



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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November 28, 2021

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADEVENT

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Our Congregational Meeting was held last Sunday (11/21). President Karen Thomsen welcomed those in attendance both in person and by Zoom. A quorum was established, and Pastor Lauren opened the meeting with prayer. Karen recognized Council members and members of the Nominating Committee, thanking them for their work in creating a slate of nominees for Council/Trustee. The following business was then conducted:

- Treasurer Ted Sudol reviewed the 2022 Spending Plan and answered questions posed by congregants. The plan was passed unanimously. Copies are available at the Connection Center, Connection Box, and by calling Linda Depoy.
- Four Council members were elected by a unanimous vote of acclamation: Gus Kagey, Brad Moyers, Rachel Peters, and Meg Wightman. They will begin their three-year term January 2022.
- Adam Copeland was elected by a unanimous vote of acclamation to the position of Trustee.
- The congregation voted to approve extending Pastor Daniel Hess' contract for

15 hours a week as a supply Pastor through January 15, 2022.

With all business concluded, Karen thanked everyone for their attendance and adjourned the meeting. Pastor Alex was asked to close us in prayer but before doing so we all sang *Happy Birthday* to Pastor Lauren.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Thomsen, Congregation President

TODAY AT MUHLENBERG

THE ADVENT WREATH

One of the best-known customs for the season is the Advent wreath. The wreath and winter candle-lighting in the midst of growing darkness strengthen images of Advent found in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens is clearly an image of everlasting life, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself. Christians use the wreath as a sign that Christ reaches into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light. In many homes, the family gathers for prayer around the wreath.



TODAY AT MUHLENBERG (CONT'D)

LET'S SING!

Today we begin singing the Sending Hymn. *See page 4 for details.*

TWEENS/TEENS CHOIR (GRADES 4-8)

We rehearse Sundays, 12:15 – 12:45 in the chancel area of the sanctuary (where the adult choir sits), and are masked during rehearsal. Our plan is to sing once in worship during Advent and also on Christmas Eve at the 4:30 pm service. If your child is interested in joining us this fall, please contact Elizabeth Williams (williams@muhlenberglutheran.org).

THIS WEEK AT MUHLENBERG

WEDNESDAY AM BIBLE STUDY

Join us **each Wednesday at 10:30 am** for Bible study. Led by Pastor Daniel Hess via **ZOOM**: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/200491556>

ADVENT CHORAL EVENSONG

Begins **THIS Wednesday, December 1 at 7:30 pm**. *See page 3 for details.*

ADVENT-URE SUNDAY

Join us **next Sunday, December 5, 12:30**. There will be an art exhibit, an opportunity to make an advent wreath, and kits of take-home activities for families and people of all ages to prepare our hearts in this time of awaiting the birth of Jesus. Keep an eye on the Muhlenberg Facebook page this week for Cookie Exchange details. *See page 4 for details.*

SAAM SERVICE

Next Sunday, December 5, 1:30 pm gather around the fire for a SAAM service following Advent-ure Sunday activities.

MUHLENBERG NEWS

ESTIMATE OF GIVING CARDS

A letter from Financial Secretary Gary Calleo and Estimate of Giving cards are available at the Connection Center. Completed cards may be returned to the locked box at the Connection Center or the Connection Box, or mailed to the church office to Gary's attention by Dec. 12.

CREATION CARE TIP

Leftover household products that contain corrosive, toxic, ignitable, or reactive ingredients are considered to be household hazardous waste (HHW). HHW may be dangerous to people or bad for the environment if poured down the drain, dumped on the ground, or thrown out with regular trash. When you need to dispose of these products, look for special collection events in your community or permanent collection centers. If you have to dispose of HHW, first check with your local waste management agency for applicable rules.

SECOND HOME NEWS

During this holiday shopping season, there is an easy way to support Second Home. We are registered with AmazonSmile, where Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the charities selected by customers. All you need to do is to sign up on smile.amazon.com, make the same purchases you would at amazon.com, and choose Second Home Learning Center as the nonprofit agency you want to support and we automatically receive the donation. You can also go directly to our donation page by clicking here: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/85-2041550>. Thank you for your continuing support.

Krisztina Szekely, Director

Advent 2021

Presence

PRESENCE ~ Our 2021 Advent & Christmas Theme

As the vibrant fall gives way to the bleak cold of winter, it is easy for each of us to draw inward and isolate. Refrains of disconnection and loneliness have been offered by so many in our community and in our world over this past year, but this is especially true during the winter time. Historically, God's people have gathered around the warmth of the Advent candles—with Advent wreaths and hymns of hope—to tell God's story of faithfulness through this dark and mysterious season. So in this particular season of Advent, it is only right that we gather our hearts around stories of God's *Presence*.

Whenever we feel alone, God's spirit is binding us together in the warmth of love. Our Narrative Lectionary lessons remind us that God's presence brings life, even in barren and trying times. In exile, among dry bones, as a child, God's presence surrounds us in surprising ways, reminding us that we are never truly alone. God will go to any length to show love, even becoming flesh and dwelling with us.

Presents under the tree are fleeting, but God's presence is eternal. Beginning November 28, join us this Advent as we gather ourselves around this word of hope.

ADVENT CHORAL EVENSONG ~ WEDNESDAYS, DECEMBER 1 – 22, 7:30 PM

We are pleased to offer a service of Advent Choral Evensong beginning **Wednesday, December 1 at 7:30 pm**. This service will be available in person as well as livestreamed each Wednesday during Advent. Choral Evensong has a long history dating back as far as the Reformation. The service itself is rather short (30-40 minutes) and is mostly if not entirely sung by the choir and presiding minister, allowing the listener an opportunity for reflection and prayer. Some of the more traditionally sung portions of the service include settings of the Magnificat (song of Mary), the Nunc Dimitis (song of Simeon), as well as one of our earliest hymns dating back to the 3rd century, "Phos Hilaron" (Greek, meaning, "O Joyous Light"). This particular hymn setting can be found in our hymnal, ELW 229. The use of candles with minimal lighting will enhance the service experience and trustfully foster a feeling of peacefulness and nearness with God during this Advent season, as we prepare for the coming of the Lord.

We do hope you will join us each Wednesday evening during Advent as we end the day in song and prayer.

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Advent News (cont'd)

ADVENT-URE SUNDAY ~ NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 12:30 PM IN THE MAC

Join us in making Advent wreaths, exchanging cookies, and walking through the scripture journey to Jesus' birth. You will receive materials to take home with activities to do weekly to prepare your hearts as a family for the arrival of Jesus. Hot beverages and light snacks will be provided.



You don't have to bring cookies to participate in Adventure Sunday. If you would like to participate in the cookie exchange, bring 3 dozen of your favorite Christmas cookies with recipe cards. You will leave with 2 - 3 cookies from each tray and recipes to take home. If you would like Ashley to print copies of your recipe, email it to her by Dec. 3. For more information, contact Children's Minister Ashley Saunders (434-3496 or saunders@muhlenberglutheran.org).

THIS JUST IN ... LET'S START SINGING!

Martin Luther famously said, "Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise." Music is such a beautiful and central aspect of our worship life at Muhlenberg, and one of the biggest challenges of this COVID-19 season has been our inability to sing together. But as COVID cases decline in our area and vaccination rates increase, especially among children ages 5 to 12, we plan to re-introduce some congregational singing in worship. Beginning November 28, the First Sunday of Advent, **we will begin singing the Sending Hymn together** in worship. We plan to add more singing as we go, as long as Covid cases continue to decline. As there are still members of our community who are unable to be vaccinated, we will continue to wear masks in worship (even when singing) in order to love our neighbors and keep one another safe.



REMEMBER & HONOR LOVED ONES

Want to remember or honor a loved one with a poinsettia? **Cost per plant is \$20.** To reserve your poinsettia, do the following:

1. **Sign up** online using the link below or call Louise Layman at 540-442-1524:
<https://forms.gle/f8BB7w2sJ4YWEKVn8>
2. **Pay** for poinsettias (write "Poinsettias" on the memo line). Place your check in the offering plate or mail it to the church office (281 East Market Street, Harrisonburg 22801). **Payments reserve poinsettias.**

Poinsettias may be picked up from the Gathering Area after the last service on Christmas Eve.

Sign up deadline is EXTENDED TO SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5 (no additional flowers ordered after that date).



Christmas 2021 Presence

CHRISTMAS NEWS

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT ~ *DO NOT BE AFRAID: A CHRISTMAS PAGEANT* DECEMBER 19



We are doing *Do Not Be Afraid: A Christmas Pageant* from Illustrated Ministry. The pageant is centered on the narratives surrounding Jesus' birth from the gospels of Matthew and Luke and will premiere in person and online **Sunday, December 19**. If your family is interested in participating, contact Children's Minister Ashley Saunders as soon as possible at saunders@muhlenberglutheran.org. Videos need to be submitted by December 5.

Red Carpet Premiere of *Do Not Be Afraid: A Christmas Pageant*

(Red Carpet event ~ 12:30-1:00; Movie Time ~ 1:00)

Join us December 19 for a red-carpet premiere of our Christmas Pageant. Get dressed up in your Christmas Best and celebrate the hard work that brought our pageant together. We will have snacks in the Gathering Area, and then the children will get to walk on the red carpet into the sanctuary where we will watch the Christmas pageant together on a big screen. It will be a fun afternoon celebrating the youth of Muhlenberg Lutheran Church! The Pageant will be available on Facebook and YouTube later that afternoon.

LONGEST NIGHT COMMUNITY WORSHIP

The longest night of the year is December 21, and it has become a meaningful time to recognize that the Christmas season is often not all brightness and fun. In particular this year, we have much to grieve and many losses to acknowledge. The Harrisonburg Community Longest Night service will be **hosted this year at Trinity Presbyterian Tuesday, December 21, 7:00 pm**. This service of word and song will provide an opportunity to be honest about our pain and be reminded of Christ's light that shines into dark places.

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Christmas News (cont'd)



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP AND ACTIVITIES

2:00 pm Fireside Christmas Eve Service will be an opportunity to gather for worship outside. As Christ's presence warms us on Christmas, we'll gather around the warmth of the fire-pits as we share an abbreviated Christmas Eve liturgy. We'll have the opportunity to hear the Christmas story, share holy communion, and sing *Silent Night* together. Hot cider and cocoa will be available, and you can pick up candles to take home for our live-streamed service at 6:30 pm.

4:30, 6:30 & 9:00 pm Christmas Eve Services will feature a full traditional liturgy, singing of beloved hymns, the proclamation of the birth of Christ, Biblical Storytelling, Holy Communion, and a candlelit singing of *Silent Night!* The 6:30 pm service will be live-streamed on Facebook and YouTube so you can worship digitally wherever you are.

*We recognize that Christmas Eve will be a time where more people are likely to join us for worship and it will be difficult to maintain the same physical distancing that we do on Sunday mornings. Properly fitting masks will be required and our pre-packaged Holy Communion practices will remain the same for in-person worship. It is **strongly** encouraged that you are fully vaccinated before attending worship, and we fully support each family discerning together the best and safest option for worship attendance. With a continued downward trend in COVID-19 cases and an increase in vaccination rates, we plan to resume some congregational singing during Advent and Christmas.*

DECEMBER 26 ~ 10:00 AM SERVICE

Sunday, December 26 will be a continuation of our Christmas celebration! We will have one service of Holy Communion at 10:00 am, with readings and carols proclaiming the birth of our Savior.

MUSIC NEWS

MOSAIC HANDBELL ENSEMBLE



Muhlenberg's own Kath Wissinger is the Artistic Director of Mosaic Handbell Ensemble, and she invites you this holy season on a musical journey through "A Nativity Story." This lovely program features 9 ringers using 3 octaves of bells (and more) and 5 octaves of chimes – presenting thoughtful, well-crafted music that spans from Prophecy to Epiphany. Celebrate the Angel Gabriel's message, hold your breath in wonder at the manger-side, gaze in awe at the miraculous star in the heavens, plod on camels in search of the Savior... and brace yourself for a surprising twist at the end that will lift your spirits! .See Kath Wissinger or visit www.MosaicBells.com for more information. **All concerts are at 7:00 pm.** Masking requirements follow venue protocols (bring one!). **Donations at the door.*

- **Saturday, December 4*** – Luray UMC
- **Friday, December 10*** – Harrisonburg Baptist Church
- **Saturday, December 11** – Massanetta Springs (dinner and concert – contact Massanetta Springs for Reservations)
<https://massanettasprings.org/programs/christmas>

FAITH IN ACTION UPDATE

Faith in Action is an interfaith group of which Muhlenberg is a member. Our purpose is to speak with the voice of faith to address social justice issues at the local level. We are starting a new listening campaign to learn the concerns on the minds of the Harrisonburg community.



We can do our part by listening prayerfully and with respect to the issues in the hearts of our fellow congregants. In the past, our listening campaigns have been conducted by the representatives from Muhlenberg assisted by a temporary team to help us interview a cross-section of church members. This year, Faith in Action has shifted a little to eventually form Core Teams from each congregation. Team members will tell us what they would most like to see changed in the community, interview other church members and their own families and friends, and, if they wish, attend the larger Faith in Action assembly. These activities also serve the purpose of making us closer as a congregation because we then know more about one another.

There is a training opportunity in December lasting a little over an hour teaching how to conduct interviews using the Faith in Action model. Anyone who would like to attend this exciting opportunity is welcome. We are encouraged to attend as a congregation group. There are three options:

- Tuesday, Dec. 7, 7:00 pm at Bridgewater Church of the Brethren
- Tuesday or Wednesday, Dec. 7 or 8, 12 noon at the Church of the Incarnation.

I am flexible and can attend any of these, whichever suits the majority of those who are interested.

If you would like to take part in this training, please contact Nancy Martin-Finks (540-421-8199 or nanmart777@comcast.net) or Cathy Copeland (catherineblose@gmail.com or 317-670-1086), and we will register you. Please indicate which training time suits you best.

Nancy Martin-Finks, Covenant Representative for Muhlenberg for Faith in Action

FINANCIAL NEWS

RECENT ATTENDANCE

Here are some interesting statistics from our recent online viewership:

11/14	8:30 Holy Communion	64
	11:00 Holy Communion	80
	11:00 Wellstream Worshippers.....	47
	Total Views this Week	182
	Hours Viewed this Week	55.5
11/21	8:30 Holy Communion	49
	11:00 Holy Communion	55
	11:00 Wellstream Worshippers.....	39
	1:30 SAAM Service.....	28

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/	(\$69,779)	(\$39,199)	(\$18,796)

Giving in support of our Spending Plan	\$ 12,835.00
Giving to Other Designated Funds	\$ 1,660.81
Total Giving for the Week	\$ 14,495.81

To give online, scan here →



Muhlenberg has not suspended its ministry through this unprecedented time. In fact, in some ways our outreach and ministry have been strengthened and enhanced. Regardless of the worship opportunities you choose, we ask you to continue your financial contributions. We also want to continue to support the needs of the most vulnerable in our community. You can make a one-time or recurring donation through our [website](#), place your offering in the basket on Sunday morning, or mail your check to the church: 281 E. Market Street, Harrisonburg 22801.

WEEKLY CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

November 29 — December 5

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

- Mon 2:00 pm** Staff Meeting
- Tues 6:30 pm** Celebration Singers
- 7:00 pm** Gloria Dei Ringers
- Wed 10:30 am** Wed. Morning Bible Study
via [ZOOM](#)
- 7:30 pm** Advent Choral Evensong
- Sun Second Sunday of Advent**
- 8:30 am** Holy Communion in person
- 9:45 am** Christian Formation Classes
- 11:00 am** Holy Communion in person and Livestreamed via [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)
- 12:15 pm** Tween/Teens Choir
- 12:30 pm** Advent-ure Sunday
- 1:30 pm** SAAM 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@muhlenberglutheran.org/434-3496
 Like us at facebook.com/muhlenberglutheran.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

CLASS LOCATIONS

Pre-K – 5th Grade meet in the Muhlenberg Activities Center [MAC] (behind the church)

These classes meet downstairs in the church:
Grades 6 -12 ~ Campus Room

Devotional Classics Adult Class ~ Nielsen Room

Faith Lens Adult Class ~ Kairos Room