



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 17, 2023**

## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

## Happy 175<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary Muhlenberg!

1849 was a big year. The California Gold Rush was in full swing, Harriet Tubman escaped and began to lead other enslaved people to freedom, Zachary Taylor became the 12<sup>th</sup> U.S. president...and Muhlenberg Lutheran Church was formed!

2024 marks our 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary! We're planning to spend the year looking back and celebrating our congregation's history and ministry to the community. But the anniversary year also gives us a chance to look forward to the future with renewed vision, hope, confidence, and commitment. We're excited to celebrate with nostalgia and fun, as well as serious reflection and opportunities for spiritual growth.

We kick off our celebration **TODAY**, as we remember the little group of Lutherans who gathered in Harrisonburg on December 17, 1848 to sign a document requesting that they be allowed to form a congregation under the leadership of Rev. J.J. Suman. Another pastor, Rev. J.A. Seiss, had been leading preaching

mission for several years in Harrisonburg. The growing town was strategically located at the intersection of two major roads down and across the valley, and with a population of just over 700 people, Harrisonburg was seen as an ideal spot for a new Lutheran congregation. In May 1849 the organization of the congregation was reported to the Virginia Synod, and Muhlenberg Lutheran Church was "official!"

We'll have a variety of anniversary activities and gatherings over the next year, and we encourage you to engage, learn, connect, and celebrate with us! We praise God for the 175 years our community has served the Lord, and look forward to the next 175 years.

--The 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee: *David Barnes, Mark Byerly, Louise Layman, Christian Perritt, Tassie Pippert, Kim Shipe, Mary Elizabeth Skinner, Kelly Zuber, Pastor Lauren Eanes, Pastor Alex Zuber*



**MUHLENBERG  
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

*See pages 2 – 3 for more information about  
our 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration!*

## 175<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### **December 17, 2023: Anniversary Kick Off!**

We begin our anniversary year with the launch of the Signature Quilt project. Sign a square for the quilt in remembrance of our ancestors in the faith who signed the document forming Muhlenberg Lutheran Church.

**January 7 - February 11, 2024: Historic Worship Services** We'll start our year immersing ourselves in liturgy and music from throughout the history of the Lutheran Church in the Shenandoah Valley. Each week, we'll worship with Lutheran resources from a different era:

- Jan. 7 1790s *Hymn and Prayer Book: for the use of such Lutheran churches as use the English language*
- Jan. 14 1850s *Liturgy of the General Synod*
- Jan. 21 1920s *Common Service Book*
- Jan. 28 1960s *Service Book and Hymnal*
- Feb. 4 1980s *Lutheran Book of Worship*
- Feb. 11 2020s *All Creation Sings*

**January 7, 2024: Introduction to Peter Muhlenberg** We welcome Pastor Jonathan Boynton to Muhlenberg for an engaging presentation about our namesake, Peter Muhlenberg. Nielsen Room, 9:45 am.

**Spring 2024: Historic Artifacts Displayed in Gathering Area** See a display of items and photographs from our past, and read stories of Muhlenberg throughout the years.

**May 19, 2024: Happy Birthday Muhlenberg!** On this Pentecost Sunday, we'll celebrate the birthday of the church with a party. We'll also welcome Virginia Synod Bishop Phyllis Milton to celebrate this milestone with us in worship.

**June-July 2024: Muhlenberg's Pastors and Sons/Daughters of the Congregation** Former pastors of the congregation, as well as those who have entered the ministry from Muhlenberg will be visiting this summer.

**Fall 2024: Tours of the Church** Learn more about our history, buildings, and art with tours scheduled throughout the fall.

**September 15, 2024: Homecoming** Save the date for our Anniversary Homecoming Event! Gather with friends old and new for a celebratory banquet, remembrances from the past, and a look to the future. Every family will receive a special keepsake from this event.

Additional presentations and speakers are still being scheduled. More details about all events will be shared through *The Chimes*.

## MUHLENBERG'S ANNIVERSARY HYMN

Pastor Paul Weber, who served as Interim Pastor in 2017 - 2018, wrote a hymn entitled *The Wellspring of God's Saving Grace* for Muhlenberg's 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is modeled on our vision to be a "Wellspring of God's Grace in Jesus Christ" and depicts our four values: open, authentic, relational, and serving. We are grateful for Pastor Paul's gift to our congregation, and give thanks for God's saving grace proclaimed at Muhlenberg throughout the years!

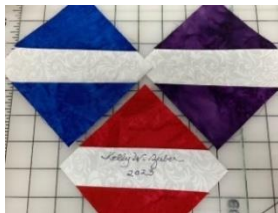
## THE RINGING OF THE BELL

Beginning today and continuing throughout our anniversary year, we return to the tradition of ringing the church bell at the start of our worship services. The sound of a church bell is a summons into a holy place, to gather in reverence to worship our Lord.



Our bell has a history almost as old as our congregation. The bell was cast by the foundry of Jones and Hitchcock in Troy, NY between 1852 - 1857 and originally installed in a church in Pennsylvania. In the late 1880s, the bell was brought to Muhlenberg and stored until it was placed on the new brick church built at N. Main and Wolfe streets. When the current building was built in the early 1950s, the bell was placed in a boiler room where it sat (except for a few years when Jim and Dolores Hoak stored it in their barn for safekeeping) until the building of the Gathering Area in 2009. In its now prominent position outside the Sanctuary, we can hear and appreciate its call to worship once more.

## SIGNATURE QUILT CELEBRATES 175 YEARS



Quilting has been part of the history of the Shenandoah Valley for centuries. In fact, Harrisonburg is home to the Virginia Quilt Museum, and our own Comfort Makers have made thousands of comforts for those in need for decades. That's one of the reasons we have chosen to kick off our 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at Muhlenberg Lutheran Church by creating an heirloom "signature" quilt to commemorate this celebration. Signature quilts were first seen in America in the mid-1800's about the same time Muhlenberg's congregation was formed. A family or group of friends would sign or embroider their names on small pieces of fabric which would be sewn together into a patchwork quilt.

Our first congregation of worshipers signed their names to a document forming our congregation. To mark this momentous

occasion, we decided to ask members, staff, and regular attendees to sign a small square of fabric which will be sewn into a much larger quilt.

**We hope each member will sign a square with their first and last name and the date they joined the church.** (Lists with member join dates will be available.) Young children are welcome to sign a square if they are able or they may sign a piece of paper and we will trace their name onto the fabric. Homebound members can do the same if they are unable to sign the fabric.

We view this quilt as "a moment in time" worth preserving in our church. The quilt will reflect the life and active participants of the church in 2023 – 2024 and will include all those who gather here, both young and old. Imagine 25 years from now when our then grown children can see themselves in this quilt as well as many of saints of Muhlenberg who have gone before them.

One of our newest members, Kelly Zuber, will coordinate the signing and put the quilt together. Starting **TODAY** (12/17) and continuing through January, you can visit the quilt signing table in the Gathering Area after the 8:30 am service and before and after the 11:00 am service. Kelly will sew the squares together and add embellishments such as our church logo, Luther Rose, and ELCA emblems to the quilt next spring and summer. We hope you will sign your name just as our founders did to charter Muhlenberg 175 years ago.

## TODAY'S WORSHIP INFO

### OFFERING

*Creator of the Stars of Night* - (Nancy Raabe)

### SENDING HYMN

*The Wellspring of God's Saving Grace* -  
(Paul D. Weber) *see back page*

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**PREACHING MINISTER** ~ Pastor Alex Zuber

**PRESIDING MINISTER** ~ Pastor Lauren Eanes

### CRUCIFERS

**8:30** ~ Gus Kagey

**11:00** ~ Sue Koch

### LECTORS

**8:30** ~ Linda Morrison

**11:00** ~ Linda Alley

### LAY ASSISTING MINISTERS

**8:30** ~ Mary Elizabeth Skinner

**11:00** ~ Robert Alley

### SOUND TECHS

**8:30** ~ Bill Wightman

**11:00** ~ Mark Byerly

### USHERS

**8:30** ~ David & Susan Lawrence

**11:00** ~ Sue Totty, Olivia Rishell

### COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

**8:30** ~ Linda Morrison, Gus Kagey,  
Oris Griffin, Bill Whitmire

**11:00** ~ Linda Alley, Sue Koch, Greta Willis

### MUSICIANS

Linlin Uta, Interim Music Minister

Judith Ofcarcik, Organist

Celebration Singers (8:30)

Sanctuary Choir (11:00)

## WHAT'S THE BUZZ? (CONT'D)

### CONGREGATION COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

At our December 12 Congregational Council meeting we said goodbye to outgoing Council members Bruce Hamilton, Joe Grandstaff and Kevin Stees. We welcomed new 2024 Council members, Jacob Dunlap, Sarah Orem, and Kristee Trumbo. The new Council members will be installed Sunday, January 14.

Per our Constitution, the new Council nominated and elected the 2024 Council Executive Committee:

**Meg Wightman, President**

**Kristee Trumbo, Vice President**

**Rachel Peters, Secretary**

**Sarah Sunde, Treasurer** (*continuing the 2<sup>nd</sup> of her 3-year term*)

Please continue to hold us all in prayer as we seek to lead faithfully.

Peace be with you,

*Meg Wightman*

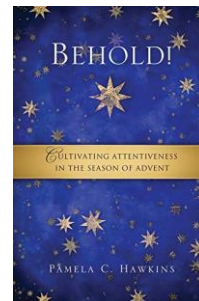
*Congregation Council President*

[mlccouncilpres@gmail.com](mailto:mlccouncilpres@gmail.com)

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### MORE ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

Thanks for your patience as we encountered unexpected delays with our devotional book order! The second order arrived this week. If you'd like one of these books, please **pick one up from the Connection Center in the Gathering Area!** We've contacted everyone who had signed up for a book and have those set aside.



## TODAY AT MUHLENBERG

### A VERY MIXED UP CHRISTMAS

9:45 AM - 10:45 AM



The Christmas Pageant is back in person **TODAY (12/17) 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.

### COMFORTS ON DISPLAY

Today we conclude our comfort display. Imagine the joy one of these comforts will bring to someone who needs warm winter bedding. Over the past 20 years, Muhlenberg has made 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 call you. For more info, contact Linda Morrison ([lindamm778@gmail.com](mailto:lindamm778@gmail.com) or 540-383-5085).

## THIS WEEK

### 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).

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

*No Bible Study December 27, but please join us again Wednesday, January 3.*

### HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER

**THIS Wednesday (12/20), 7:00 pm**

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.

### LONGEST NIGHT WORSHIP

**THIS Thursday (12/21), 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 7:00 pm Thursday, December 21 at Park View Mennonite Church (1600 College Avenue).



## THIS WEEK (CONT'D)

### YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY

**THIS Friday (12/22), 6:00-8:00 pm**



Middle and High School youth are invited to dinner and a Christmas party at Pastor Lauren's house from 6:00-8:00 pm 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](mailto:zuber@muhlenberglutheran.org).

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER

**Christmas Day, Monday (12/25) 4:30 pm**

Muhlenberg will host our second annual Community Christmas Dinner on Christmas Day. *See details on page 7.*

### Volunteers Needed for

### Community Christmas Dinner

Help is needed for Muhlenberg's Community Christmas Dinner. There are many ways to volunteer before the event or on Christmas Day at the event. Please see the sign-up Genius link below for all the ways you can help. You may also call Karen Thomsen (540-421-4431) and let her know how you would like to participate.

[www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084FA4AF2DAAFFCC70-46446938-community#/](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084FA4AF2DAAFFCC70-46446938-community#/)

## NEW YEAR'S DAY:

### THE WELLSPRING PODCAST

New Year, new podcast! Mark your calendar for January 1, 2024, when the first episode of **the Wellspring Podcast** will be released. The first series of this new podcast will be a book and Bible study led by Pastor Alex and weekly guest hosts 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. Episodes will release weekly on Mondays beginning January 1, so grab your copy of the book, and reach out to Pastor Alex if you're interested in organizing a discussion group!



# 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](http://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 (CONT'D)

### EPIPHANY CHILI COOK OFF

Sunday, January 7, 4:30 pm



Mark your calendars for the third annual Epiphany Chili Cook Off in Wayland Hall and the Nielsen Room. Plan ahead and enter your favorite chili recipe - regular, white or vegetarian for the Muhlenberg Great Chili Cook Off! We will vote for the best chili with change and bills, and proceeds from voting will benefit Open Doors. **We will also need corn bread, salad and dessert as well as volunteers to help.** Contact Barbara Roadcap (540-830-1896 or [bbroadcap@gmail.com](mailto:bbroadcap@gmail.com)) if you can help.

We will have dinner, followed by a short service and Epiphany traditions like Chalking the Door and Burning of the Greens, **so bring a branch from your Christmas tree or wreath** to place in the fire.

## MUHLENBERG NEWS

### PRAYER SHAWL KNITTING GROUP Making Hats for Open Doors



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. (*Vicki Heitsch, Artist/Photographer*)

## MUHLENBERG CUB SCOUT PACK?

Muhlenberg is considering chartering a Cub Scout pack in our community and needs volunteers to be a part of that effort, especially someone to be a dedicated Chartered Organization Representative (COR). This position is the link between the pack and the church. They are a part of the unit's key-3 leadership team that includes the COR, the pack committee chair and the Cubmaster. The COR works with the unit to help them succeed and ensure the pack has adult volunteers that uphold the values of both organizations.

The position also serves as the voice of Muhlenberg within the local council. Chartered organizations make up the body of Virginia Headwaters Council, and the COR is the voting representative.

If you have any questions about the role or are interested in taking it on (or any other leadership role in the pack), please reach out to Sarah Sunde ([sunnysunde@gmail.com](mailto:sunnysunde@gmail.com)) and Matt Phillippi ([matt.phillippi@virginiaheadwaters.org](mailto:matt.phillippi@virginiaheadwaters.org)).

## CREATION CARE TIP

Reusable wrapping: minimize the impact your gifts have on local landfills by packaging them in reusable or biodegradable materials. Use a gift bag or basket. Wrapping gifts in blankets or table linens creates practical and reusable packaging options.





## FROM OUR FINANCE MANAGER

For more information about these articles, contact Finance Manager Jane Eanes ([eanes@muhlenberglutheran.org](mailto:eanes@muhlenberglutheran.org) or 540-434-3496).

### YEAR-END GIVING

The season of Advent has already begun, and this happy time of celebrating Christmas means that the end of the year will soon be upon us! Perhaps you are setting aside a special Christmas or end-of-year donation for Muhlenberg, and those gifts will be very much appreciated!

You should have recently received a preliminary year-end contribution statement, allowing you to see how much you have given so far in 2023, and also give you an idea of what you may like to give before the end of the year.

If you have plans to fulfill a 2023 donation amount to our congregation, please mark your calendars to make sure your cash or checks arrive in our office **no later than 12:00 noon on Sunday, December 31**. Mailing your donation to the church can be fine, as long as you send them early enough to ensure that they are delivered by the USPS on or before Friday, December 29 (assuming you prefer your gift to be counted for 2023). Any checks or cash donations arriving in our office after December 31 will be counted toward 2024 giving. For this reason, dropping your donation into the offering plate on December 31 may be the easiest and most predictable solution!

Since online donations take several business days to complete the process, please make sure the transaction is dated no later than December 22 to insure a completed transaction by **December 29**.

**Thank you in advance for your generosity to Muhlenberg Lutheran Church.**

## 2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Earlier this fall, we asked the congregation to let us know if you would like to order a booklet of 2024 offering envelopes. For those of you who replied and asked for these, offering envelopes will be ready for pick up **TODAY** (12/17). You will find your offering booklet in the Gathering Area. They are arranged in alphabetical order to make it easier to find your envelopes. They will remain out for pick up through December 31. After January 1, you can pick up your offering booklet from the church office or call me to make other arrangements. If you didn't order a booklet but would like one, please let me know. Thank you!

*Jane Eanes, Finance Manager*

## 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](mailto:bbroadcap@gmail.com)).

**Due to the Christmas holiday, the deadline for The Chimes next week is Tuesday, 12/19 at 8:00 am. The church office will be closed December 25 & 26.**

## PARKING INFORMATION

### PARKING ALERT!

If you park in a numbered space at the lot on the corner of Ott and Water Streets (behind the MAC), **your car may be towed!** That lot is leased by Urban Exchange and no other vehicles are permitted.

### ADDITIONAL PARKING

On special days like Christmas Eve, we are blessed with more people in attendance. Sometimes, it can be challenging to find a parking spot in the lot surrounding the church. We have agreements with our neighboring businesses for additional parking on Sundays, so remember you can always park in the following locations as well:

- **The Ott Street Parking lot** behind the MAC beside the Ott Street House (which we share with Michael Layman Law Group). Do not park in Urban Exchange's lot with numbered spaces on the corner of Ott and Water Streets — you may be towed!
- **Gary's Piano** lot next to the church.
- **Farm Credit** lot across East Market Street.
- **Michael Layman Law Group** lot across from the Water Street entrance to our parking lot (note: parking cones may be moved for church parking use).
- **Wharton, Aldhizer & Weaver Law Offices** lot between W. Water Street & Newman Avenue. Visit the Connection Center for a parking map.

### 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 others who need it may have a safer spot. Thank you for your consideration.

## LOCAL AND GLOBAL MISSION

### 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](http://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! *For more info, see page 15.*

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!

## OPEN DOORS

January 7 – 11 Muhlenberg is providing meals for Open Doors which is being hosted by First Presbyterian Church on Court Square. Open Doors provides shelter for our community members in need of a safe place to stay. You can access the spreadsheet that includes the food needs and servers required to feed 50 people per night by clicking [HERE](#): Please consider helping our neighbors in need with a hot meal. For more information, please contact Sue Totty ([svtotty@gmail.com](mailto:svtotty@gmail.com) or 540-478-3073).

## FAITHFUL QUESTIONS

We offer the opportunity for you to ask faithful questions! In the pews and at the Connection Center, you'll find light purple cards, where you are invited to ask questions whenever one arises. Any question is welcome! Place your purple card in the Offering Plate or in the purple lock box at the Connection Center. Only the Pastors have access to this box. Questions can also be asked digitally using [THIS GOOGLE FORM](#). If you have any questions about this process, please reach out to the Pastors.



## YOUTH NEWS

### WINTER CELEBRATION, JAN. 27-29

Virginia Synod's annual faith-sharing retreat for 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> graders will take place at Eagle Eyrie Conference Center in Lynchburg. It includes Large and Small Group gatherings with singing, comedy, worship, a presentation on our event theme, and time to get to know other Lutheran youth from Virginia and discuss life, faith, and other topics.

Free time Saturday afternoon allows participants to grow relationships, and participate in or watch the talent show. Evenings are for relaxing and talking about the day. Click here for more info or to register:: <https://vasynod.org/event/winter-celebration/>

**Early Registration discount ends January 8!**

## 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:*

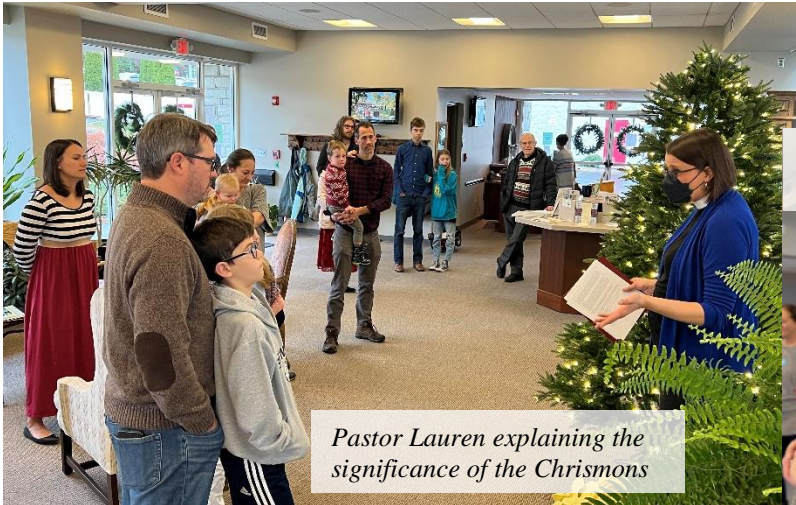
Reflect on this passage of one of Luther's Sermons on the reason why Bethlehem would be a suitable place for the birth of Christ. "[Christ] comes without pomp, without violence, without estate, without money, without sword and muskets. He disregards the great and mighty cities, Jerusalem the most holy, Rome the most powerful, and others of the kind, and chooses for His birth-place the poor and lowly Bethlehem, so that one might judge, from the very place of His birth, what a Governor He would be: poor and mean before the world, but rich in spirit and all heavenly gifts."



## CELEBRATION CORNER

### HANGING OF THE GREENS AND CHRISTMAS CAROLING!

Last week was busy!



*Pastor Lauren explaining the significance of the Chrismsons*

*Pastors entertaining a little one!*



*Decorating the Tree*



*Pastor Alex handing out ornaments*





*Even tall people  
need a chair to  
reach the top!*



*A big thank you to everyone who  
went Christmas Caroling to our  
members. Your singing was well  
received – we're so glad you went!*



## REMINDERS

### NEW DOOR ENTRY SYSTEM



Knock, knock! Who's there? Have you been wondering about our new doorbell system? It was installed to make our building more secure and easier for people coming to church during the week! Wondering how to use it?

***During the week:*** When you arrive at the church, come to the Gathering Area doors and press the doorbell (instructions are posted on the door). When the call is answered, please identify yourself, and the door will be unlocked remotely so you can enter. Please note that ***the office is staffed Monday through Friday from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.*** If you arrive outside of those hours, there's still a good chance someone will be here, but please call before you come to be sure. Please do not use the red doors at the back of the building — for security reasons, these doors are now reserved for Day Care use only.

***On Sundays:*** Our practice is to unlock only the Gathering Area doors for entry on Sunday mornings, allowing for greater security. **All doors can be used to exit the building.**

Currently we are reviewing applications and issuing PIN numbers for those who need to regularly enter the church. If you completed an application, you will hear from the church office very soon. If you didn't complete an application and need a PIN number, applications are still available at the Connection Center **TODAY (12/17).**

We plan to rekey all exterior doors at a later phase in the entry system project.

### PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

*Jesus said, "I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was homeless and you gave me a room, I was shivering and you gave me clothes...." Matthew 25*

People Helping People is hope for many people. It is an ecumenical crisis ministry of churches and faith communities serving Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. They are an organization whose purpose is to ...

- Coordinate services for people in need
- Partner with clients by helping them with assistance they may require
- Improve the quality of life for individuals and families in our community

People Helping People, located in the Ott Street house on Muhlenberg's campus, is open limited hours (Monday and Wednesday) by appointment. If you are vaccinated and this ministry speaks to you, please contact Director LeeAnne Shepherd ([Peoplehelpingpeopledirector@gmail.com](mailto:Peoplehelpingpeopledirector@gmail.com) or 540-433-7286) to discuss volunteering or how you might help those in need in our community.



**People  
Helping  
People**

## TIME, TALENT & TREASURE

### RECENT ATTENDANCE

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

<b>12/03</b>	<b>8:30 Holy Communion .....</b>	<b>61</b>
	<b>11:00 Holy Communion .....</b>	<b>84</b>
	<b>11:00 Wellstream Worshippers.....</b>	<b>33</b>
	<b>Total Views this Week .....</b>	<b>229</b>
	<b>Hours Viewed this Week .....</b>	<b>50.5</b>
<b>12/10</b>	<b>8:30 Holy Communion .....</b>	<b>68</b>
	<b>11:00 Holy Communion .....</b>	<b>95</b>
	<b>11:00 Wellstream Worshippers.....</b>	<b>40</b>

### NOTE FROM OUR TREASURER

In November, Gifts & Offerings and total income are higher than the previous year. We are trending in the right direction. However, expenses are higher than past years, due to increased costs to maintain and manage Muhlenberg's campus and ministries. As the year draws to a close, consider how you might make a year-end gift to support the ministry of God's work in this community.

*Sarah A. Sunde, Treasurer*

### FINANCIAL REPORT

Through November 2023

	2023 YTD Actual	2023 YTD Budgeted	2022 YTD Actual
Gifts & Offerings	\$505,128	\$581,167	\$467,809
Total Income	\$680,066	\$755,128	\$600,037
Total Expenses	\$747,838	\$757,340	\$588,703
<b>Excess Income/(Deficit)</b>	<b>\$(67,722)</b>	<b>\$(2,212)</b>	<b>\$11,334</b>

Giving in support of our Spending Plan	\$ 7,843.23
Giving to Other Designated Funds	\$ 494.00
<b>Total Giving</b>	<b>\$ 8,337.23</b>

**December Thrivent Choice Dollars - \$349**

To give online, scan here ➔



## WEEKLY CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

**December 18 – 25, 2023**

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

<b>Tues</b>	<b>6:00 pm</b>	<b>Celebration Singers Rehearsal</b>
	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Gloria Dei Ringers</b>
<b>Wed</b>	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>Bible Study via <a href="#">ZOOM</a></b>
	<b>6:00 pm</b>	<b>Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal</b>
	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Holden Evening Prayer</b>
<b>Thurs</b>	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Longest Night Service at Park View Menonite Church</b>
<b>Fri</b>	<b>6:00 pm</b>	<b>Youth Christmas Party</b>
<b>Sun</b>		<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b>
	<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>A Fireside Advent Service Livestreamed via <a href="#">Facebook</a> and <a href="#">YouTube</a></b>
		<b>Christmas Eve Services</b>
	<b>4:00 pm</b>	<b>"Family Service"</b>
	<b>7:00 pm</b>	<b>Traditional Holy Communion in person &amp; Livestreamed via <a href="#">Facebook</a> and <a href="#">YouTube</a></b>
	<b>10:00 pm</b>	<b>Late Holy Communion Service</b>
<b>Mon</b>	<b>4:30 pm</b>	<b>Community Christmas Dinner</b>



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

*Nicole and Adrien Cruz*

*Bob and Vicki Curry*

*B J Daniel*

*Richard & Barbara Davis*

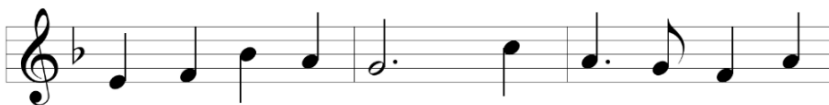
*Linda Depoy*

*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](mailto:depoy@muhlenberglutheran.org))*

# The Well-Spring of God's Saving Grace



1. The well - spring of God's sav - ing grace flows
2. The source of life, the fount of love, is
3. Come, Ho - ly Spir - it, live in us through



free - ly as we pray: God's un - de - served and  
found a - mong us here: In word and wat - er,  
faith by grace a - lone: U - nite our wills to



bound-less love brings life and joy this day. How  
wine and bread, God's sav - ing grace ap - pears. That  
serve in love that all may be your own. Then



won - der - ful to share this grace with  
grace, de - scend - ing from the cross, for -  
let our voic - es join the hymn that



ev' - ry child of God, We o - pen wide our  
gives our sin - ful deeds: Your love, O Je - sus,  
streams through end - less space: "O God, the well-spring



hearts to all and love as we are loved.  
fills our hearts with com-fort, hope, and peace.  
of all love, we sing your wond-rous grace!"