



ELCA

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 10, 2023

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Behold! Advent and Christmas are Here!

It's so easy to overlook Advent. The weeks leading up to Christmas Day can plunge us into a state of dazed busyness in which the stunning story of Christ's birth is obscured by the rush of the season or even traditions that begin to feel monotonous. In the midst of this time, we offer a simple Advent invitation: ***Behold!***

This Advent and Christmas, we're inviting our community to a season of prayerful attentiveness. Through worship, devotions, reflection, and fellowship, we hope this will be a time where each of us can be attentive to our feelings of expectancy, our call for preparation, the heart of our faith, and the promise in which we live. Utilizing the devotional resource ***Behold!*** by Pamela C. Hawkins, we'll journey together, cultivating attentiveness in the season of Advent. 2000 years ago, 175 years ago, and this very day... ***Behold!*** God is doing a new thing! Let us gather our hearts intentionally and attentively around the promise of this season.

New info re: devotional booklets ~ see page 4.

TODAY AT MUHLENBERG

HANGING OF THE GREENS

All ages gather together **9:45 – 10:30 am** to adorn our church with Advent and Christmas decorations, including the Chrismon tree and our nativity sets. Hear the story of Santa Lucia and learn more about the symbolism of familiar Christmas decorations like wreaths, poinsettias, and holly and ivy while helping to get our space ready for Christmas!

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

When was the last time you and yours went caroling? We are looking for an enthusiastic group - young to not so young to help spread Advent/Christmas cheer to our brothers and sisters who can't join us in worship. Impressive singing ability is not required, just a willingness to make noise with spirit! We need YOU and your family - the more the merrier. **Meet at 12:15 pm for a light meal in Wayland Hall before caroling!**

SUMMARY OF TODAY'S EVENTS

- ✚ Christmas Pageant Practice, 9:45 am
- ✚ Hanging of the Greens, 9:45 am
- ✚ Christmas Caroling, 12:15 pm
- ✚ Young Adult Lunch & Bible Study ~ pg. 2
- ✚ Deadline to sign up for Poinsettias ~ pg. 6

TODAY'S WORSHIP INFO

PRELUDE

8:30 *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* (PICARDY,
French Carol 1560, arr. Kath Wissinger) Gloria Dei Ringers

11:00 *Light One Candle* (Natalie Sleeth) Children's Choir

OFFERING

Gloria Dei Ringers

Once in Royal David's City (IRBY, Henry Gaunlett
c. 1850, arr. Bull Ingram)

COMMUNION HYMN

Gloria Dei Ringers

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime (UNE JEUNE
PUCELLE, French Folk tune 16th c., arr. John Atteberry)

PREACHING MINISTER ~ Pastor Lauren Eanes

PRESIDING MINISTER ~ Pastor Alex Zuber

CRUCIFERS

8:30 ~ Gus Kagey

11:00 ~ Sue Koch

LECTORS

8:30 ~ Robert Alley, Biblical Storyteller

11:00 ~ Robert Alley, Biblical Storyteller

LAY ASSISTING MINISTERS

8:30 ~ Wylie Walton

11:00 ~ Lori Reich

SOUND TECHS

8:30 ~ Tom Pippert

11:00 ~ Todd Hedinger

USHERS

8:30 ~ Bob Neumann, Jeanette Norfleet

11:00 ~ Sue Totty, Pam Bergey

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

8:30 ~ Robert Alley, Gus Kagey,
Oris Griffin, Crystl Whitmire

11:00 ~ Robert & Linda Alley, Sue Koch

MUSICIANS

Linlin Uta, Interim Music Minister

Judith Ofcarcik, Organist

Gloria Dei Ringers; Director ~ Kath Wissinger

Children's Choir; Director ~ Rachel Peters

TODAY AT MUHLENBERG (CONT'D)

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT PRACTICE

Today (12/10) at 9:45 am

Today is our last rehearsal before the performance next Sunday! (*See p. 3 for details.*)

YOUNG ADULT LUNCH

AND BIBLE STUDY

TODAY (12/10), 12:15 pm

Members ages 21 - 35ish are invited to meet in the Nielsen Room after the 11:00 service and share in a time of fellowship, Bible Study, and a meal. You're encouraged to bring your own lunch, or feel free to order and have something delivered to the church! Coffee and tea will be provided. Please join us and invite a friend!

Childcare will be provided in the nursery during our time together. If you plan to attend or have questions, contact Pastor Alex (zuber@muhlenberglutheran.org).

COMFORTS ON DISPLAY

The comforts that were blessed last week will be on display during worship services. Imagine the joy one of these warm comforts will bring to someone who needs warm winter bedding.

Over the past 20 years, Muhlenberg has made more than 2,500 comforts to give to local, national & international disaster relief projects.

Comforts may be purchased: large ~ \$55; youth ~ \$40; baby ~ \$35. Proceeds pay for batting and other supplies. If interested, pin your name and phone number on the comfort you choose, and someone from the Comfort Makers group will be in touch with you. For more information, contact Linda Morrison (lindamm778@gmail.com or 540-383-5085).

THIS WEEK AT MUHLENBERG

HAPPY 175TH ANNIVERSARY, MUHLENBERG!

NEXT Sunday, December 17 - On December 17, 1848, several months before the City of Harrisonburg (population: 700) was incorporated and Isaac Hardesty was elected the town's first mayor, a group of intrepid Lutherans gathered to form the first Lutheran congregation in Harrisonburg. Signing their names to a charter document, Muhlenberg Lutheran Church was formed. Although not "officially" a congregation until accepted into the Virginia Synod in May 1849, Muhlenberg recognizes December 17, 2023 as the start of our 175th Anniversary Year! Join us in worship **NEXT Sunday, December 17** as we kick off a year of celebration.

WEDNESDAY AM BIBLE STUDY

Wednesdays, 10:30 am

Join Pastor Lauren **each Wednesday at 10:30 am** for Bible study via [ZOOM](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/200491556). This class dives deep into the upcoming Sunday's scripture text.

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

Or by phone ...DIAL IN – **301-715-8592** and enter Meeting ID / Passcode: **200491556#**

FINALS WEEK PRAYER FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Finals week is here for college students at all of our area schools! In the midst of this season of stress and studying, join us in lifting a prayer for students and educators in our community.

God of all wisdom, we pray for your gifts of guidance, assurance, and clarity to be poured out on all who face their final exams. Grant learners the ability to recall and apply the

knowledge they have acquired, and fill them with resilience and determination to overcome any challenges. Bless educators with peace and poise as they shepherd their students through the final days of this semester. Success in coursework, and faithful discernment, we commend to you in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Students are invited to join us one final time this semester, **Wednesday evening at 6:00 pm** for a free dinner and time to rest in the midst of a busy week.

HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER

Wednesdays in Advent at 7:00 pm. See page 4 for details.

A VERY MIXED UP CHRISTMAS, NEXT SUNDAY (12/17), 9:45-10:45

The Christmas Pageant is back in person **next Sunday, December 17 at 9:45 am** in the MAC. Join us for *A Very Mixed Up Christmas* by Gwynne Watkins.

What if kids showed up to perform a traditional Christmas Pageant...in their Halloween costumes?! That's what happens in this contemporary spin on a traditional nativity play. It's up to their youth director to improvise her way through the story of Jesus' birth in a hilarious and heartfelt way that connects biblical figures with modern day superheroes, villains, and more. In the end, everyone learns that perhaps being a little bit "mixed-up" is something we can all rejoice in. There will be light refreshments and a chance to meet the performers afterward.



BEHOLD!

Advent & Christmas at Muhlenberg 2023



MUHLENBERG
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Advent Devotional Books – More on the Way!

Thanks for your patience as we encountered unexpected delays and issues with our devotional book order! We received the books in time for worship last Sunday--and were surprised to discover at the end of the morning that we were out! We're delighted at the interest in the devotional book this year, and have placed a second order. **The anticipated delivery date is December 12.** If you'd like one of these books, please **sign the sheet on the Welcome Center to reserve your copy!** We'll contact everyone who signs up for a book to let them know when they've arrived and arrange for pick-up/delivery.

Holden Evening Prayer

Wednesdays in Advent at 7:00 pm (December 13 & 20) - Gather together for a time of contemplation, music and reflection. The music of Marty Haugen's beloved Holden Evening Prayer will surround a time of Scripture and reflection on our weekly themes of expectancy, preparation, and faith. This service will also be live-streamed, so if you can't make it in person, be sure to tune in for this beautiful worship.

Happy Anniversary, Muhlenberg Lutheran Church!

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BEHOLD! Advent & Christmas at Muhlenberg 2023

Christmas Pageant

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Join us after the play for light refreshments and a chance to meet the performers!

Longest Night Worship

Thursday, December 21, 7:00 pm, Park View Mennonite Church - The longest night of the year is December 21, and it has become a meaningful time to recognize the darkness of grief and loss in our lives that long for the light of Christ. The Harrisonburg Community Longest Night service brings together eight congregations (Presbyterian, Mennonite, Methodist, UCC, and Lutheran) for a service of Word, song, prayer, and Holy Communion. The worship provides an opportunity to be honest about our pain and be reminded of Christ's light that shines into dark places. Join Pastor Lauren and leaders from all participating congregations at 7:00pm on Thursday, December 21 at Park View Mennonite Church (1600 College Avenue).

Youth Christmas Party

Friday, December 22, 6:00-8:00 pm - Middle and High School youth are invited to dinner and a Christmas party at Pastor Lauren's house from 6:00-8:00pm Friday, December 22. Wear your favorite tacky Christmas sweater and join us for Christmas games, decorating cookies, and a White Elephant gift exchange. (No spending money on gifts! Your gift must be something you create or already have at home!) RSVP to Pastor Alex by December 18 if you plan to attend or have any questions - zuber@muhlenberglutheran.org.

BEHOLD! Advent & Christmas at Muhlenberg 2023

Local and Global Advent Giving Opportunities



This year, the Local and Global Mission Ministry team is offering two opportunities for giving during Advent. The first is an opportunity to give to ELCA's Lutheran Disaster Response Fund. As all of us know, many people around the world have suffered from numerous disasters this year. As followers of

Jesus we are compelled to help our brothers and sisters in need. Thankfully the Lutheran Disaster Response Fund is a trusted source of support to our neighbors in crisis. To give online go to elca.org/disaster or put your check in the offering plate with ELCA Disaster Response in the memo line. The Local & Global Mission Ministry team is using the last of our budgeted funds to double your donations up to \$1,000 total!

The second opportunity for Advent giving is the donation of \$10.00 gift cards to Walmart, Sheetz, Roses, or 7-Eleven. These gift cards will be given out to our Community Christmas Dinner guests. Your gift cards may be given to Linda Depoy in the church office or placed in the mail slot of the main office door in the Admin Hallway!

Poinsettias ~ Sign-up deadline TODAY!

Help us enjoy the festive colors of poinsettias throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons! Poinsettias will adorn our sanctuary during Advent, and then you take the plant home following the last service on Christmas Eve. You can choose to remember or honor a loved one through your poinsettia purchase. We will have both white and red poinsettias available this year, so please be sure to specify if you have a preference. **The deadline to purchase one is TODAY (12/10).** Please sign up at the Connection Center or use this link: muhlenberglutheran.org/AdventChristmas The cost per plant is \$22. Place your check in the offering plate or mail it to the church office and note "Poinsettias" on the memo line.



BEHOLD! Advent & Christmas at Muhlenberg 2023

Christmas Eve Worship - Sunday, December 24

10:00 am - ONLINE ENCOURAGED - A Fireside Advent - Christmas Eve is a Sunday this year, which means that we'll be celebrating the fourth Sunday of Advent in the morning, before turning to Christmas Eve worship in the afternoon and evening! You can join us in person in the Nielsen Room, or we encourage you to grab a warm beverage, cozy up on the couch, and join online worship at 10:00 am for a 20-30 minute time of prayer and reflection to lead us from Advent to Christmas. This "Fireside Service" will be a time for us to pause whatever we're doing, wherever we are, and prepare our hearts for the coming of the Christ child.

Beginning at 3:20 pm - IN PERSON - Christmas Photos - Come early to get your photo taken by the Chrismon tree! Kids will also have the opportunity to pack a special Christmas gift bag filled with quiet activities that can be done during worship and at home. Enjoy pre-service music by youth and adults from the congregation, and visit with friends old and new before worship begins at 4:00 pm.

4:00 pm - IN PERSON - Family Service - Join us for an energetic worship for all ages. This service includes easy-to-sing hymns, a meaningful reflection, the sharing of Holy Communion, special music from our children and youth choirs, and a candlelit "Silent Night," with battery operated candles for our younger kiddos! The nursery will be staffed.

7:00 pm - IN PERSON & ONLINE - Traditional Service - Gather for a rich liturgical service led by choir and organ. This service includes favorite Christmas carols, a full sermon, Holy Communion, beautiful anthems, and a candlelit "Silent Night." The nursery will be staffed, and the entire service will also be livestreamed.

10:00 pm - IN PERSON - Late Service - Welcome Christ in the darkness through this quiet, intimate, reflective, and joy-filled service. This service includes music led by the handbell choir and solo musicians, congregational song, a full sermon, Holy Communion, and a candlelit "Silent Night." It's a "Midnight Mass" a few hours early!

Community Christmas Dinner

Monday, December 25, 4:30pm, Muhlenberg Activities Center - Muhlenberg Lutheran Church will be hosting our second annual Community Christmas Dinner on Christmas Day. Christmas should be a time for joy and celebration but far too many in our community face loneliness and hunger on this most special day. Hosting this Community Christmas Dinner gives us the opportunity to know our neighbor. This year, we open our doors for guests at 4:00 pm with dinner served at 4:30 pm. Dinner will be followed by games and the singing of Christmas Carols. The event will end at 6:00 pm as we say good night and bid our guests a very Merry Christmas. Go to the Advent website muhlenberglutheran.org/AdventChristmas for ways you can be a part of this event either before Christmas Day and/or on Christmas Day.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

THE WELLSPRING PODCAST



A book and Bible study led by Pastor Alex and weekly guest hosts will be available soon and distributed in Podcast format so that you can take this study with you on the

go! Each episode will break down a chapter of the book [*Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others*](#) by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky and offer an accompanying Bible study. This incredible book was designed to be read by those who work in helping professions to understand how to care for the trauma of others and the world around them without embodying trauma for themselves. However, in a post-COVID world, we've witnessed profound trauma as an entire society, and everyone we meet is carrying some kind of pain. If we hope to be caring people in the world today, we need to understand Trauma Stewardship. The first episodes will soon be available, so stay tuned and jump into reading!

PARKING COURTESY

From young families juggling little ones to older members and all those in between, there are many folks whose lives could be made a little easier or safer by parking closer to the church entrances. While we have a few designated handicapped parking spots, at times on Sunday morning those can be full. Let's be hospitable to each other and visitors who might simply be helped by a closer space. If you usually park closer, maybe take a spot a little further back so that others may have a safe spot for them. Thank you for your consideration.

Visit the Connection Center for more parking-related info.

MUHLENBERG NEWS

CREATION CARE TIP

To preserve the environment and leave a better planet for your children, avoid using disposable goods (lighters, plastics, etc.). We can embrace the ideals of reducing, reusing, and recycling materials to make the world a better place.



ANNUAL REPORTS REMINDER

Attention Committee/Ministry Chairs and Officers: Please send your annual report to Parish Administrator Linda Depoy (depoy@mhlenberglutheran.org) **by Friday, December 15.** If a copy of your committee's report from last year would be helpful, please let Linda know and she will be glad to send it to you.

COAT DRIVE SUCCESSFUL!

Thanks to your generosity, we collected two full bins of new or gently used coats for the many refugees who will experience their first winter this year. Our support will greatly lessen the impact and stress for our newly arrived neighbors. Church World Service picked the coats up Monday so they could distribute them this week. Thanks again for your support!

PATCHWORK PANTRY THANK YOU!

We collected two full bins of non-perishable goods and food for Patchwork Pantry last week. Thank you for your generous donations to help local families.

PRAYER SHAWL KNITTING GROUP

Making Hats for Open Doors



(Vicki Heitsch, Artist/Photographer)

During January and February, Muhlenberg's Prayer Shawl Knitting Group will be knitting/crocheting hats for Open Doors along with prayer shawls. We invite Muhlenberg knitters, knitting at home, to join us in this project. Hats and prayer shawls may be brought to the church when finished, or call Jackie Wells (540-434-6283) if you wish to have them picked up at your home.

CONFIRMATION CORNER

Confirmation isn't just for middle schoolers! All the baptized who have been confirmed are called to grow in faith and affirm God's promises in their life. You can support the hard work of our middle school students by reflecting on these Confirmation Corner thoughts each week. Here's a confirmation prompt for this week:

This week, dive into one of the prophetic books of the Old Testament. Some of it may be challenging to understand without a study Bible to learn more about the context, so reach out to a friend or talk to a pastor if you don't have a resource like this. How do the messages of the prophets speak to the challenges and opportunities of our time?

YOUTH NEWS

WINTER CELEBRATION, JAN. 27-29

Virginia Synod's annual faith-sharing retreat for 9th - 12th graders and their adult advisors will take place at Eagle Eyrie Conference Center in Lynchburg. *Winter Celebration* includes Large Group gatherings with singing, comedy, worship, and a presentation on our event theme. After each Large Group gathering, participants gather in Small Groups, made up of a handful of youth and a couple of adult leaders. Here, participants get to know other Lutheran youth from Virginia and discuss life, faith, and other topics.

There is free time Saturday afternoon when participants can continue to grow relationships, enjoy the coffee and ice cream shop, and participate in or watch the talent show. Evenings are for relaxing in your cottage and talking about the day. Find more information and register for the event at: <https://vasynod.org/event/winter-celebration/>
Early Registration discount ends January 8!

FELLOWSHIP NEWS

MAC KITCHEN UPDATE

The MAC kitchen has been cleaned and updated with new guidelines in place for its use. Did you know the original guidelines were based off of Weavers Mennonite Church? With the implementation of new guidelines, a class on the use of the commercial dishwasher will be offered at the first of the year. Any groups or individuals interested in attending, please contact Barbara Roadcap (540-830-1896 or bbroadcap@gmail.com).

CELEBRATION CORNER

ADVENT-URE SUNDAY

At Advent-ure Sunday last week, everyone had a great time!



We had several craft tables...



There were beads to make crafts.



And materials for Advent luminaries.



And everyone loved playing with the babies!



Emily Carneal & Kemper enjoy a snack.

The Perritt family made a beautiful Advent wreath!



And Barbara Roadcap helped us make Chrismsons!



*The kids had a great time dancing to
The Carol of the Bells!*



The kids had a lot of fun while eating their snacks!

TIME, TALENT & TREASURE

RECENT ATTENDANCE

Here are some interesting statistics from our recent in-person and online viewership:

11/26	8:30 Holy Communion	39
	11:00 Holy Communion	103
	11:00 Wellstream Worshippers.....	36
	Total Views this Week	186
	Hours Viewed this Week	51.3
12/03	8:30 Holy Communion	61
	11:00 Holy Communion	84
	11:00 Wellstream Worshippers.....	33

NOTE FROM OUR TREASURER

We see an increase in gifts and offerings compared to this time last year. I am hopeful this continues through the end of the year. Expenses are slightly down compared to where we expected them to be. I am hopeful gifts and offerings will continue the upward trend so that we can end the year balanced.

Sarah A. Sunde, Treasurer

FINANCIAL REPORT

Through October 2023

	2023 YTD Actual	2023 YTD Budgeted	2022 YTD Actual
Gifts & Offerings	\$454,353	\$528,333	\$423,392
Total Income	\$620,115	\$686,480	\$542,676
Total Expenses	\$668,716	\$688,392	\$529,576
Excess Income/(Deficit)	\$(48,601)	\$(1,912)	\$13,100

Giving in support of our Spending Plan	\$ 10,026.00
Giving to Other Designated Funds	\$ 1,210.00
Total Giving	\$ 11,236.00

December Thrivent Choice Dollars - \$349

To give online, scan here ➡



WEEKLY CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

December 11 – 17, 2023

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

Mon	7:00 pm	Congregation Council Meeting
Tues	6:00 pm	Celebration Singers Rehearsal
	7:00 pm	Gloria Dei Ringers
Wed	10:30 am	Bible Study via ZOOM
	6:00 pm	LCM Dinner
	6:00 pm	Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal
	7:00 pm	Holden Evening Prayer
Sun		Third Sunday of Advent
		175th Anniversary Kick Off
	8:30 am	Holy Communion in person
	9:45 am	Christmas Pageant
	11:00 am	Holy Communion in person & Livestreamed via Facebook and YouTube
	12:15 pm	Cherub Choir Rehearsal
	12:15 pm	Youth Ensemble Rehearsal



Each week, we lift up five households from our congregation in prayer. Our prayer families for this week are the following:

Adam, Cathy, Latham and Gwendolyn Copeland

Pat Costie

Leslie and Glenn Crawford

Justin, Catherine, Eli, Esme and Eden Creasy

Bob and Dana Crittenden

*Please note: if you notice an unintentional omission in our list or prefer your name not be listed, please contact
Parish Administrator Linda Depoy (540-434-3496 or
depoy@muhlenberglutheran.org)*

The **weekly deadline** for routine articles for *The Chimes* is **Thursday at 8:00 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 /540-434-3496)