



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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December 5, 2021

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Dear friends of Muhlenberg Lutheran Church,

As we begin this Advent season and start a new church year, the time has also come for me to say goodbye and transition into a new role, serving as a supply pastor in a small congregation further up the Valley, as well as continuing serving and working at Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp & Retreat Center.

While this transition is a little sooner than we had planned, I give thanks for each of you and the time we've had together. It has been a joy and honor to have joined the Muhlenberg community and serve alongside the other amazing Muhlenberg Pastors and Staff. Over these last few months you welcomed me into your lives with open arms and for that I am humbled and thankful. We have shared stories, studied the Bible, worshiped, and journeyed together. Through it all, God was present.

As I leave and say goodbye, I want to encourage each of you in the weeks and months to come to reach out, check in, visit, or introduce yourself to someone at church. Over the last few months in my visits with you, I often heard "I wish our church members connected with each other more" and almost always followed by "I wish I reached out more

to the folks at church." The last few months the church staff has been imagining new ways to bring individuals together and care for one another. There is no day like today to call someone, reconnect, or visit one of our elders.

Over these last few months with you, I have encountered God again and again. I pray that as we enter into this new church year each of you continues to encounter God as you walk together in faith. I pray that in this season of Advent you know God as Immanuel, God with us. Thank you all!

With peace and hope,
Pastor Daniel Hess (He/Him/His)

TODAY AT MUHLENBERG

ADVENT-URE SUNDAY

Join us **at 12:30 in the MAC!**

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.



SAAM SERVICE CANCELLED

TODAY (12/5) there will be no SAAM service.

TODAY AT MUHLENBERG (CONT.)

WELCOME PASTOR MELISSA MAY

We welcome back to Muhlenberg the Rev. Melissa May as our guest preacher. Pastor Melissa is leading the Virginia Eastern Shore Exploration, gathering residents of the Eastern Shore for conversation, partnerships, and the potential development of a Lutheran worshipping community. She also serves as adjunct faculty with EMU's Intensive English Program. We are grateful for her proclamation of God's Word among us today.

FOOD COLLECTION REMINDER

Today we collect non-perishable food items for Patchwork Pantry. No glass jars please. The Pantry is also in need of paper products (paper towels, wraps, food storage bags, toilet tissue, etc.), cleansers (dish, laundry, all-purpose), diapers, and all types of personal hygiene products. Monetary donations are also appreciated — make checks payable to Muhlenberg, noting “Patchwork Pantry” on the memo line. Thank you for your support.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GATHERING

TODAY, 2-4 PM, all 6th-8th graders are invited to the home of Pastor Lauren. We'll gather around the fire pit for s'mores, and when our toes get chilly, we'll move indoors to study the First Article of the Apostles' Creed. Bring a mask, water bottle, Bible, and pen and join us for learning, service, and fun! The middle school group meets on the first Sunday of each month at the homes of participants. Contact Pastor Lauren or Karen Thomsen for more information and to be placed on the email list.

LET'S SING!

Today we rejoice in singing the Sending Hymn. *See page 5 for details.*

THIS WEEK AT MUHLENBERG

WEDNESDAY AM BIBLE STUDY

Join us each Wednesday at 10:30 am for Bible study via **ZOOM**:

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

ADVENT CHORAL EVENSONG

Each Wednesday in Advent at 7:30 pm. *See page 4 for details.*

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.



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.



MUHLENBERG NEWS

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS NEEDED

Participating in worship leadership can be a meaningful way to serve God. Whether it's helping the assembly focus on the cross of Christ as a crucifer, proclaiming the Word of God as a lector, or serving at the table of Holy Communion as part of the altar guild. We invite you to take this next step on your journey of faith. Join Pastor Lauren and Pastor Alex **next Sunday, December 12 at 9:45am** in the sanctuary to learn more about why we do what we do in worship, and how you can be a part of it!

SERMONS AVAILABLE

Printed sermons are available on the table in the Gathering Area and upon request from Linda Depoy in the church office.

CREATION CARE TIP

Many used, worn-out batteries end up in the landfill where they leach toxic metals into the soil and groundwater. Check with your local waste-management company to find out how to dispose of batteries in your area --please don't just throw them in the trash. You can help keep batteries from going to the landfill by choosing holiday gifts that don't require batteries. If you do buy gifts that require batteries, give rechargeable ones.

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 understand the concerns on the minds of the Harrisonburg community.

For more information contact Nancy Martin-Finks (nanmart777@comcast.net or 544-421-8199) or Cathy Copeland (catherineblöse@gmail.com or 317-670-1086).

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

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>

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 8, 15 & 22, 7:30 PM

We are pleased to offer a service of Advent Choral Evensong each Wednesday evening during Advent **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 Dimittis (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.

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Advent News (cont'd)

ADVENT-URE SUNDAY ~ TODAY- 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.

FINANCIAL NEWS

RECENT ATTENDANCE

Here are some interesting statistics from our recent online viewership:

11/21	8:30 Holy Communion	49
	11:00 Holy Communion	55
	11:00 Wellstream Worshippers	39
	Total Views this Week	165
	Hours Viewed this Week	73.1
11/28	8:30 Holy Communion	48
	11:00 Holy Communion	68
	11:00 Wellstream Worshippers	38

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	\$ 4,775.00
Giving to Other Designated Funds	\$ 6,893.50
Total Giving for the Week	\$ 11,668.50

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

December 6 - 12

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](#)
6:30 pm Sanctuary Choir
7:30 pm Advent Choral Evensong
- Sun Third 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

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