

ST. MATTHEW'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

December 20, 2020

"A faithful family reaching out to serve Christ"

Fourth Sunday of Advent

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

The Gower Family

(L) Mary sang: "I'm bursting with good news: I'm dancing the song of my Savior... I'm the most fortunate woman on earth! What God has done for me will never be forgotten..."

(P) God's mercy flows in wave after wave on those who are in awe of him.

(L) God bared his arm and showed his strength, scattered the bluffing braggarts.

(P) He knocked tyrants off their high horses, pulled victims out of the mud.

(L) The starving poor sat down to a banquet; the callous rich were left out in the cold.

(P) God embraced his own child, Israel.

he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled them high.

(L) It's exactly what he promised beginning with Abraham and right up to now.

(Adapted from Message Bible)

(Light the fourth blue candle)

***OPENING PRAYER**

(L) Mighty God, your faithfulness is magnified in the coming of your Son, in the long-awaited birth of the promised Messiah.

May we, like Mary proclaim your greatness and your amazing love as we rejoice in our Savior, Emmanuel, God with us. **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 surprises, we pretend not to hear your messengers calling our names.

**We look away, sure that there must be a mistake,
for we are afraid to believe that you would trust us
to bear you into the world.**

We are just ordinary people trying to get by.

Have mercy on us, O Most High. Help us to believe with Mary.

**Send your Spirit upon us, that we may indeed live for the sake of
Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior. AMEN.**

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 VIDEO MESSAGE

THE READING OF SCRIPTURE

The Old Testament Lesson: Psalm 89: 1-4, 19-22, 24-26 Staci Gower

1 I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. **2** I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. **3** You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David: **4** "I will establish your descendants forever and build your throne for all generations.' "

19 Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one and said: "I have set the crown on one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people. **20** I have found my servant David; with my holy oil I have anointed him; **21** my hand shall always remain with him; my arm also shall strengthen him.

22 The enemy shall not outwit him, the wicked shall not humble him. 24 My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him; and in my name his horn shall be exalted. 25 I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers. 26 He shall cry to me, "You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation!"

The Gloria Tibi: *Glory be to thee, O Lord

***The Gospel Lesson:** Luke 1: 26-38

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Laus Tibi: *Praise be to thee, O Christ

SERMON

"Holy Disruption"

The Rev. Suzanne Brooks-Cope

***CAROL**

It Came Upon A Midnight Clear

*It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.*

*And ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
Look now! For glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing.*

*For lo! The days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.*

***THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

UCC Statement of Faith

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, who is made known to us in Jesus our brother, and to whose deeds we testify: God calls the worlds into being, creates humankind in the divine image, and sets before us the ways of life and death. God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin. God judges all humanity and all nations by that will of righteousness declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord; God has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the whole creation to its Creator.

God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.

God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be servants in the service of the whole human family, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in passion and victory.

God promises to all who trust in the gospel forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in that kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God. 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 CAROL**

The First Noel

*The first Noel, the angel did say, Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep, On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel.*

*They looked up and saw a star Shining in the east, beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light, And so it continued both day and night.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel.*

*Then let us all with one accord Sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
That hath made heaven and earth of naught, And with His blood our life hath bought.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King, Born is the King, Born is the King of Israel.*

***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

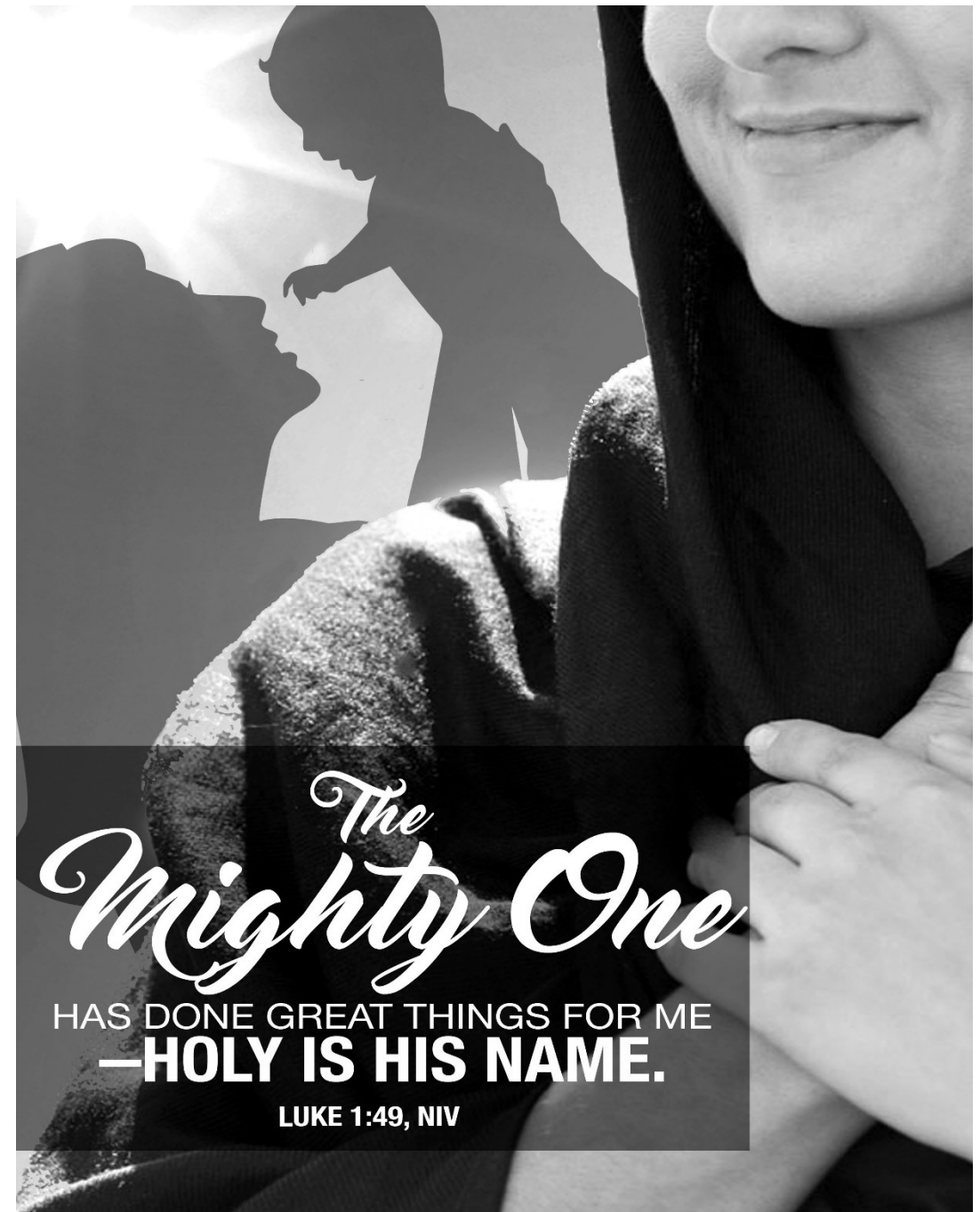
Music Director: Mr. Daniel Smale

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



*The
Mighty One*

HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR ME
—HOLY IS HIS NAME.

LUKE 1:49, NIV



God, I pray for all who are lonely in this season, or exhausted, or grieving. Give them the courage of Mary as you fill them with the Holy Spirit.

This Week Ahead

Sunday, December 20	Worship Third Sunday of Advent	-Sanctuary, 9 am -CIA Class, Stage 10:30 am
Monday, December 21		-Office Open 9am-1 pm
Tuesday, December 22	Confirmation Class Exercise Group	- Zoom, 4-6 pm -Gathering Room, 1 pm
Wednesday, December 23	Exercise Group	-Office Open 9am-1pm -Gathering Room, 1 pm
Thursday, December 24	Christmas Eve Worship	-3, 5, 7 and 10 pm
Friday, December 25		-OFFICE CLOSED
Sunday, December 27	Worship First Sunday of Christmas	-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.

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 worshipping in person. Please pick up the boxes for your family members and neighbors and drop them off for us. Thank You!



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.

Our New Council members will be installed on January 10, 2021. Please join us as we honor the council members of 2020 and welcome and install RJ Cramer, Cheryl Heffelfinger, and Jessica Slawter.