



# 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*

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**December 13, 2020**

**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

## **WHAT'S THE BUZZ**

### **GENEROSITY MATTERS**



It's not too late to submit your Estimate of Giving for 2021! We submit our Estimate of Giving Cards as an act of faith and in response to God's generosity to us. This can be done one of three ways:

1. Mail your card to Muhlenberg Lutheran Church, 281 E Market St, Harrisonburg VA 22801, Attn: Tim Wessel.
2. Bring the card to the parking lot service **TODAY at 4 pm.**
3. Click here to fill it out electronically at <https://forms.gle/V6tnk3W46MwqfHNN6>.

If you need a card mailed to you, please contact the church office. If you have questions, contact Tim Wessel at [twessel@aol.com](mailto:twessel@aol.com) or 803-521-9984.

**Please submit your card by December 15.**

Thank you for joining with us as we celebrate God's abundance in our lives and the ministry we are called to do together through Muhlenberg Lutheran Church!

*See p. 8 for news about a CARES Act special tax deduction.*

## **TODAY AT MUHLENBERG**

### **SHENANDOAH VALLEY HARPERS**

We are pleased to welcome the Shenandoah Valley Harpers today as guest musicians during the Prelude. Leader Cathy Cunningham began teaching group harp lessons some time ago and later formed today's ensemble, which consists of seven members. One of the harpers you will hear today is Muhlenberg member Linda Morrison. For clarification, they are *harpers*, not harpists. This group uses levers instead of pedals, which makes them *harpers*. One who plays the pedal harp is a *harpist*.

### **PARKING LOT SERVICE**

**Today (12/13) at 4:00 pm**

On the second Sunday of each month, we gather at 4:00 pm in the Muhlenberg parking lot for a brief worship service. The audio of the service is broadcast through a radio transmitter, allowing participants to stay in their cars for the entirety of the service. We'll share communion at this service. Bread will be available, but if you're more comfortable, feel free to bring your own bread.

*See p. 7 for items being collected at the service.*

## TODAY AT MUHLENBERG (CONT'D)

### 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 - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Class  
**9:30 – 10:00** 4<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> 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

While we aren't meeting in person, we are able to track our online viewership:

<b>11/29</b>	<b>8:30 Communion</b>	<b>21</b>
	<b>11:00 Total Live Views</b>	<b>112</b>
	<b>Total Views this Week</b>	<b>487</b>
	<b>Hours Viewed this Week</b>	<b>139.2</b>
<b>12/6</b>	<b>8:30 Communion</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>11:00 Total Live Views</b>	<b>101</b>

### FINANCIAL REPORT

Through <b>October 2020</b>			
	Y-T-D Actual	Y-T-D Budget	Y-T-D Last Year
Gifts & Offerings	\$504,446	\$673,509	\$566,725
Total Receipts*	\$642,631	\$765,722	\$650,160
Expenses	\$660,132	\$813,258	\$689,353
<b>Excess Income/ (Expenses)</b>	<b>(\$17,501)</b>	<b>(\$17,501)</b>	<b>(\$39,193)</b>

\* Includes \$12,331.53 – federal PPP proceeds

Giving in support of our Spending Plan	\$ 19,563.00
Giving to Other Designated Funds	\$ 26,720.00
<b>Total Giving for the Week</b>	<b>\$ 46,283.00</b>

November Thrivent Choice Dollars: \$47



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.

## THIS WEEK

### MINISTRIES NIGHT

**Monday (12/14) 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](#) using the following link:

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

### PASTORS' BOOK CLUB

We gather **THIS Wednesday, December 16, 6:30 pm** via Zoom for a discussion of *The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong Can be Made Right* by Lisa Sharon Harper. Please join us using the link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82701657853?pwd=NWFhZVh0VGdEY1Z5dzRCSjNVQzIzQT09>

Remember: “Membership” is not required. A different group of people gather each month based on interest, so feel free to attend, even if you haven't before!

### HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER

**Wednesdays at 7:00 pm**

Led from the sanctuary by Music Ministry Accompanist Linlin Uta and a rotating slate of singers, including the pastors, this service is livestreamed on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#). The service will be recorded and available to view any time.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### VIRGINIA INTERFAITH CENTER

**FOR PUBLIC POLICY**

**Day for All People**

**January 18-21**

Join people of faith and goodwill from across Virginia to make your voice heard on economic, racial, social, and environmental justice issues. Learn the issues from dynamic speakers and workshops, meet with legislators and engage with advocates in your region. Register at [tinyurl.com/dfap2021](http://tinyurl.com/dfap2021).



### ONLINE WINTER CELEBRATION

**January 22-24, 2021**

**Registration Now Open**

Winter Celebration is Virginia Synod's annual weekend faith-formation retreat for youth in 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grades and adult leaders. This year we will gather online for large group experiences with lots of singing, skits and fun, and small group experiences with lots of new friends, games, conversation, and faith sharing! **Deadline to register is January 5, 2021.** To register after this date, please contact Rev. Dave Delaney ([delaney@vasynod.org](mailto:delaney@vasynod.org) or 540-529-6893).

For more information and to register online, visit

[www.vasynod.org/event/winter-celebration](http://www.vasynod.org/event/winter-celebration).

## **ADVENT NEWS**

**Advent 2020**



### **DO NOT BE AFRAID**

This Advent and Christmas, you're invited to listen in to the angels' message in the first two chapters of the Gospel of Luke: "Do not be afraid!" God gave this instruction to God's people throughout their history, and it's a message God continues to give to us today. Through the stories of Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary, we'll explore together what it looks like to have hope, know peace, live in joy, and trust love.

### **ADVENT DAILY DEVOTIONAL**

This has been a challenging year, with many stressors and unexpected twists along the way. Biblically, prophets are often called upon to speak God's Word in troubled times like these, and so we turn to their wisdom now! In worship on Sundays at Muhlenberg we will reflect on the angelic call "Do Not Be Afraid," while throughout the weeks we will explore the faithfulness of the prophets and what wisdom and challenge they shared with God's people.

You are invited to participate in this devotional season by recording a short video reflection that will be shared as a daily devotional. How do we have hope, know peace, live in joy, and trust love? Contact Pastor Alex for more information or click [HERE](#) to sign up for a reflection.

To sign up to RECEIVE the daily devotions via email, click [HERE](#). They will also be posted daily in the Muhlenberg Daily Devotions Facebook group.

### **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.

## CHRISTMAS NEWS

### CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM ~ *CHRISTMAS LETTERS*

Nearly 30 young people will participate in our online program, *Christmas Letters*, premiering **Sunday, December 20, 4:00 pm** on Muhlenberg's [Facebook](#) page and [YouTube](#) channel. Tune in to see their presentation in word and song! This event will be available online for two weeks following the premiere, so if you miss the broadcast you can watch it any time during those two weeks. Share it with friends and family so they can join in the Christmas cheer!

### 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. Muhlenberg is hosting this year's ecumenical Longest Night worship service **Sunday, December 20, 7:00 pm**, on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#). 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.

### CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP AND ACTIVITIES

**3:00-6:00 pm** please stop by the church to drop off alternative giving boxes and/or Christmas offerings. Pick up poinsettias (if you ordered one) and candles for singing Silent Night at home.

**3:00-3:30 pm Carols and Story** ~ Gather in Muhlenberg's parking lot for Christmas carols and a family-friendly reading of the Christmas story! We'll stay in our cars and listen through our radio transmitter. (Also, you can sing as loud and off-key as you'd like when you're in your own car!) Come and welcome the newborn King with our faith community.

**4:30 pm Christmas Eve Service of the Word** will premiere on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#). This service will be similar to our current 11:00 Sunday service and feature rich musical selections, the proclamation of the birth of Christ, and a candlelit singing of "Silent Night." Watch it concurrently with the congregation and send greetings to one another through the chat, or tune in anytime that evening to worship with your family.

**5:30-6:30 pm Luminaries** ~ Candle-lit luminaries will line the street around our church building, shining Christ's light out to passersby. Stop by the church to light a candle and listen to musical selections through our radio transmitter. (*Weather permitting*)

**7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service of Word and Sacrament** will take place via [ZOOM](#). Similar to our current 8:30 Sunday service, this service will feature simple liturgy and music, proclamation, the sharing of communion, and a candlelit singing of "Silent Night." Please have bread and wine ready in your home before the service begins.

**9:00 pm Christmas Eve Service of the Word** will premiere on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#). This service is identical to the 4:30 service and provides the opportunity to worship concurrently with other members of the congregation.

## CHRISTMAS MORNING MUSIC

Tune into a **Concert for Christmas Day**, presented by Music Minister Elizabeth Williams. This concert premieres on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) **December 25, 10:00 am** and will be available to view anytime the rest of the day.

## DECEMBER 27 LESSONS AND CAROLS

**Sunday, December 27** will feature a service of lessons and carols **at 11:00 am** on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#). There will be NO 8:30 am service, Christian Formation, or fellowship that day.

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## REMEMBER & HONOR LOVED ONES

Want to remember or honor a loved one with a poinsettia? **Cost per plant is \$17.** 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/rLA7kyZfcMnbeQLBA>
2. **Pay** for poinsettias (write "Poinsettias" on the memo line). Mail your check to the church office (281 East Market Street, Harrisonburg 22801). **Payments reserve poinsettias.**

Poinsettias may be picked up Christmas Eve Day from outside the Gathering Area, 3:00-6:00 pm.

**Sign up deadline is TODAY (12/13).** (no additional flowers will be ordered after that date).



## ALTERNATIVE GIVING OPPORTUNITY

If you wish to remember a loved one in a different way during this Holy Season, we offer a local opportunity in **Habitat for Humanity** (a nonprofit organization that helps families build and improve places to call home) and a global opportunity in **ELCA Disaster Response** (an *ELCA mission*).

1. **Sign up** using the link below or call Emily Wicht at 540-421-1994:  
<https://forms.gle/7nLwASmuxfZkLA1o9>
2. **Make your contribution.** Ensure correct credit/designation by indicating "**Habitat for Humanity Christmas Gift**" or "**Disaster Response Christmas Gift**" on the memo line. Mail your check as described in #2 above.

We will publish the name of your loved one(s) in an insert during the Christmas season (as we do for poinsettia donations). **Sign up deadline is TODAY (12/13).**

## ADVENT & CHRISTMAS GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

*Christian Formation and Local & Global Mission ministry teams are offering many opportunities to make your Advent and Christmas a time of sharing with others. By providing these different opportunities, we hope you find one that touches your heart. Another way you and your family can take part is by praying for those who are in need in our world! Contact Diane Bayer ([bayer@muhlenberglutheran.org](mailto:bayer@muhlenberglutheran.org) or 434-3496) with any questions about these projects.*

### ANGEL TREE



ANGEL TREE

If you chose an “angel,” please return it and your gift(s) **TODAY** (12/13) during the 4:00 pm parking lot service.

### CHRISTMAS SOCKS

Fill a **pair** of dark socks with things like...

- water flavoring powder packets**
- tissues**
- toothpaste/toothbrushes**
- crackers, granola**
- hand warmers**
- soap, shampoo, lip balm**
- bus tickets**
- gift cards to local food shops, etc.**

**Tie the pair of filled socks together** and bring to church **TODAY** (12/13) **during 4:00 pm parking lot service**. Filled socks may also be placed in the pick-up/drop-off box outside the Gathering Area before December 13. If your sock contains bus tickets, gift cards, or other valuable items, contact Diane Bayer for instructions.



### SENIOR CITIZEN SANTA BAGS

Sponsored by JAMers

The JAMers offer this service opportunity every year for the whole congregation. The following items will be collected:

- shampoo**
- toothbrushes/toothpaste**
- combs/brushes**
- body lotion**
- soap**
- hand sanitizer**
- tissues**
- hot chocolate**
- popcorn**
- snack crackers**
- stamps, envelopes & greeting cards**



Bins for collection of these items will be available at the 4:00 parking lot service **TODAY** (12/13).

### ALTERNATIVE ADVENT...



Each day during devotions, put something in the box you picked up at Advent-ure Sunday (or any box): e.g. a canned good, a bar of soap, a toothbrush or toothpaste, etc.

The boxes should be **returned Christmas Eve** and placed on the table outside the Muhlenberg Activities Center between **3:00-6:00 pm**.

## MUHLENBERG NEWS

### CREATION CARE TIP



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

In order to protect indoor air quality in your home, choose formaldehyde-free furniture, organic cotton and hemp fabrics, and no- or low-VOC paints or finishes. Volatile Organic Compounds or VOCs are carbon-containing substances that easily become vapors or gases. They can be present in paints, coatings, and cleaning products.

Choose FSC wood furniture, flooring, and cabinetry. FSC or Forest Stewardship Council is a non-profit organization that sets certain high standards to make sure that forestry is practiced in an environmentally responsible and socially beneficial manner. If you can only do one thing, purchase furnishings that meet sustainable standards from the beginning of their production phase to the end. You'll get the most environmental benefit for your buck while encouraging other manufacturers to achieve sustainable standards.

### COMMUNICATING WITH MEMBERS WITHOUT ONLINE ACCESS

Members of the congregation who cannot read *The Chimes* online can request a copy be mailed to them weekly. If you know a member without online access, contact Parish Administrator Linda Depoy (434-3496 or [depoy@muhlenberglutheran.org](mailto:depoy@muhlenberglutheran.org)).

## CARES ACT NEWS

### SPECIAL \$300 DEDUCTION FOR DONATIONS IN 2020

Ordinarily, you can only deduct charitable contributions on your tax return if you itemize your deductions, but under the CARES Act, individuals can deduct \$300 in cash donations to a qualifying organization. This special deduction is an "above-the-line" deduction, which means that it reduces your taxable income even before you apply the standard or itemized deduction. Consider a special gift to Muhlenberg, which allows our ministry to happen and comes with a bonus tax deduction for you!

## CARE COMMITTEE NEWS

### SUGGESTION

As you are thinking about your gifts and greetings, please consider sending additional greeting cards or messages. Some suggestions might include:

- military personnel away from home
- nursing care facility staff or residents
- healthcare workers /first responders
- a member of the congregation living alone or in a care facility
- a member of the congregation who has lost a loved one this year

In addition, please send a card to someone within our church family to show you are thinking of them. If you have children who would include a small drawing or homemade card, wonderful!

You may never know how much a small gesture such as this could mean to someone this holiday season.

## REMINDERS

### PASTORAL CARE

Pastor Lauren and Pastor Alex are available for phone conversations, email, and video/in-person meetings as needed. Simply email or call them at the church office — they'll be happy to hear from you!

### ENTERING THE CHURCH

Staff continues to work mainly from home. **All doors are locked at all times.** To keep everyone safe, we ask that congregation members refrain from coming to the church building unless necessary. **If you need to be in the building, use the Gathering Area doors to enter and exit.** We suggest you wear a mask as much as possible. If you have something to drop off, arrange with a staff person to receive it ahead of time. Thank you!

## JOYS, THANKS & CONCERNS

*This is the space for sharing joys, thanks, and concerns of our congregation, our synod, and the wider church. Please lift these up as a part of your daily prayers. To share joy, thanks, or concern (e.g. birth, illness, injury, or death of an immediate family member; thank-you and congratulatory notes, etc.), contact Parish Administrator Linda Depoy (434-3496 or [depoym@muhlenberglutheran.org](mailto:depoym@muhlenberglutheran.org)). Submissions will be printed with consideration for space and appropriateness at the discretion of the pastors and editor.*

✝ We offer sympathy to Audrey Cook and her family following the death of her husband Edwin “Sam” Cook on December 3. Sam was a long-time member of Muhlenberg and lived at Sunnyside Retirement Community.

## WEEKLY CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

December 14- 20

*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](#)
- Tue. 5:00 pm** Tweens and Teens  
**5:30 pm** Children’s Choir  
**6:30 pm** Celebration Singers
- Wed. 10:30 am** Wed. Morning Bible Study  
**6:30 pm** Pastors’ Book Cub via [ZOOM](#)  
**7:00 pm** Holden Evening Prayer via [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)  
**7:00 pm** Sanctuary Choir
- Sun. Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
[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 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Class  
**9:30 am** 4<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Class  
**9:30 am** Faith Lens Class  
**9:30 am** 40-Day Journey Class  
**11:00 am** Service Livestreamed via [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)  
**4:00 pm** Children’s Christmas Program  
**7:00 pm** Longest Night Service via [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)

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:*

*([depoym@muhlenberglutheran.org/434-3496](mailto:depoym@muhlenberglutheran.org/434-3496))*

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