



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 19, 2021

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

A MESSAGE FROM TREASURER TED SUDOL

I am grateful that the Congregation adopted the 2022 Fiscal Plan presented by Council at the recent Annual Meeting. On a personal note, I thank you for your endorsement of this plan for the new year.

While it's been my honor to serve on Council and as Treasurer for the Congregation, I need to step away from these roles. As much as I try not to let my work interfere with my volunteer roles, it happens sometimes. This is one of those times. As you may know, I am a member of a global philanthropy and fundraising-focused consulting firm. I've been offered the opportunity to serve as lead counsel in an engagement with a new client in Chicago. It's an offer I do not want to pass on. I will need to be in Chicago quite a bit and I am abundantly aware I'll not have the time required for my Council and Treasurer roles as I take on this new engagement.

I will remain on Council and as Treasurer through January 15, 2022. I wish I could offer better news. I've enjoyed the opportunity to work shoulder-to-shoulder with the dedicated

members of Council on behalf of the Congregation. In the coming days, I will work with Council and other Muhlenberg leaders in identifying candidates interested in serving in these roles.

In the spirit of the holiday season, please know I am grateful that I've had the opportunity to be of service to Muhlenberg. Thank you ... and Merry Christmas!

CRYSTL WHITMIRE IS RETIRING

Several months ago, we began the process of preparing for my retirement from my position as Muhlenberg's Administrative Assistant, and now it's time for me to officially announce that my service will conclude December 31. I have loved my time in this service and grown in many ways under the tutelage of Linda Depoy. This service has been a true blessing to me personally, professionally and spiritually since beginning in February 2009! I value each person, staff, Pastor, and opportunity I have had. My husband Bill retired from JMU, and we are planning to spend more time together. I hope that God will continue to bless me in being able to volunteer my services here still for years to come!! -- *Crystl*

We will celebrate Crystl's retirement with her in worship on January 2.



Christmas 2021 Presence

CHRISTMAS NEWS

TODAY AT MUHLENBERG

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



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 premieres in person and online **TODAY** (12/19).

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

Join us at 12:30 for an in-person *Red Carpet* movie premiere of the 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. Then the children will walk down the red carpet into the Sanctuary where we will watch the Christmas pageant together in the Sanctuary at 1:00. It will be a fun afternoon celebrating the youth of Muhlenberg Lutheran Church! **The Pageant will be available on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) beginning at 4:00 pm.**

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 THIS 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.

~continued on next page~

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, congregational 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.*

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.

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>

Bible study will not meet December 22 or 29. We will resume January 5.



ADVENT CHORAL EVENSONG

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

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

WELCOME TO MUHLENBERG!

If you are new to the Muhlenberg community, or would simply like to learn more about the congregation, please save the date for a *Welcome to Muhlenberg* experience **Sunday, January 16 at 9:45 am**. Meet leaders, hear about ways to get involved, and take a tour of our campus. We'll also share information about membership at Muhlenberg. If you're interested but unable to attend, please contact Pastor Lauren (eanes@muhlenberglutheran.org or 434-3496) so you can receive an invitation to our next event later in the spring.

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.



Ways to Halt Climate Change

Do you know where your energy comes from? Call your energy provider and ask. Tell them you want energy derived from clean, green, sustainable sources like wind and solar. You can also limit your carbon footprint by shifting energy usage to the evening or nighttime, when most power companies generate a large proportion from renewable resources – and save on your electric bill. Set your thermostat to a comfortable temperature and save energy other times. Call and write your local government, show up and speak up, rally your neighbors to join with you, and get your town or city moving to 100 percent renewable energy.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY NEWS

For more information, contact Financial Secretary Gary Calleo (vnccall@yahoo.com or 540-421-5463).

SIMPLY GIVING UPDATE

If you use Simply Giving and plan to change your amount for 2022, please send Gary Calleo an email authorizing the change or put a signed note in his mailbox. *Note: Pledge cards do not provide authorization unless specified.*

OFFERING ENVELOPES

In an effort to reduce costs and become aligned to the reality that quite a few members don't use offering envelopes, envelopes are available in the Gathering Area for the next few Sundays. Please pick them up then if possible. If you wish to have yours left in the Connection Box (outside the Gathering Area), please email Gary or call the church office. Envelopes not picked up and still being utilized will be mailed early January 2022.

LOCAL & GLOBAL MISSION NEWS

LOCAL AND GLOBAL MISSION DOES ALTERNATIVE GIVING

On behalf of the members of Muhlenberg Lutheran Church, the Local and Global Mission team used some of its remaining budgeted funds to provide monetary support for one local and one global charitable organization. Checks in the amount of \$500 were sent to Our Community Place for our local focus and ELCA Disaster Relief for our global focus. The Local and Global Mission team is grateful to all Muhlenbergers for your continued support of our efforts to serve our neighbors both near and far.

Local and Global Ministry Team

VILLAGE TO VILLAGE

Village to Village is an organization that welcomes refugee families to our area. This season of giving will deplete their warehouse.



Let's take the last few days of this Advent season to gather **new or gently used toys, backpacks, school supplies, home items, and coats to restock their warehouse.** These items will be used to welcome refugees to our community in the coming months.

Items can be brought to Muhlenberg on **Christmas Eve or December 26, 2021 or January 2, 2022.** You can also give a monetary donation at www.hope4villages.org.

Village to Village also has monthly collection days for items designated to this ministry. **Collection dates:** 2nd Tuesday of each month. **Collection location:** 2136 Rawley Pike, Rockingham, VA 22801 at Dove's Camper Sales, (the warehouse to the right when you pull into the parking lot).

Collection Times: 4:30 - 6:00 pm

Please donate gently used items as there is limited storage space and the need is for "like new" things.

MATERIALS AVAILABLE

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

Devotionals for January-March 2022 are available from the Connection Center or the Connection Box.

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

An outbreak of at least 30 tornadoes recently swept through six states. So far, 94 people are reported dead across five states. Lutheran Disaster Response is collaborating with the Indiana-Kentucky Synod and other partners in the area to assess the damage and develop an immediate and a long-term response plan. Your gifts to support these response efforts will empower our partners to meet survivors' immediate and long-term needs. Given the extent of the damage, recovery will take years as thousands of homes will need to be rebuilt or repaired. With your support, Lutheran Disaster Response can accompany survivors on the long road to recovery.

The season of Advent is a time of hope as we prepare to celebrate Christ's birth. Right now, we have an opportunity to share hope with our neighbors in their time of greatest need. Please pray for those impacted by the tornadoes and consider giving as you are able. 100% of your gift goes directly to help response efforts.

- **Online:** click [HERE](#) or visit [elca.org](#)
- **Phone:** 800-638-3522 (Monday-Friday, 8:00-5:00 Central Time).
- **Mail:** make checks payable to Lutheran Disaster Response and send to ELCA, PO Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009.
- **Offering plate:** make check payable to Muhlenberg and designate *Lutheran Disaster Response* on your check and envelope.
- **Via Thrivent Financial:** Thrivent members can direct Choice Dollars to Disaster Relief and/or make a personal donation that will be matched by Thrivent. Visit [thrivent.com](#) Disaster Response for details.

CARE COMMITTEE NEWS

“BE RELATIONAL”

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE

Think about sending a Christmas card or personal note (or two) this season to someone in our congregation! Pick a person or family that you have missed seeing in church, or that you know is probably alone this holiday, or just pick someone at random! Consider including a prayer in the card or a little information about yourself and your holiday season. If you never send cards, just pick up the phone and give someone a call or drop off cookies or fruit for someone living close by. Taking time for a simple act like this could be a great gift to the recipient and even make you feel better.

YOUTH NEWS

WINTER CELEBRATION RETURNS!

Winter Celebration is the Virginia Synod's annual weekend faith-formation retreat for **youth in 9th - 12th grades and adult leaders**. This year we are gathering in-person **January 21-23** (at Eagle Eyrie Retreat Center in Lynchburg) once again for Large Group experiences with lots of singing and skits and fun and Small Group experiences with lots of new friends, games, conversation, more games, and faith sharing!

You can register online [HERE](#) or talk to Pastor Alex (zuber@muhlenberglutheran.org) if you have any questions or need assistance in covering the registration costs. There is also the option of attending the event via Zoom for those who are concerned about COVID safety or have other mobility limitations. The cost is \$35 for online participation.

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

SEASON'S GREETINGS



**People
Helping
People**

As the year draws to a close, we want to say thank you for your support and generosity during these tremendously difficult times. Your contributions allow us to continue our mission of helping those in our community who need it the most. We are truly grateful for your giving spirit. We wish you and your family joy and good cheer during the holidays!

*Leeanne Shepherd, Executive Director
People Helping People Volunteers, Staff & Board Members*

CHRISTIAN FORMATION NEWS

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

To attend virtually, use this Zoom Link:

[HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/84731416878](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84731416878)

COMFORT MAKERS

Please join us **Thursdays January 6 – April 7, 2022 anytime between 8 am - noon** to enjoy fun and fellowship! No sewing skills required.

For more information, contact Linda Morrison (glenn778@comcast.net or 383-5085).

FINANCIAL NEWS

CONSIDER A CHRISTMAS GIFT

A letter was mailed this week asking the congregation to consider the gifts we've already *received* this year. Perhaps those gifts don't seem immediately obvious in a year filled with the continuing uncertainty of a global pandemic, the pain of political and societal divisions, and devastating natural disasters.

And yet each of us can likely name blessings that have come about in this challenging year as well: the joy of reconnecting with loved ones, the beauty of the changing seasons, the renewed sense of community in our church family. Perhaps it's as simple as a roof over our heads and food to eat. As a church community, we continue to be blessed by the Word of God spoken in our midst and the body and blood of Christ in our communion meal. **Even in the midst of challenges, God continues to provide.**

In response to God's gifts to us, we invite you to consider a special Christmas gift to Christ's church. Christmas gifts can be brought during worship, mailed to the church (281 E. Market St, Harrisonburg, VA 22801), or given online at muhlenberglutheran.org/give.

Extra copies of the complete letter are available at the Connection Center.



*Thanks be unto God
for his unspeakable gift.*

2 Corinthians 9:15, KJV

FINANCIAL NEWS (CONT'D)

RECENT ATTENDANCE

12/05	8:30 Holy Communion	44
	11:00 Holy Communion	92
	11:00 Wellstream Worshippers.....	46
	Total Views this Week	189
	Hours Viewed this Week	97.2
12/08	Choral Evensong.....	21
	Wellstream Viewing	11
12/12	8:30 Holy Communion.....	59
	11:00 Holy Communion	86
	11:00 Wellstream Worshippers.....	42

Note Regarding the Treasurer's Report

Due to this year's staff and volunteer transitions, the monthly Treasurer's Report has not been updated for a while. We now have this remedied and today's report is updated through November 30, 2021. As you review this report, you'll recall my message at the recent Annual Meeting: Even with the appropriation to 2021 revenue of part of a very generous testamentary gift, we are looking at the possibility of a substantial deficiency this year. As we give prayerful consideration to our year-end giving, a strong finish to 2021 can send us into the new year in a healthy fiscal position.

Ted Sudol, Treasurer

FINANCIAL REPORT

Through November 30, 2021			
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Year to Date Last Year
Gifts & Offerings	\$528,062	\$754,566	\$558,746
Testamen- tary Gift	79,095	—	—
Total Receipts	\$723,968	\$846,646	\$719,885
Expenses	\$771,215	\$876,170	\$728,367
Excess Income/ Deficit	(\$47,247)	(\$29,524)	(\$17,138)

Giving in support of our Spending Plan	\$ 19,503.00
Giving to Other Designated Funds	\$ 970.00
Total Giving for the Week	\$ 20,473.00

To give online, scan here →



WEEKLY CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

December 20 - 27

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

Mon	2:00 pm	Staff Meeting
	6:30 pm	Congregation Council Mtg.
Tues	6:30 pm	Celebration Singers
	7:00 pm	Gloria Dei Ringers
	7:00 pm	Longest Night Community Worship
Wed	10:30 am	Wed. Morning Bible Study via ZOOM
	6:30 pm	Sanctuary Choir
	7:30 pm	Advent Choral Evensong
Fri		Christmas Eve ~ Church Office Closed
	2:00 pm	Fireside Service
	4:30 pm	Holy Communion in person
	6:30 pm	Holy Communion in person and Livestreamed via Facebook and YouTube
	9:00 pm	Holy Communion in person
Sat		Christmas Day
Sun		First Sunday of Christmas
	10:00 am	Holy Communion in person and Livestreamed via Facebook and YouTube
Mon		Church Office Closed

Due to the Christmas holiday, the deadline for The Chimes next week is Tuesday, 12/21 at 8:00 am. The church office will be closed December 24 & 27.