18,796)

Giving in support of our Spending Plan	\$ 12,949.74
Giving to Other Designated Funds	\$ 16,355.96
Total Giving for the Week	\$ 29,305.70



To give online, scan here →

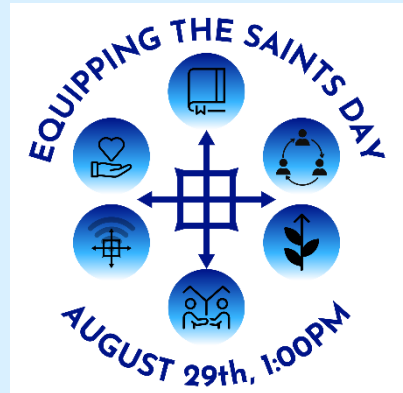
Muhlenberg has not suspended its ministry through this unprecedented time, and we ask you not to suspend your financial contributions either. We are committed to maintaining our ministries, even if they are in a different form for now. We also want to be able to continue to support the needs of the most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

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS DAY

TODAY!

1:00 – 3:00 PM IN THE MAC

Join us **TODAY (8/29) at 1:00 pm in the MAC** for our first *Equipping the Saints Day* at Muhlenberg! As we shared in the spring, Congregation Council has been working under the guidance of a new mission statement. For years we have recognized our vision for ministry as *Muhlenberg Lutheran Church strives to be a Wellspring of God's Grace in Jesus Christ*. While a vision statement points us toward the hope of our future, a mission statement roots us in who we are and our purpose in this community. A mission statement gives us a roadmap for how we achieve this vision, and our mission is simple: *To equip all people to live out Christ's love*.



How will you be equipped through our life together? *Equipping the Saints Day* is an opportunity to gather with your Muhlenberg family and learn about the various areas of ministry offered throughout the fall. From worship to music, from care teams to Sunday School, from Local & Global Mission to Administration/Communication, there are countless opportunities for you to identify your gifts and live out our mission.

From 1:00 – 3:00 pm our campus will be open for a time of food, fellowship, and a ministry fair. You'll have the opportunity to learn more about many of Muhlenberg's ministry teams and connect with others who share similar interests. You will also be able to tour the sanctuary and see our new *Wellstream* system in action and discover the behind-the-scenes process for how we will continue to offer vibrant digital ministry each week. Mask wearing will be required in the sanctuary, and strongly encouraged in the MAC when not eating. There will be space and tents outside for fellowship if you prefer that option.

We're excited for a fun day of connecting our members, learning about what's happening this fall at Muhlenberg, and leaning into our shared Mission, Vision, and Values! We hope to see you there. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

GATHERING TOGETHER TASK FORCE FALL 2021 UPDATE

First, we would like to express our gratitude for the over 150 responses gathered in our Fall survey of the congregation. Thank you for taking the time to share your insights and perspectives as we strive for the health and safety of our congregation in this challenging time. The results of this survey showed a congregation that has a wide variety of views and comfort levels regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and our best path forward. However, this survey also showed a congregation deeply committed to caring for one another. We are pleased to know that 97% of those who responded are **fully vaccinated**, and we hope you'll continue to encourage your friends and neighbors to get vaccinated ASAP.



Based on the feedback we received and the best practices recommended by health officials, here are the Task Force's guidelines for worship this fall:

Worship times will be 8:30 am and 11:00 am in the Sanctuary. These worship times recommended by council were found to be favorable by the congregation, with some noting a need to change their Sunday morning pattern. Physical distancing will be in place in the sanctuary with every other row in use.

Worship will be live-streamed at 11:00 am. Many wish to remain online for their health and safety, and we affirm this choice. Digital ministry isn't going anywhere and our *Wellstream* service at 11:00 am will allow those at home to worship alongside our gathered community for a service of Holy Communion.

Masks will be required for in-person worship. While the CDC lifted the mask mandate for fully vaccinated individuals, many health officials are revising that position in light of the high transmissibility of the Delta variant. Masks are a way we protect those around us, and we will continue this practice of care.

Music will be led by the choir only. At this time, we will not be resuming congregational singing of hymns and liturgy. A majority of respondents were in favor of allowing the choir to lead music, as the act of singing moves more air than speaking, making it more dangerous. Our choir members will be masked as well, and all musicians will provide proof of vaccination before rehearsing.

Communion will still be offered in its current prepackaged form. While this practice of using prepackaged elements and receiving the eucharist in our seats may feel unfamiliar, it is safer at the moment than the processional process.

~continued on next page~

GATHERING TOGETHER TASK FORCE FALL 2021 UPDATE (CONT'D)

Afternoon outdoor services will be offered twice a month. Even with all the practices outlined above, some families, especially those with children under 12, may not feel comfortable worshipping indoors yet. We will offer outdoor services at 1:30 pm twice a month in a format similar to our current 10:00 am service.

More information will be shared soon about Christian Formation and other groups that will be gathering. A hybrid opportunity will be available for many of our activities, so stay tuned to *The Chimes* for more information.

Lastly, it is worth noting that all of this is subject to change as we keep an eye on local conditions. We will be watching local COVID-19 numbers and heeding the advice of public health officials as we move into this fall, but we trust the science behind these vaccines that so many of our congregation have taken and the efficacy of masks with physical distancing. We hope that with all of these safety measures in place the opportunity will be afforded for our community to worship in whatever way is best for you and your family. Please contact any member of the Gathering Together Task Force if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for all you are doing to allow us to safely *equip all people to live out Christ's love*.

Erin Burke, Cynthia Page, Kevin Stees, Crystl Whitmire, Greta Willis, Pastor Alex Zuber

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

COMFORT MAKERS

Calling all former and new Comfort Makers



COMFORT MAKERS

If you can tie a knot, want to help keep your neighbors warm, and have an hour or 3 to spare for others, come join us **Thursdays starting September 9**. We work in Wayland Hall (basement of main church) from about 8:00-12 noon, but we welcome you for any time during those hours. If you haven't tried it, come by and see what we're all about. All are welcome! For more information, contact Linda Morrison (540-383-5085 or glenm778@comcast.net).

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

FAITH LENS ADULT CLASS

Please note: The Faith Lens adult class **will not meet Sundays August 29 - September 5**. Class will resume September 12. Time and place will be announced later.



Faith Lens Class helping at OCP

MUHLENBERG NEWS

FINANCE MANAGER NEEDED

We are hiring a paid part-time Finance Manager to replace Elizabeth Fletchall who recently resigned her position. We need a staff member who can truly manage our financial affairs, while also working with our Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Parish Administrator and volunteers. If you or someone you know may be interested in exploring this opportunity, you can find the job description and application instructions by clicking [HERE](#). We hope to fill this position as soon as possible, so please lift up our search in prayer.

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).

Trees increase a home's value aesthetically and economically by reducing energy costs. Recent studies showed that mature trees planted in a nicely manicured yard could increase a home's value. Additionally, neighborhood streets with shady trees can be a staggering 6 to 10 degrees cooler than streets without trees. This not only affects the comfort of the neighborhood but also reduces the area's energy needs. Increase your home's value by planting trees around your property. While they may not be mature yet, they will eventually grow and be enjoyed by residents for years to come.



LOCAL & GLOBAL MISSION

DAY OF SERVICE

September 26, 2021

God's Work, Our Hand

It's the time of year for the ELCA's Day of Service, where we can reach out in meaningful ways to help our neighbors in need. Again this year, we will help Minnick School, now called *enCircle*, by collecting packages of new underwear and/or new or gently used



sweat-pants or shorts (elastic or drawstring waist). Sizes: small - large; children's sizes 4 - 18. These are among the top clothing items that are greatly needed.

Over the next several Sundays, place donations in the wooden bin, inside for the 8:30 service and outside for the 10:00 service. If you would rather donate money, we can purchase items for you. Please indicate *Underwear Drive* on the memo line of your check/envelope.

As you may know, Minnick is a part of Lutheran Family Services, now called *enCircle*. They so appreciate our continued care and support.



ABUNDANCE TASK FORCE

WHY I GIVE ~ *Conversations about giving and abundance*

As part of our Abundance Task Force's efforts to share the story why members give to the ministries of Muhlenberg, Congregation Council President Karen Thomsen sat down for some conversations with Muhlenberg members about giving their time, talents, and treasure to help live out Muhlenberg's mission. Here's an abbreviated recap of Karen's conversation with long-time members and volunteers, Malcolm and Judy Wilfong.



Karen: You have a long history with Muhlenberg - what brought you here?

Malcolm: Mom and dad brought me - I became a member in 1957. When Judy and I got married, it was a natural transition for her to join...

Judy: ...the truth is - he said, if we're going to get married, I had to join the Lutheran church! Coming from a Mennonite / Brethren background, it was very different. I remember learning about grace, and how it's for everyone - I hadn't been taught that. I learned to love the liturgy, the music - I'm definitely Lutheran now. We were married here, all 3 kids were baptized here, and we renewed our vows here.

Karen: Quite a bit of history! So, why do you give to Muhlenberg?

Malcolm: Starting off, we weren't able to tithe as much as we wanted, working public service jobs with 3 children. But now, we can give what we want, and we do it because we can see the good things that happen - the growth of the membership, the church building and activity center, and the outreach of the church. My parents were good models for giving, but wrote out their checks every Saturday. We didn't want to do that, so are big proponents of Simply Giving.

Judy: Simply Giving is like when taxes are taken out of your paycheck - you really don't miss that money, because you never had it. With Simply Giving, the money goes to the church first - so you feel good your obligations are met while never missing that money.

Karen: I really like Simply Giving, too! What are other ways you give to Muhlenberg?

Malcolm: We've both sung in the choir, been involved with church leadership, Judy's taught Sunday School, I've been involved in Property Committee and build projects - those are fun.

Judy: I've enjoyed teaching children and adults in Sunday School for many years. I also led women's retreats for about 10 years, and do Biblical Storytelling. And we do a lot of service in our community as well.

Karen: You two are the perfect examples of being the hands and feet of Christ - you feel His love and put it into action in the church and community. We need to be a lay member led church, and you're great examples!

Judy: Thank you. I think when the pandemic closed the doors, it became almost comfortable to stop participating - so we need to put a fire under people again!

Karen: Yes, I agree. And thank you so much for talking today!

WELLSTREAM DIGITAL INSTALLATION

We are excited to announce that “Phase 2” of our Wellstream initiative is well underway! We recently completed the installation of our live-streaming system which will enable us to stream full worship services, live from the Sanctuary. This is a significant development in equipping Muhlenberg to better reach our online faith community that we grew over the past year.

Worship is where we gather around the true *Wellspring of God’s Grace* — the Word and Sacraments of Jesus Christ. Worship, and the community we find there, is still at the heart of who we are. Part of creating a culture of welcome, hospitality, and care involves making that core aspect of worship available to a variety of communities — local or at a distance, online or in person — so that we are reaching as many as we can with God’s story.

In 2020, we learned that online services were not just good “alternatives” to in-person worship but they helped create a whole new way to engage with and grow our faith community. With our new live-streaming system, we’ll be able to operate as a truly hybrid church, returning to full worship in the Sanctuary, while providing those online with a rich and full worship experience.



The new streaming system includes three high-resolution remote-control digital cameras mounted inconspicuously throughout the sanctuary, along with a switcher, dedicated laptop, and all necessary equipment to broadcast an online live-stream video. All of this will be run from the balcony of the church (next to the current soundboard).

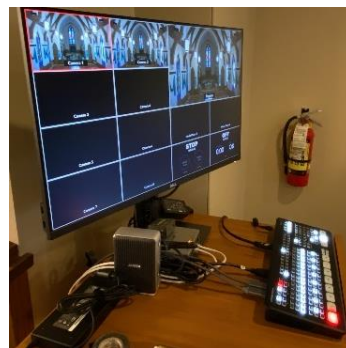
Our Communications Team spent countless hours researching the best solution that would meet our needs while keeping costs as low as possible and honoring the beautiful aesthetics of Muhlenberg. The result is a low-profile, unobtrusive system that will allow us to replace our pre-recorded services with a live-stream of the 11:00 service each Sunday.

This system also gives us the ability to simultaneously stream to a number of different platforms including Facebook, YouTube, Vimeo, etc. The live-stream will also be automatically recorded, so that each worship service can be part of Muhlenberg’s YouTube archive to be viewed anytime.

Our next steps include system testing and training of a team of operators, so that our live-stream process is as sustainable as possible. We hope to premiere our first live-streamed services in September, and we’ll keep you posted on our progress.

This focus on becoming a truly hybrid church is not about simply keeping up with the latest trends. Digital communities are here to stay, and we’ve learned that we can reach people online, as well as in person, in truly deep and meaningful ways. We look forward to experiencing this new and exciting chapter together!

Tours of our new system will be available on [Equipping the Saints Day](#), or stop by the Administration/Communication table to learn more.



SECOND HOME NEWS

SECOND HOME RENEWED!

In 2007, Second Home was created in partnership with Muhlenberg Lutheran Church to serve our neighbors with high quality, academically focused care for school-age children that is affordable for even the lowest income families. As the program grew to fill the ever increasing need in the city, Muhlenberg and Second Home leadership recognized that an independent non-profit status could potentially expand much needed funding opportunities for the program. After a long process, we are delighted to announce that as of August 16 (just in time for the new school year) Second Home Learning Center has acquired its own 501(c)(3) non-profit status. **We remain a social outreach ministry of Muhlenberg (much like People Helping People and Habitat for Humanity), and seek to work in partnership with the congregation.**

The need for affordable child care is bigger than ever and is essential for economic recovery. As the only before-school child care opening at 6:00 am for those working in the food and service industry, health care, and other areas requiring early shifts, Second Home's program has become a lifeline for more children than ever before. Our after-school Literacy, STEM, and Performing Arts activities encourage children to explore and learn. Your support is essential in continuing the mission and caring for these families and their children. In-kind and monetary donations are extremely helpful. Please address any donation to "Second Home Learning Center." Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to learn more about our daily activities, or stop by our table on *Equipping the Saints Day*

Krisztina Szekely, Executive Director

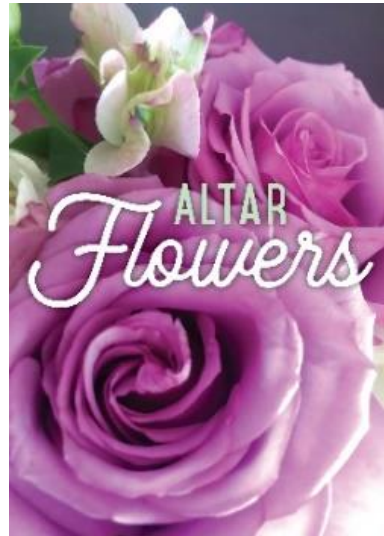
ALTAR FLOWERS

RESERVING ALTAR FLOWERS

Beginning September 12, we will once again offer the opportunity to reserve your special dates to remember or honor a loved one by providing funding for altar flowers! We offer the opportunity for two families to sign up each week and **request payment (\$25/vase) at the time of sign up**. We will send reminders as needed and appreciate your cooperation.

Please sign up in person at the Connection Center. To sign up electronically, click [HERE](#).

Also, stop by the worship table on *Equipping the Saints Day*. You will have the opportunity to meet Altar Flower Coordinator Louise Layman, learn more about why and how altar flowers are provided each week, and sign up to sponsor flowers this fall.



SUMMER SERVICE INFORMATION

8:30 Hybrid Service: In-person and online opportunities to participate. **Advanced registration is no longer required.** A well-fitted facemask is required at all times in the building. To connect online, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84731416878>.

10:00 Outdoor Service: Bring your own chairs, shade and/or coolers! Please check in at the Welcome Tent. There will be special music but no congregational singing at this service. Masks optional.

11:00 Worship on Facebook and YouTube. Full Service of the Word with sermon, prayers, etc. Sing hymns and enjoy special music. www.facebook.com/MuhlenbergLutheran
www.youtube.com/c/muhlenberglutheranchurch.

REMINDERS

USE OF PHOTOS



As we enhance our communication (website, monitors, brochures, etc.), we will include photos and videos of congregational life. **If you prefer not to have your image (or your child's image) included,** please contact Parish Administrator Linda Depoy (434-3496 or depay@muhlenberglutheran.org).

NO ONLINE ACCESS?

Those who cannot read *The Chimes* online can request a copy be mailed to them weekly. If you know someone without online access, contact Linda Depoy.

WEEKLY CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

August 30 — September 5

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

Mon. 2:00 pm Weekly Staff Meeting

Sun. Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
[Sunday am ZOOM link](#)

8:30 am Hybrid Communion Service

9:00 am [ZOOM](#) “Coffee Hour” begins

10:00 am Outdoor Worship

11:00 am Service Livestreamed
via [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Join your Muhlenberg friends and family for education and fellowship via [ZOOM](#) each **Sunday from 8:30 – 9:30** using this link [HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/84731416878](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84731416878) or call 1-301-715-8592 and enter the Meeting ID: 84731416878.

No internet access? Call Wellstream Phone:
[1-434-205-8777](tel:1-434-205-8777)

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:*

(depay@muhlenberglutheran.org/434-3496)

Like us at facebook.com/muhlenberglutheran.