

ST. MATTHEW'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

December 13, 2020

"A faithful family reaching out to serve Christ"

Third Sunday of Advent

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CALL TO WORSHIP AND THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

The Hawk Family

(L) When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those in a dream.

(P) Our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongues with shouts of joy.

(L) Then it was said among the nations around us,

"The Lord has done great things for them!"

(P) The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed!

(Light the pink candle)

***OPENING PRAYER**

Penny Hawk

(L) Emmanuel, God with us, we wait for your coming reign with much joy and anticipation. We long for a time when all violence will cease, all illness disappear, and all mourning turns to joy. As we wait for your coming, let us rejoice in the knowledge of your coming reign of love, peace and joy. **AMEN**

***OPENING HYMN**

Advent Hymn

*And come Thou long awaited One in the fullness of Your love.
And loose this heart bound up by shame and I will never be the same.
So here I wait in hope of You. All my soul's longing through and through.
And Dayspring from on high, be near. And Daystar in my heart appear.*

*And dark and cheerless is the morn until Your love in me is born.
And joyless is the evening song until Emmanuel has come.
So here I wait in hope of You. All my soul's longing through and through.
And Dayspring from on high, be near. And Daystar in my heart appear.*

*So here I wait in hope of You. All my soul's longing through and through.
And Dayspring from on high, be near. And Daystar in my heart appear.*

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**God of covenant, we confess that our faith has been small.
We have doubted your promises and have denied your power
to free us from captivity, and to establish us in security.
We have chosen instead to trust in our own ways and strength.**

**By your tender mercy, forgive our unbelief;
fill us with your Holy Spirit, that we may fully trust and obey you.
Cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today,
by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.**

MOMENT OF SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

ACT OF PRAISE #198

*Good Christian friends rejoice with heart and soul and voice.
Now ye need not fear the grave, Jesus Christ was born to save.
Calls you one and calls you all to gain his everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Staci Gower

THE READING OF SCRIPTURE

The Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11

Penny Hawk

1 The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; **2** to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; **3** to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. **4** They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

8 For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. **9** Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. **10** I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. **11** For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

The New Testament Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-24

16 Rejoice always, **17** pray without ceasing, **18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

19 Do not quench the Spirit. **20** Do not despise the words of prophets, **21** but test everything; hold fast to what is good; **22** abstain from every form of evil. **23** May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

SERMON "Rejoicing in the Desert" The Rev. Suzanne Brooks-Cope

***HYMN** *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

*Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.*

***THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve.

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God, preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal. AMEN.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. AMEN.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION

***CLOSING HYMN** *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

*Hark! the herald angels, "Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With thee angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."*

*Christ, by highest heaven adored. Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of the Virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail thee incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."*

*Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, Born that men no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."
The newborn King. The newborn King. The newborn King. The newborn King.*

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE #152**

*Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley a level way appear.
Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.
Oh, blest is Christ that came in God's most holy name.*

***POSTLUDE**

*(*Please stand in body or spirit.)*

St. Matthews United Church of Christ

102 Church St, Kunkletown, PA 18058

610-381-2442, stmatts@ptd.net

Pastor: The Rev. Suzanne Brooks-Cope

Office Manager: Mrs. Rose Arace

Coordinator of Spiritual Formation: Mrs. Staci Gower

Music Director: Mr. Daniel Smale

Council President: Mr. George Huber

Sunday Worship, 9 AM; AM, Adult Sunday School, 10:30 am

Children's Sunday School is virtual on our website

www.stmattsucckunkletown.com





*“Each of us is an innkeeper who decides if there is room for Jesus.”
—Neal A. Maxwell*

This Week Ahead

Sunday, December 13	Worship Third Sunday of Advent	-Sanctuary, 9 am -CIA Class, Stage 10:30 am
Monday, December 14	Exercise Group Blue Christmas Service	-Office Open 9am-1 pm -Gathering Room, 1 pm - Gathering Room, 7 pm
Wednesday, December 16	Exercise Group	-Office Open 9am-1pm -Gathering Room, 1 pm
Friday, December 18	Worship	-Office Open 9am-1pm
Sunday, December 20	Worship Fourth Sunday of Advent	-Sanctuary, 9 am -CIA Class, Stage 10:30 am

Prayer Concerns

Shirley Borger, Doug Hawk, Bill Slawter, Eliza Dymond, Janet Gower, Grace Everett, Alton and Lila Kleintop, Allen Kramer-Moyer, Bruce Eckhart, Gladys Lindenmoyer, Erica Pozza, Rosemarie Stranahan, Ralph Wunder, Lynda Edwards, Janet Fowler, Shirley Smith, Andrea Holec, Chapman and Mason Buskirk, Brayden Wunder, Kelly George, Kim Cope, Josh and Kevin Engler, Mae Borger, Gladys Meixsell, George Keller, and the Families of Bill Clausen, Scott Madden, Loretta Hawk, Marlene Prutzman, Bobbie Christman, Franklin Smith, Rose Miller and Robert Taschler

Today's Ushers:

Darryl Breinich and Diann Bittenbender

Next Week's Ushers:

Gabrielle Bentley and Starlene Barr

This Week's Acolyte: Ally Pfancook

Next Week's Acolyte: Ty Borger

Transmission of COVID19 is on the rise in our area. Don't forget to wear a mask at all times when inside the building and to keep 6 feet away from others not in your household! If you are not feeling well or running a fever, *please* stay home.

We will have a “Blue Christmas” Service on tomorrow Monday, December 14 at 7 pm for all those who are grieving or having a difficult time finding joy this Advent/Christmas season. It will be a service of prayer, candles, and communion. We will worship in the Gathering Room.

Christmas Eve Plans: Currently, we are planning on having four Christmas Eve Services—3, 5, 7, 10 pm. ***We ask that you call the church office and make a reservation.*** (7 and 10 pm are getting close to capacity). We can only allow a maximum of 57 people in the sanctuary for each service—and that includes all participants. Our TV's will live stream the services for overflow. We ask that you reserve your spot in the sanctuary for one service only. All services will have communion so don't forget to bring bread and wine (juice).



Offering Envelopes for 2021 are available for pick up in the Social Hall. Because of COVID19, many of our members are not worshiping in person. Please pick up the boxes for your family members and neighbors and drop them off for us. Thank You!

It had been decided not to have a New Year's Eve Celebration. Most folks thought it would just be too cold to host one up at the Grove this time of year. We may plan a celebration for the church community in the spring (when its warmer.)



Due to the Corona Virus pandemic, many events were cancelled throughout the year. But fun wasn't!

People everywhere are practicing social distancing, which often means confining oneself to home. Tired of everything on TV? Bored with housework? Trying to find the Christmas Spirit after learning that another holiday party or family get-together won't be happening this year? Want to try something different? You want to have some fun? Something you or the whole family can do together? Well, put on your aprons, your Santa Claus Thinking Caps and let's make Gingerbread Houses! Yup! Let's have a contest at St. Matthew's UCC and see who can come up with the most creative, prettiest, or clever-ist Gingerbread structure. The rules are simple:

1. You cannot purchase a ready-made structure. You must make it. It can be a purchased kit, but you have to put it together. Or make your own original design.
2. Have fun!

The deadline is Sunday, Dec. 27, 10:30 a.m. You can bring it to the CIA classroom anytime between now and then where we will put them on display. They will be judged and awards will be announced by 11:30 a.m. that day. This is open to any St. Matthew's member of all ages. If you have any questions, call Linda at 610-681-4617 or email linhar@ptd.net.