



Milton Lutheran Church

NEWSLETTER

Fostering community through faith, love and service.

December 2021

Pastor Gary's December Message

Dear Friends of the Milton Lutheran Church,

Advent is a great time for us to be reminded that the bible is a wilderness text. It's a text where its stories are riddled with trauma, loss, conflict, displacement and so much more. The people who wrote the bible were often the ones disenfranchised within their communities. They were the outcast or the odd ones out. In most cases they were the ones working hard to bring about a voice of hope and love while experiencing real hardship in their lives.

Our biblical lectionary has us reading scripture from the Gospel of John and as we begin our journey through advent, we are given the story of John the Baptist in Luke chapter 3. John too had his wilderness experience, having lived in it. He was a man of deep faith and purpose, but also an outcast. He was ridiculed by those in power, constantly under persecution and mocked by those around him. However, it says in Luke 3 that John brought a message of hope from out of the wilderness. This message of hope was about the coming of Jesus. John preached a message of hope, love, and preparation. He challenged people to consider how to love one another and to live a life of repentance so that they could be obedient to the word of God.

This advent we are celebrating the *gifts of Christmas*, expectancy, hope, love, and Jesus. We too live in a place of wilderness. Our lives are not the way we would like them to be, we live in fear that Covid-19 will continue to spread and grow, we are constantly judged for the decisions we make and the things that we do. At the same time, we remember how God meets us in the wilderness and shows us love. This advent let us remember that through the gift of Jesus, we are comforted by God's grace, and empowered by God's love.

Many Blessings,

Gary Schaeffer,



News from the ELCA website:

Ministry at sea

Chaplain reflects on service onboard

USS Dwight D. Eisenhower

By [A.J. Striffler](#) November 11, 2021



A.J. Striffler, a Navy chaplain, served onboard the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower last year. Because the ship avoided port to prevent spread of COVID-19, it set a record for the longest consecutive time at sea for any naval vessel.

I checked into my new command, the aircraft carrier [USS Dwight D. Eisenhower](#), on Dec. 17, 2018. I was 48 and fresh out of Navy's Officer Development School and Naval Chaplaincy School. While I had left chaplaincy until later in life, I was excited and ready to tackle this new ministry.

During my first full day at work, I sat at my metal desk in my tiny office—directly beneath the flight deck of one of America's largest and most powerful warships—and wrote myself a note to hang on the wall: "My only job is to be here for the sailors." That note kept me focused during the two toughest and most memorable years of my life.

Throughout 2019, the crew prepared the ship for its deployment in 2020. "Ike" had spent the two previous years in dry dock, having extensive work done. Many of the ministry spaces—chapel, lounge, computer lab and library—had received a makeover. Our department was ready.

Beginning in March 2019 we went out to sea for trials almost every month, our excursions ranging from four days to three weeks as we trained to do the nation's business. I walked passageways and wandered into spaces, attended meetings and command functions, letting everyone get to know this new lieutenant.

Constantly surrounded by water and remembering my baptism, I lived into a ministry of presence that everyone seemed to connect with. Everyone soon learned they had a friend in "Chaps," no matter their religious background (if any), their spiritual beliefs or their desire to attend worship; no matter their language, race, ethnicity, sexuality or rank. Feeling safe with someone is a rare gift in all branches of our armed services.

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I became the officer in charge of the ship's burials at sea. During our 2019 sea trials, we committed to the sea more than 100 veterans who had requested this final tribute. The Catholic chaplain and I, both committed liturgists, wrote the service together, and all three chaplains onboard took part, as did senior leadership. Our commanding officer, illiberal with praise, expressed how proud he was of the way we had performed this task. We were all off on the right foot.

But as 2020 dawned and tensions rose around the world, we began to see what our deployment would look like. We had been told to prepare for one thing but also to be ready for a very different contingency. Sure enough, we would head to the "hot" zone.

We left the pier in Norfolk, Va., on Jan. 16. About 28 days later, we started across the Atlantic Ocean, headed for the Middle East. We knew the temperature would rise and knew the potential for danger. We knew there would be times when internet, email and phones would be offline. What we didn't know was that the world was headed into a pandemic, or how that would change everything.

By the time we reached the Mediterranean Sea and sailed through the Suez Canal, we realized that this would be a deployment like no other. Until more was understood about the virus, we wouldn't stop in any foreign port. For now, we would "bubble" at sea.

The other chaplains and I wandered the ship and welcomed sailors—who were anxious about home and loved ones—into our various spaces. We got them connected when we could, or we reassured them, sharing jokes, laughs and boxes of gifts sent from the Daughters of the American Revolution or the Girl Scouts.

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When COVID-19 spread onboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt, we knew our fate was sealed: we would remain isolated at sea for the entire deployment. Other ships would come to restock our supplies and bring fuel for the aircraft, but no one would come or go. We would remain on the job—a clean, closed system.

As chaplains, we planned for contingencies and trained for disasters as did everyone else. We presided at worship, wrote evening prayers and led various studies. Most importantly, we were always there for the approximately 4,800 sailors and airmen on the ship. Sometimes bored, sometimes exhausted, sometimes dirty and smelly, they would come to my office, sit down, put their feet up, get a snack and just talk.

At times they were frustrated, scared or just plain silly. But they would come to find me and feel safe to just be themselves. Our conversations were about everything but God 99% of the time, but I knew God was always present—I think they did too.

We returned to the pier in Norfolk 206 days after we'd left it, having broken the record for the longest consecutive time at sea for any naval vessel. Several holidays, a ceremonial crossing of the equator, and two times each through the Suez Canal and Strait of Gibraltar later, we set foot on dry land Aug. 9—a day after my 50th birthday. I stepped off that ship a disciple of Jesus whose life and ministry had been forever changed by the authenticity, resilience and courage of his sailors.

[A.J. Striffler](#)

A.J. Striffler is a staff chaplain at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Update on Getting Ahead Program

Getting Ahead News – Nov / Dec 2021

On October 9th, a graduation ceremony was held at Milton Lutheran Parish. This is our 4th group to take the journey of self-discovery, to examine life circumstances and to get the necessary tools needed to piece together a realistic future story.

One graduate commented “I will become a better person from these classes. It has showed me I am a worthwhile person, even though I don't have money. I can be someone. I've learned to love myself again”. And another, “The Getting Ahead program helped me through a very hard time in my life. The sense of camaraderie and community support I received from the program gave me the motivation to push ahead of all obstacles in my way”.

We started Intro to Financial Literacy on October 14th, led by our partner Members Choice Federal Credit Union. Classes are focused on basic economic empowerment skills and financial knowledge to serve as a road map to financial well-being. Our last financial class is November 11th. Then on Dec. 2nd, we begin 7 sessions of Nutrition Links with Penn State Extension. There's a two-week break, 12/23 & 30.

Thank you, Milton Lutheran Parish, you are making a difference in the lives of our neighbors in need!

Meetings & Events

Sundays, Bible Study 8:00 AM (every week) this week join us as we discuss God's powerful presence. Led by Kellie Brouse.

Wednesdays, Bible Study 7:00 PM (every week) in the library. Pastor Gary will be leading bible study each week. You can join us in person or online. If you want to join us online for Bible Study, please let the church office know so we can send you the Zoom link.

Wednesday, December 1st, 2021 Blood Drive 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM The blood mobile will be at 1125 Mahoning St. They will be there and ready to accept blood donations from 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Please stop by to give blood if you can. With so much going on in the world your donation is needed now more than ever. Next Blood drive will be February 2, 2022.

Saturday, December 4, 2021 Community Meal Preparation will be at 100 Mahoning St (Milton Lutheran Church) Please see a member of the Outreach Team for times and to volunteer to help.

Sunday, December 5, 2021 Community Meal at 4:00 PM In partnership with St Paul's AME, Milton Lutheran Church & Saint Paul's United Church of Christ. Served at 1125 Mahoning St, Milton. All meals will be provided as take out, either by drive up or walk up.

Menu: Ham, mashed potatoes, ham gravy, glazed carrots, apple sauce and a dinner roll.

Sunday Dec 19th,
2021 Annual
Christmas Party
6:30 PM at UCC –
Crafts, fun,
Christmas carols
and yummy cookies
too! Please bring
some cookies to
share for the cookie
exchange.

CRAFTS CAROLS COOKIES

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

December 19th @ 6:30 P.M.
1875 Churches Rd. Lewsiburg, PA
United in Christ Lutheran Church & Milton
Lutheran Church

*This event is welcome to everyone! There will be
homemade crafts to make, Christmas carols
and a cookie exchange. Please bring some
cookies to share!*

Blue Christmas

a worship service of
healing & hope.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22ND 7:00 P.M.
100 MAHONING ST. MILTON, PA



The light shines in the darkness, and the
darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:5)

Provided in partnership with
Saint Paul's United Church of Christ
United in Christ Lutheran Church
Milton Lutheran Church

Wednesday, December 22,
2021 Blue Christmas 7:00

PM at Milton Lutheran
Church, 100 Mahoning St,
Milton. Feeling the holiday
blues? Join us for special
service just for you. *Feel the
return of the light...*

Be sure to go & see

Friday, December 12, 2021 "
Love was born a King" 7:00
PM at Saint Paul's UCC 1125
Mahoning St.

*All performances are free, and no
tickets are required.

Coming in January ...

A FUN EVENING WITH OUR CHURCH FAMILY

GAME NIGHT & POT LUCK

Sunday, January 23rd at 6:00 P.M.
100 Mahoning St. in the fellowship hall

DRINKS AND SERVING ITEMS PROVIDED. BRING
FOOD, CARDS, BOARD GAMES, OR GROUP GAMES
TO SHARE!



Recipes Old & New

These recipes are out of the cookbooks that each church created; many of these recipes were shared by members. There is nothing more fun at this time of year than to gather the family and create your very own Gingerbread house and decorate it with candies and bright baubles! We hope your family tries this and enjoys it as much as we do!

We'd like to feature recipes from the current church members as well. So if you have a recipe, you'd like to share please submit it to the church office. We look forward to seeing your new recipes!



Gingerbread House Dough

Shared by Janet Swartz

Ingredients:

5 Cups Flour

1 Teaspoon Baking Soda

1 Teaspoon Salt

1 Teaspoon Nutmeg

1/4 Teaspoon Cloves

3/4 Teaspoon Cinnamon

1 Tablespoon Ginger

1 Cup Butter or Margarine (melted)

1 Cup Sugar

1 Cup Molasses

****OPTIONAL** 5 or 6 crushed Jolly Rancher candies – to make “glass” windows. Other candies like gum drops, candy canes and licorice ribbon for decorating .

Royal Icing: - Used as the glue!

3 cups Confectioners Sugar

2 Egg Whites (only)

1/2 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract

1/4 Teaspoon Cream of Tartar

Mix all together well until sugar is dissolved, use immediately to glue pieces together and decorations onto your house. You can add food coloring to make different colors as well.

Instructions:

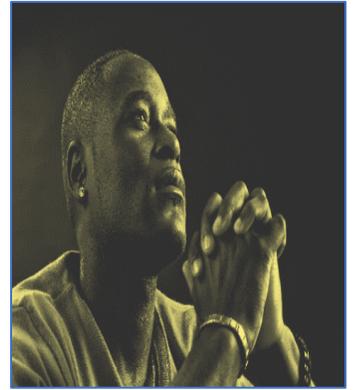
Mix the dry ingredients in a bowl and set aside.

Melt the butter in a large pan, add sugar and molasses, mix together well. Once incorporated remove from heat. Begin incorporating the first 4 cups of dry ingredients (flour) and mix well, adding the 5th cup when the first four have been worked in well to the dough, (you can use a stand mixer with your paddle or dough hook). Once all the flour mixture is well incorporated, put dough into a bowl and cover with a wet cloth. Don't overwork the dough as it will make the cookies tough. Experts recommend letting dough rest in the fridge for a minimum of 2 hours, for best results overnight.

Roll out your dough on a floured board and then cut out your desired pattern. When your pieces are cut, place onto parchment paper lined sheets. If using the crushed candy for window, sprinkle the crushed candy in your window hole and bake at 300 F for 40-60 minutes or until dough is firm. When removed from oven let cool fully before starting your construction.

Please Join Us in Prayer For...

Joanie Fisher	Patricia Muffly	Doris Heffelfinger
Ken Gaugler	Patsy Aunkst	Chole Henderson
Karen Smith	Jack Aunkst	Kathy Longenberger
Mae Jones	Mary Lou Benschhoff	Florence & Pete Ishler
Terry Deaner	Julie Benschhoff	Jim Seidel & Family
Mary Billhime	Gerald Greenly	Family & Friends of
Kimberly Dill	Gabby Ricco	Darlas Yost
Nancy Cochran	Russ Winn	Silvie Walters
& Family	Jess Walters	Sadie Walters
	Kyle Walters	



Please let the office know of anyone who needs added or can be removed from the monthly prayer list.

Just a few more things....

Holiday Gift Drive: Once again this year we are working with the **Milton School District** to ensure every child feels the joy of receiving a gift this holiday season. Please reach out to Krista Yaiko if you have any questions, her cell phone number is 570-742-7772. There will be a sheet with numbers listed, you are to print your name and phone number next to the number (or numbers depending on how many gifts) you would like to donate. All gifts should be new and wrapped, don't forget to get your tag(s) off the tree in the lobby. **All gifts need to be dropped off at the church no later than Sunday, Dec 5, 2021.** In years past this has been a fun and much appreciated contribution to the kids in our school. We look forward to another joyful and successful year!

Life After Loss - Thursdays, April 21 thru May 26, 2022 2-3:30 PM at 235 Hospital Dr. Lewisburg.
Fee \$20.00.

Coping with the loss of a loved one can be difficult, especially during these challenging times. So, we would like to let you know about a local program presented by Hospice of Evangelical and Community Health and Wellness. It is a 6-week bereavement class called "Life After Loss" Your program facilitator is Andrea Runkle MSW. Anyone over 18 or older who has experienced a loss is invited to attend. It is recommended that the loss be longer than 6 months ago. Pre-Registration is required, the cost is \$20.00, scholarships are available. Registration is limited so please contact the hospital at 570-522-2157



December Birthdays



12/1 Julie Benshoff	12/16 Joe Rearick	12/23 Sara Delp
12/1 Crystal Gnidoves	12/17 Penny Ulmer	12/24 Joan Swartz
12/1 Shannon Moll	12/17 Linda Valiquette	12/25 Polly Dehart
12/1 Nancy Watts	12/18 Peggy Buck	12/25 Ryleigh Heimbach
12/3 Charlene Francis	12/19 Kevin Fry	12/25 Annette Mellman
12/5 Carolyn Daniloff	12/21 Alyssa Byers	12/29 Anna Mae Harpster
12/7 Ruth Greenly	12/22 Janie Bloom	12/30 Cuff Greiner
12/7 Florence Ishler	12/22 Blake Wargo	

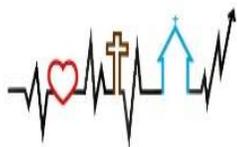
December Anniversaries



12/13 Erik & Stephanie Strawser – Celebrating 13 years!
12/25 Dave & Shirley Robinson – Celebrating 65 years!

Did we miss you on the birthday or anniversary list? Please let us know! Call the office, we will be happy to make any changes.

Online Worship and Resources



Have you checked out our Church website recently? If you haven't, we hope you will take some time to visit the site. You can find worship service links, weekly bible studies, the church calendar, pictures, and resources to deepen your spiritual life. Feel free to invite others to stop by the website as well!

<http://miltonlutheranchurch.org>

Milton Lutheran Church Leadership Team	
Pastor	Gary Schaeffer
Organist & Music Director	John Warfel
Office Administrator	Robin A. McKean-Power
Digital Ministry Coordinator	Seth Reitz
Sexton/Custodian	Chuck Stahl
Treasurers	Rich Handy, Carol Yost, Craig Lawler, and Lorraine Lawler
Transitional Council	Kellie Brouse, Krista Yaiko, Don Fisher, Jeff Coup, Penny Ulmer, Crystal Gnidovec, Rose Deener, Seth Reitz
Worship Team	Jeff Coup, Kellie Brouse, Nancy Walters, Sue Warfel, John Warfel
Digital Ministry Team	Aaron Coup, Rick Coup, Seth Reitz, Donna Spear
Outreach Team	Connie Stover, Kay Dunn, Claire Weisner, Lynnette Weisner, Carol Yost, Linwood Hill, Krista Yaiko, Karen Martello, Peggy Fisher
Discipleship Team	Rose Handy, Ed Coup, Kate Budman, Kellie Brouse
Ministry Planning Team	Penny Ulmer, Rose Handy, Lynette Weisner, Ruth Scott, Joe Yaiko and Cindy Coup
Property Team	Don Fisher (point person for 1125 Mahoning St.) Chuck Stahl (point person for 100 Mahoning St.), Bob Greenly, Rusty Brouse, Helen Billhime, Bill Heimbach, Seth Reitz, Joe Yaiko

Office Hours

Monday – 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 Tuesday - 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 Wednesday – Noon to 5 p.m.
 Thursday - 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 Friday - Office Closed

Pastoral Office Hours

Mon, Tue, Wed & Thursday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 Please call the office to reserve time to speak with Pastor Gary.

Office Location:

Milton Lutheran Church, 100 Mahoning Street, Milton, PA 17847, 570-742-4601
 Office Administrator email: info@miltonlutheranparish.faith – new e-mail to come shortly, it will be
info@miltonlutheranchurch.org
 Website: <https://miltonlutheranchurch.org>

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and our YouTube Channel to connect with us online.

Email or drop off bulletin announcements or newsletter articles.



Inspirational Thoughts:

"It's important what thoughts you are feeding into your mind, because your thoughts create your belief and experiences. You have positive thoughts and you have negative ones too. Nurture your mind with positive thoughts: kindness, empathy, compassion, peace, love, joy, humility, generosity, etc. The more you feed your mind with positive thoughts, the more you can attract great things into your life."

— Roy T. Bennett

*"Christmas Gift Suggestions:
To your enemy, forgiveness.
To an opponent, tolerance.
To a friend, your heart.
To a customer, service.
To all, charity.
To every child, a good example
To yourself, respect."*

— Oren Arnold

"Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity."

— Simone Weil

