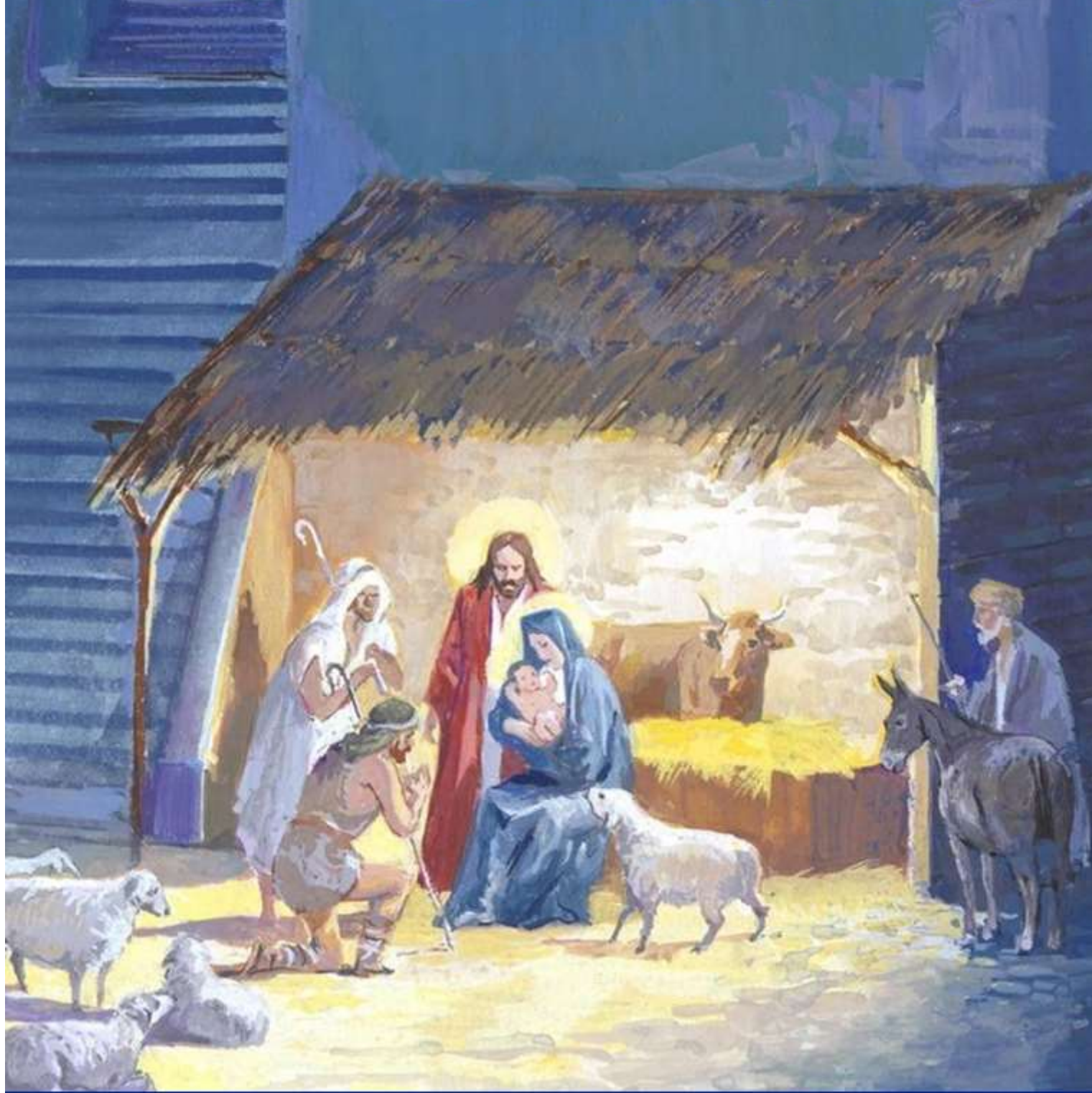


CHARLTON

WINTER
2022

CHIMES



A Message from the Pastor ...

Christmas is not as much about opening our presents as opening our hearts.

~ Janice Maeditere ~

Jesus has been surrounded by contrasts since His birth. He was born to be the Jewish king, according to Matthew's Gospel. However, the Gospel of Mark reminds us that by giving His life for us, Jesus would be the servant of all: *"For the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."* (Mark 10:45).



We usually choose to serve a few people, usually friends and family or people close to us. However, Jesus' example opposes the exclusivity of sharing with a select group. Instead, Jesus freely gives Himself to everyone, including His enemies. In this regard, how many of us are like Jesus? How many do we share with people who don't seem to be like us?

Jesus, Emmanuel — *God with us* — has arrived, and he is among us today. However, few people remember, see, or adore him during this season. Many people turn the Advent and Christmas seasons into times of consumerism. Parents spend money that they do not have to buy gifts for their children. Families gather just to enjoy the calendar's free days. Others completely ignore the true meaning of Christmas.

Sometimes I wonder what it's like to celebrate someone's birthday — but who isn't invited to his own party. We can create beautiful liturgies, light the four advent candles, sing beautiful Christmas carols, and decorate our sanctuary and surroundings. Is this enough? Jesus' example of service reminds us that this season is also about demonstrating our service to others. It is letting the hope, love, joy, and peace of Jesus reign in our lives through family reconciliation and forgiveness. It is serving others with meaningful gifts — not just material gifts. It is giving ourselves to others in celebration of the birth of Jesus.

What do you have planned for this Advent and Christmas season? Are you only concerned with giving gifts to your loved ones, attending a particular Christmas service at church, and eating the Christmas meal that day?

What thoughts come to mind when Jesus instructs us to serve others in the manner of a servant? Think... Jesus was born into the world as a defenseless child under the care of His parents. His parents found a place for Him to be born and cared for. Others approached Jesus and served Him. According to biblical accounts, the shepherds came to serve Him in adoration. Later, some Magi from the East are said to have come and served Him with gifts of incense, myrrh, and gold. But, in the midst of it all, Jesus' true mission was to be the world's Savior. In other words, Jesus came to serve others not only through His actions but also through His life.

How will you serve Jesus this Advent and Christmas season?

Will you only do it with your closest friends and family ... or will you also look for a way to recognize Christmas service in others?

May this Advent and Christmas season be a time of personal and family reflection, remembering that Jesus came to us and is still present in the faces of those we least expect. You might see Jesus in the eyes of others this Christmas.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

~ *Pastor Miguel*



The Charlton Chimes
IN THIS ISSUE

From the Pastor	2-3
Worship Series	4-12
Advent	13
Christmas Events	14-15
Season's Greetings	16
Make a Difference	16
Advent Calendar	17
For Your Consideration	18
Charlton Chocolate Factory	19
Leadership Council	19
Winter Small Groups	20
Winter Fellowship	21
Mission Update	22-23
Children / Youth News	24
Preschool News	25
View from My Pew	26
Family News	27
Contact Information	28

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SERMON SERIES

Christmas Characters

God's Plan in Unlikely Individuals in the Birth of Jesus

"The celebration of Advent is possible only to those who are troubled in soul, who know themselves to be poor and imperfect, and who look forward to something greater to come."

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

As we enter Advent, a time of waiting and preparing for Christ's coming, we think about how fast this year has gone. We all have had numerous highs and lows this year. Some of us have had health and success, while others have suffered a loss. Inflation has caused historic price hikes worldwide. The pandemic's after-effects and the Ukraine war add to widespread fatalities. We wonder how we will focus on Advent with so much on our minds. Is our heart ready for Jesus?

Many people in Jesus' day wondered this very thing. Israel was a province of the Roman Empire. The Romans suffered under a repressive government that encouraged violence in the name of "Pax Romana" while also imposing heavy levies on them. The ecclesiastical authority had compromised the established order, and rather than protecting the people, it became a Rome-controlled puppet show whose members let themselves be led by narrow self-interest. The Jewish monarch Herod did little to advance national unity or freedom and lived lavishly at his people's expense.

With so much going on, how could people possibly wait for the Messiah to come when they could be doing anything else?

Despite everything, the coming of the Messiah was still a source of optimism. Evidence of this can be found in regular folks like yourself who follow the lead of



the promised Messiah when he or she arrives. Everyone waiting for the Messiah had their own story to tell, from Mary and Joseph to Elizabeth and Zechariah to the shepherds, the wise men, and even Simeon. They experienced the ups and downs of having faith in difficult times. The road ahead of them was going to be rocky. Despite this, they saw that Christ's light shone brighter in their own lives.

The eight-part sermon series "*Christmas Characters*" introduces us to these unknown people who became instruments of God's plan. The fact that they were able to make this Advent season meaningful despite their personal hardships. This series invites us to discover how these people follow God's plan despite their own triumphs and tragedies, struggles and dreams—as we anticipate the birth of the baby from Bethlehem. *Emmanuel*, God with us.



Sunday, November 27, 2022 — 1st Sunday of Advent

"How Can This Be? (Luke 1: 5-25)

Elizabeth and Zachariah, the parents of John the Baptist, are the first two characters in the Christmas story. Even though they aren't usually linked to the birth of Christ, the child they will have will be the one who goes before the Lord to prepare the way. This story is not about John the Baptist. Instead, it is about what happened to Elizabeth and Zechariah nine months before John was born.

You might feel like you can relate to these two characters while also being pushed. Zechariah prayed to God that he and his wife would have a child. God stopped Zechariah from doing his job as a priest to tell him something important. You might pray to find out what God wants you to do with your life, and God might tell you to switch jobs, not marry someone, or go into ministry. Like Elizabeth and Zechariah, you might think, "How can this be?" God knows everything about you. What are you doing with that time that's keeping you from God's plan?

Sunday, December 4, 2022 — 2nd Sunday of Advent

“Attuned to the Will of God (Luke 1: 26-38)

God sends the Angel Gabriel before Mary. She is a young woman, probably between twelve and fourteen years old, who is recognized as a virgin. Still, there is nothing in Mary's life that guarantees God's favor. Mary is not a perfect human being, but rather an ordinary girl with her own doubts and conflicts, chosen by God to become the recipient of God's plan.

It is natural to feel hopeless in the face of God's revealed will for our lives. Even so, when God's plan is made clear in our lives and we comply, there is no limit to what we can accomplish. While the divine plan is being implemented, information about that plan is being shared and clarified. How are you in tune with God's will for your life? To what extent are you obedient to the will of God? How can you tune in to God in the midst of your own struggles and doubts?

Sunday, December 11 — 3rd Sunday of Advent

“Aligning our Life to God's Plan” (Matthew 1:18-25)

Joseph is a vital character in the Christmas story. The Gospel of Matthew tells the story of Joseph and how Joseph learns that Mary is pregnant with the Messiah. Something that makes Joseph doubt his permanence with Mary. Still, we know that Joseph was a descendant of Abraham, as shown in Matthew's detailed description of Jesus' lineage. This genealogy is extremely important to the Gospel of Matthew because Matthew is writing to the Jewish people to introduce them to the Messiah. However, Joseph must decide; and he decides by God's plan.

How would you feel in Joseph's place? What attitude would you take when faced with a decision you feel you have a role to play? Joseph must learn to align his life with God's plan. Joseph was an ordinary man willing to be used by an extraordinary God. So, how do you align your life with God's plan? How does social pressure influence your desire to be aligned with God?



Sunday, December 18 — 4th Sunday of Advent

The Christmas Grinch (Matthew 2:1-23)

Herod's inclusion in this series of sermons may seem odd, but this King, who was a Roman-appointed governor of Judea and was notorious for his cruelty, served a purpose in the story of Jesus' birth. To ignore him is to ignore not only the world in which Jesus was born but also a crucial thread in God's grand redemptive plan.

Herod reminds us of the Grinch, the Dr. Seuss villain who wanted to steal Christmas. In this day of commercialization and individuality, many Herods (or Scrooges) seek to erase the Christmas tale and the birth of Jesus Christ. Herod nonetheless serves as a striking warning that we cannot be indifferent regarding Jesus. Either we can equip ourselves against him, or we can adore him through repentance and faith. How do we then fight Christ's authority over our lives? How are we inclined to marginalize those who seek to obstruct our progress?



Saturday, December 24 — Christmas Eve

“A Plan Without Exception” (Luke 2:8-20)

Luke's gospel says that shepherds were tending their flocks nearby when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. They were unpopular among people and were considered outcasts, thieves, and misfits. They were impure and could not attend temple services. These Christmas figures remind us that the gospel reaches everyone, including those who appear unworthy of God's grace.

The message was heard and impacted the shepherds. This group of unpopular individuals became missionaries proclaiming the birth of Jesus. The salvation plan is for everyone without exception. How are you proclaiming God's plan in the lives of others on Christmas Eve? Have you considered people who appear less fortunate in your proclamation of salvation?

Sunday, December 25 — Christmas Day

“Made Flesh” (Luke 2:1-7)

Jesus is the physical expression of God's incarnation on earth. This child's birth in Bethlehem fulfills God's plan for salvation. This Christmas narrative focuses on him as the protagonist. Moreover, it is he who reveals himself to every one of us in shape and body.

This Christmas, how does Jesus reveal himself in your life? In the gospel story, it is said that there was only room for him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. What place do you have to offer Jesus this Christmas? What place does Jesus have in a world so convulsed today?

Sunday, January 1 — First Sunday of Christmas

“Seeking and Finding” (Matthew 2:1-12)

Were there three Wise Men? Furthermore, were they, kings, as the famous hymn "We Three Kings" seems to indicate? Probably not. We get the idea from "three" of the three gifts offered (gold, frankincense, and myrrh). However, the gifts were likely presented jointly by the entire delegation. It is clear that the Wise Men were fervent in their desire to seek and find the King of the Jews.

Why are you looking for Jesus? The answer given in the Gospel of Matthew is that they were looking for the child of Bethlehem to worship him. Have you found Jesus? The way of the wizards was not easy, but when they found him, they gave their gifts. What gift do you have for Jesus? Can you trace your own journey to Jesus?



Sunday, January 8 — First Sunday after Epiphany

“Bucket List” (Luke 2:21-38)

We are introduced to the old man with the following promise *“he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ”* (2:26). In addition to him, we know about an eighty-four-year-old woman called Anna. Both were devoted people of God. And both of them are blessed to meet with the Child-God at their old stage in their lives.



Both Ana and Simeon were able to fulfill their desire to meet the King of kings and Lord of lords, despite their advanced age, because they had faithfully awaited the coming of Jesus against all odds, the logic of the time, and the skepticism of the time. Their bucket list was complete, thanks to God's grace and the kindness of these two older adults. What things on your bucket list bring glory to the Lord?

EPIPHANY SERMON SERIES

Do You Understand What You are Reading?

Do you understand what you are reading? It was Philip's question to the Ethiopian eunuch; his response was, *“How can I unless someone guides me?”* (Acts 8:30-31.)

Very likely, this has been our experience when reading the Bible. We have studied its pages but need to comprehend its message. By the grace of the Holy Spirit, we interpret what we read based on our knowledge or reason, our experiences, our tradition, and the context in which we read the Bible.

The Bible has always been and will always be the Christian Holy Book. It contains what Christians refer to as "The Word of God." Because of our faith, we believe that God inspired and revealed this word to his people. The Bible is a book that describes the creation and formation of a people. It is a book detailing slavery, emancipation, monarchs, and kingdoms. The book imparts insight through wisdom, literature, visions, and prophetic words. It is a book that relates the life of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to our own. In addition, it is a book that describes Jesus' ministry, his disciples, and his life, death, and resurrection. A book describing the transformation of a Jewish sect into a religion demonstrates the spread of a powerful message that reaches Jerusalem and Samaria, and the ends of the earth. A collection of letters to newly formed churches, including counsel, cautions, and encouragement. The Bible is all these and much more.

Although the Bible is a book that speaks to us of unity, love, and understanding, this has not always been the case in its interpretation. We all do not interpret the Bible through the same lens or prism. There is no uniformity in interpretation, nor is it anticipated that there would be.

"Do You Understand What You are Reading?" is a six-week sermon series based on the book *"Making Sense of the Bible"* by Methodist pastor Adam Hamilton. This book invites us to reflect on biblical interpretation and how to find ways to understand our own struggle in our biblical reading. Have your Bible at hand; we will begin making sense of what we read.



Sunday, January 15 — 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

How to Understand the Bible (Genesis 32:22-29)

Talking about the Bible always brings up many questions. Who wrote it? Why does it come to us? Is the Bible inspired? How do we interpret it? Is the Bible the history of humanity or only of the Jewish people? And the list can go on and on; indeed, you have many other questions to add.

This sermon will reflect on what the Bible is and is not. You may be surprised to discover new perspectives on this Sacred Book. In the meantime, take advantage of familiarizing yourself with your Bible by reading it and writing down your questions.

Sunday, January 22 — 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Making Sense of the Old Testament (Deut 6:1-9)

One of the great questions of the Old Testament is how to read it. Should we read it from the idea that it is humanities or Jewish history? Who reports the facts? What is our interpretation of this part of the Bible? Is EVERYTHING from the Old Testament replicable to our time in which we live?

This sermon will reflect on why these old writings come to us. And what is the connection of this writing with us, as Christians? Perhaps, we will also discover that the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible has more than one purpose in our lives as Christians. Meanwhile, read your Bible and find your favorite Old Testament story, and find the connection with your life.



Sunday, January 29 — 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Making Sense of the New Testament (John 1:1-18)

The origins of the New Testament come to us through the voices and hands of generations who wrote, edited, and compiled the words and actions of Jesus and the church. Why do you think not all gospels have duplicate accounts of Jesus? How did these stories end up in the New Testament canon? Will there be other stories about Jesus and the formation of the church?

In this sermon, we will try to answer these questions and others that will help us understand the importance of these new writings. Significantly, the connection these writings have with our faith as Christians. In the meantime, look up your favorite New Testament story and see how this story or tale connects to your own life.

Sunday, February 5 — 5th Sunday after Epiphany

The Bible and Science (Gen 1:27-31 / 1 Cor 10:11)

Throughout history, science and the Bible have not always found reconciliation. Is the story of creation the story of a people, or is it the story of humanity? Were Adam and Eve real people? Were there dinosaurs on the Ark? These and many other questions arise when we fear to speak of challenging passages for the Christian faith.

This sermon will explain some of these great doubts about our faith. But at the same time, we will seek to find out the reason for really understanding the meaning of the Bible concerning these two subjects that seem so antagonistic. In the meantime, read the two creation stories in Genesis and think about how they relate to the story of salvation.



Sunday, February 12 — 6th Sunday after Epiphany

Violence, Suffering, and other Troubling Issues (Deuteronomy 20:10-20)

Christians have many questions about why the God of the Old Testament seems so violent. Many people see a conflict between this God and the God of the New Testament, who is described as loving, kind, and merciful. So how can we make sense of a God who seems so different?

During this sermon, we will reflect on some hard-to-understand parts of the Bible that talk about God being violent toward people who were not his people. In the meantime, you can look for stories in the Old Testament where God told people to do things that were too violent and then think about why that would be. Read and think about things with a calm heart.

Sunday, February 19 — 7th Sunday after Epiphany

Issues of Sexuality and Relationships (Galatians 3:19-29)

The church has for years debated different issues that have divided it, from slave ownership to the authority of women in the pulpit to homosexuality. These are the issues that Christians face. So how do we interpret these issues according to the Bible? What is the relationship between these texts and the biblical context in which they were enunciated? Are they relevant or irrelevant? What is the genuine concern a Christian should have regarding these issues?

In this sermon, our last sermon in the series, we will meditate on these and other difficult topics for Christians. In the meantime, pray for what God has for you when we discuss challenging topics.

As you may or may not be aware, according to the liturgical church calendar, the first Sunday of Advent (which is November 27 this year) is the beginning of the Christian Year. So while chances are that you are reading this newsletter either

Advent

preparing for or after having just celebrated Thanksgiving, it's time to say "Happy New Year!"

As we begin the Christian Year, we also celebrate the Holy Season known as Advent. It is a time when we prepare ourselves for the coming of our Messiah. The word 'Advent', from the Latin word 'adventus', means "coming." We celebrate these days of Advent in expectation and preparation for Christ's arrival. Through the centuries, Christians have observed a time of waiting and anticipation before celebrating the birth of the Savior at Christmas. This Advent season is a time for reflection and preparation, but its mood is joyful. Advent has been enriched by Christian tradition to reflect its distinctive Christian meaning. It proclaims the revelation of God's love as expressed in Christ's birth in a humble stable, his sacrificial death on the cross, and his victorious resurrection! It points to the hope of Christ's coming again as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

The season of Advent comes to a close with the celebration of the birth of Christ ... Christmas ... a word originated from the compound of "Christ's Mass". This season, also known as Christmastide, begins on December 25th, although most scholars agree that this was not the actual date of Jesus' birth. Christmastide is celebrated for twelve days until the celebration of Epiphany on January 6th. The word 'Epiphany' means "to manifest" or "to show" and is the observance of the "showing forth" or revelation of God in human form. This holy day commemorates the visitation of the magi when Jesus was between one and two years old. Epiphany is also the day we remember and celebrate the baptism of Jesus as he entered his earthly ministry.

As we begin to observe these holy-days, don't get caught up in the commercialization of the season. Instead, let us do our best to focus on the 'reason for the season', starting with Advent.

Advent makes innkeepers out of all of us, asking each of us to make room for the arrival of Christ the King. As the familiar carol says, "Let every heart prepare him room!"

FRI DAY, DECEMBER 2

5:30 pm — CHRISTMAS CLASSIC MOVIES

Everyone is invited to join us as we watch the Christmas classic movies “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” and “A Charlie Brown Christmas”. Pizza will be served; bring a snack.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

11:30 am — ANNUAL COOKIE EXCHANGE

Join us and bring a batch of your favorite Christmas cookies already baked and ready to share and exchange so you can go home with a larger variety of cookies.

Some of the cookies will also be given to our homebound members. Please have them to the church kitchen by noon on Saturday, December 3.

FRI DAY, DECEMBER 9

6:30 to 7:15 pm — DRIVE-THRU LIVING NATIVITY

Drive through our parking lot and see a living nativity presented by Kid’s Night Out.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

4:00 to 7:00 pm — SCOUT SPAGHETTI DINNER

Support the Scouts with their annual Spaghetti Dinner and Christmas Craft Show.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

5:00 pm — CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Join us as we go caroling to spread some Christmas cheer and greetings. Hot chocolate and cookies will follow.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18

9:00 am and 11:00 am — CHARLTON CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

10:00 am — CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST

Join us as the Sanctuayr Choir and children of our church lead us in our worship service. our annual program presented by our Sanctuary Choir. And be sure to join us for our Christmas breakfast between services.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24 — CHRISMTAS EVE

JOIN YOUR CHARLTON FAMILY FOR CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

4:00 pm — Worship service with children's message.

7:00 pm — Worship service with music by the choir.

9:00 pm — Worship service with holy communion.

SUNDAYS, DECEMBER 25

There is only **ONE SERVICE** on this day at 10:00 am. Please take note of this special time for this celebration of Jesus' birth.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31

5:00 pm — NEW YEAR'S EVE COVERED DISH

Bring your favorite dish and come enjoy the company of your Charlton family. Feel free to stay afterwards to chat or play a board game.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1

There is only **ONE SERVICE** on this day at 10:00 am. Following the service, a pork and sauerkraut dinner will be served.

Season's Greetings

Like last year, we will be printing and distributing a Charlton Christmas Card. We will not have a table available for you to share your Christmas Cards. Everyone is encouraged to participate by writing up a short note to share with your church family. It might be a greeting, a line of poetry, or even an update on what you have been doing this past year. You can drop off your greeting in the church office, you can place it with your offering, or you can email it to newsletter@charltonchurch.org. All submissions should be in by Wednesday, December 7th. If you wish, you may desire to make a donation to Debt Reduction in place of purchasing cards and postage.

Make a Difference this Christmas

Many of our beloved Christmas carols mention peace and goodwill. Christmas does bring out the good in many people. This year, we are encouraging our Charlton family to go the extra mile in spreading peace and goodwill wherever they may be. And to help you do that, we have two programs in place to make part of your Advent and Christmas season.

ACT OF KINDNESS GIFT CARDS

We will once again have a supply of \$5 Karns gift carts available for purchase during the holiday season. We encourage each of you to purchase some of these to keep on hand to pass out as random acts of kindness as you go about your day. Bless the clerk at a store, the receptionist at your doctor's office, or any other person you feel may be in need of a random act of kindness. We continue to hear how touched many people were by this simple act of kindness. You can purchase your \$5 Karns gifts cards at the Welcome Desk on Sundays or in the church office during the week.

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS ADVENT CALENDAR

Be sure to check out the Advent Calendar on the next page. Beginning December 1, the calendar has suggestions of things that you can do during the Advent season as random acts of kindness. Practicing these simple acts of kindness can help "let every heart prepare him room".

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS ADVENT CALENDAR

During the month of December, one way to “let every heart prepare him room” is to make these suggested acts of kindness part of your daily routine.

You may also purchase \$5 Karns Gift Cards at the Welcome Desk or office to randomly share.

1 Write someone a note of thanks.	2 Make an effort to greet people with kindness.	3 Contact a family member you haven't seen.	4 Let someone know you're praying for them.	5 Make this a day of intentional kindness.
6 Purchase gloves and hats and bring them to church.	7 Make this a day of giving compliments.	8 Do something random for a neighbor.	9 Write notes of encouragement for someone you know.	10 Make this a day of intentional kindness.
11 Make a donation to a charity.	12 Leave a note of thanks for your mailperson.	13 Surprise a friend with an unexpected gift.	14 Go out of your way to help someone else.	15 Make this a day of intentional kindness.
16 Buy mini candy canes and hand them out.	17 Buy a 2 lb. bag of rice to drop off at church for Helping Hands.	18 Leave a note and \$5 gift card for a stranger to find.	19 Contact someone you haven't seen lately.	20 Make this a day of intentional kindness.
21 Write a note of thanks to your doctor's office.	22 Go out of your way to offer people a smile.	23 Invite someone to join you for Christmas Eve services.	24 Reach out to at least 3 people and wish them a Merry Christmas.	25 Reach out to at least 3 people and wish them a Merry Christmas.



Season's Greetings



*Although we will be sending out our Charlton 'Greeting Card',
you may want to consider sending individual cards to the following persons
who are unable to worship with us on Sundays.*

Virginia Bowman
2108 James Buchanan Drive
Masonic Village
Elizabethtown, PA 17022

Janet Cunningham
3525 Candy St. Apt. 105
Harrisburg, PA 17109

Fran Kimberlin
4700 Oakhurst Blvd #219
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Denise Seiders
3560 N. Progress Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Bob Brehm
999 West Harrisburg Pike
#334
Middletown, PA 17057

Pat Enders
7005 Clearfield St,
Harrisburg, PA 17111

Irene Matthews
4310 Plymouth St,
Harrisburg, PA 17109

Sig Sunday
Country Meadows
Building 4 #225
4905 E Trindle Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

Phoebe Chubb
Oak Hill Village #124
1020 N. Union Street
Middletown, PA 17057

Skip and Dennis Heimbaugh
394 Village Blvd
Mifflintown, PA 17059

Mary Miller
1579 English Drive
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Frank Schindler
617 Frances Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17109

Don and Judy Willow
Country Meadows
451 Sand Hill Road #264
Hershey, PA 17033

*What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part; yet what I can I give him: give my heart.*

Christina Rossetti

Before you buy a bunch of 'stuff' for family and friends this holiday season, try asking them what they really NEED.

Maybe they need help with a utility bill, or a car payment, or the rent.

Maybe they need a kid-free night, and could use a free babysitter.

Maybe they could use a homemade meal.

Maybe they need help with gas for their car.

Maybe they need a cup of coffee, and someone to listen.

Maybe they need help making the holidays bright for their children.

Maybe they need help in some other way, but they don't know how to ask for help or are embarrassed to ask.

Maybe YOU could be the one to give them what they really need this year rather than more 'stuff'.

— CHARLTON CHOCOLATE FACTORY —

Jingle Balls

We recently expanded our chocolate production with the addition of our new Jingle Balls, which were very popular at the recent Craft Show. We will continue to sell the Jingle Balls while supplies last. They are \$4 for a pack of 4 candies. We will be having an evening production on Monday, December 5 to allow more Charlton members to experience the candy making process.

Easter Eggs

It will soon be time to start our annual project of making our famous Easter Eggs. We will be making the eggs on Mondays, beginning in February. A few people begin the process at 8am, while the majority of people come in anytime between 9am and Noon. Production usually wraps up by 1:30 pm; lunch is included. There's a job for everyone, so be sure to join us for this major fundraiser of the church!

CHARLTON LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

At our annual Church Conference on October 2, 2022, church membership approved the transition to the Simplified Accountable Structure, which had been explained in a previous newsletter. As the new Leadership Council meets beginning in January 2023, they earnestly seek your prayer support as they dedicate themselves to following the guidance of the Holy Spirit as they make decisions on the mission and ministry of Charlton Church.

If you have thoughts, ideas, or concerns to share with the Leadership Council, please reach out to someone from the Council, whose members are as follows:

Martha Brown, Al Goss, Mark Holmgren, Kay Lengle, Carrie Livingston, Mark Malone, Marjorie Martin, Eric Miller, Scott Pribanich, Tom Schreiber (chair), Heidi Stanalonis, and Marleen Steele.

Kathy Hoover serves as Council Secretary.

Ex-Officio members are Pastor Miguel Arenas, Chuck Kaufmann, Marianne Eagle and Sarah Tingley.

WINTER SMALL GROUPS

ADVENT RETREAT

There is no better way to start the Advent Season than to join us at Charlton Church for our annual Advent Retreat, which will be held on the first Wednesday of Advent, Wednesday, November 30 from 9:00 am to Noon. This is a time to step out of your daily routine and rest in the presence of God. The morning is spent participating in a few group devotions interspersed with free time to pray, read, listen to music, or simply rest.

DIVING DEEPER BIBLE STUDY

Pastor Miguel invites you to join him during the Epiphany season to dig deeper into our sermon series. We encourage participants to read the book "Making Sense of the Bible" by Adam Hamilton. These Bible studies will be held on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 am, from January 18 through February 15.

MOM'S NIGHT OUT

All moms are invited to join on the first Monday of the month to get away and share conversation and a meal with other moms. Details will be provided in the Sunday bulletin.

CHUM 55+ LUNCHEONS

All persons age 55 and over are invited to our monthly luncheon at Charlton Church, which is held at Noon on the third Tuesday of the month. Following the lunch, an informational or entertainment program is presented.

MOVIE NIGHTS

Join us on the first Friday of the month at 5:30 pm for a simple dinner while we watch a movie together. The movie is announced in the Sunday bulletin. Be sure to join us in December to watch 2 Christmas classics: "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and "A Charlie Brown Christmas".

WINTER FELLOWSHIP

Thursdays are 'Fellowship Day' at Charlton Church. We encourage you to participate in one (or all) of these fellowship opportunities.

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Matthew 18:20

FIRST THURSDAY: *Family Table Talk*

Our 'Coffee with the Pastor' was intended for our church family to get to know our new pastor. Now that the pastor has been with us for two years, we are transitioning this event into 'Family Table Talks'. Each month a topic will be chosen and advertised in advance. We encourage everyone to gather round our family table at 9:00 am to talk about issues of faith.

SECOND THURSDAY: *Men's and Women's Luncheons*

All men and women are invited to this monthly luncheon at Noon. The men meet at Jojo's Pizza on Allentown Boulevard. The women's location changes from month to month.

THIRD THURSDAY: *Hot Topic Dinner Discussion*

Join us at 6:00 pm for dinner in a local restaurant as we share how the news of the day interacts with our faith journeys. The location is advertised to those who sign up each month.

FOURTH FRIDAY: *Meet'n'Eat Luncheon*

Everyone is invited to join us at Noon at a local restaurant for fellowship and a meal. No group discussions are planned. It's simply a time of fellowship with your church family. Location is announced each month.

WINTER MISSION OFFERINGS

Donations to our Monthly Missions can be made by using your Mission Envelopes, by using the 'My Offering' envelopes in the pew and marking 'Missions', or online.

DECEMBER — BETHESDA MISSION

Charlton Church has a long history of supporting the work of Bethesda Mission, who provides a variety of support ministries for the homeless of greater Harrisburg.

JANUARY — CENTRAL PA FOOD BANK

Food insecurity remains one of the largest problems facing our community. The Central PA Food Bank feeds countless families by providing food to local food banks in our community.

FEBRUARY — GIVING GRACE

Each month, Charlton Church reaches out to our community and provides basic essentials that are not available through local food banks to over 70 families in our community.

HARVEST HOME DONATIONS

Thank you to everyone who donated towards our Harvest Home fund for our Helping Hands program. On the first Wednesday of December, we will be providing the 85 families who participate in our Giving Grace outreach with a \$20 gift card to Karns Foods or a \$20 voucher to the RGS Market across the street from the church.

While it has always been a blessing to see the bags of food surrounding our altar on Harvest Home Sunday, we now recognize that many of the families we serve do not eat the types of food that was often donated. By offering the gift cards and vouchers, we are practicing better stewardship while we offer respect and dignity to the families we serve.

HELPING HANDS COLLECTION

Moving forward, we would like to transition and focus on providing a healthy pantry items for the families of our outreach programs. Due to supply chain issues, we are no longer able to purchase in bulk. Therefore we encourage our church family to buy 2 lb. bags of rice and place them in the grocery cart located in the church lobby.



GOD'S HANDS AT WORK

The ladies of GH@W have been working all year long to make items that were shared with local schools and ministries. A total of \$305 was also raised by selling items at the Craft Show.

In 2022, GH@W made the following items:

664 hats, ear warmers, headbands, scarves and mittens; 181 dish cloths and hot pads; 91 baby blankets, sweaters, and booties; 41 prayer shawls; 9 full size afghans; and 34 lap blankets. This is a total of 1020 items made in 2022. Praise God!

HEART COOKIE MINISTRY

One of the newest outreach ministry is our cookie outreach. In addition to the cookies, the recipients also receive a card sharing that Charlton Church is praying for them. This outreach started as an idea in the back of Darlene Furlong's mind. Although she pushed the thought aside, it kept coming to her mind. In time, she began to realize that God was speaking to her and planted the seed of this ministry.

The program currently has 9 bakers who have given generously of their time, materials and "talent" for this outreach. Since February, they have made 2,405 heart-shaped sugar cookies that have been delivered to approximately 20 recipients, which has included police departments, schools, fire stations and post offices. Other recipients included the children whose parents have tragically died (and the church that was helping that family), and an attorney's office who had been handling the case of a person who had been bullied and abused while incarcerated.

If you would like to be part of the cookie baking team, or have an idea of who might appreciate receiving some cookies, please contact Darlene Furlong.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Thank you to everyone who filled a box for Operation Christmas Child this year. We have collected 43 boxes which will be shared with children in the United States as well as countries around the world. Thanks also to the individuals and Sunday School classes who have made donations to the OCC program to coverage postage and additional boxes.



KIDS KIDS IN DISCIPLESHIP CLUB

The kids of Kids Night Out are planning a very special evening on Friday, December 9 ... and they're inviting everyone to join them. They will be holding a Drive-Thru Living Nativity from 6:30 to 7:15 pm. Come and see them re-enact the story of the birth of Jesus.

Following the Live Nativity, the kids will then warm up inside with some hot chocolate and cookies. Anyone interested in helping with this event should contact Sarah Tingley.



CALLING ALL ADULTS! We are in of adult volunteers to help chaperone our children's and youth events. Both children and youth engage more fully in programs when their parents are not standing over their shoulder watching them. Please prayerfully consider whether you can help when needed!

YOUTH DATES

Friday, December 9 — 6 to 8 pm
Youth help at Kids Night Out

Sunday, December 11 — 5:00 pm
Christmas Caroling with the church

Sunday, December 18 — 5:00 pm
Mystery Trip Redo

For those of you who remember, our intended Mystery Trip last December went bust when the line for Hershey Sweet Lights was hours-long. We're planning a Redo on the Mystery Trip, and we're not taking any chances this year. All youth are invited to join us for a fun getaway.



The children are all eager to enjoy the snow this winter!

All the classes will begin December learning about fun, holiday traditions. The rest of the month will be focused on the story of Jesus' birth.

The Duck class will spend the rest of the winter season learning about polar animals, emotions and different types of weather.

The Frog and Turtle classes will complete units on the great outdoors and many different kinds of animals.

We will hold our annual readathon the week of February 27-March 3rd. This is a fun week exploring many books and practicing new pre-reading skills. The preschool appreciates the donations to the readathon and will be using the money this year to update our dramatic play and fine motor materials. We are also hoping to add a light table which costs around \$400.

A fun, sensory material we like to make in the winter is snow slime. Want to try it? Here are the directions:

Ingredients: 1/2 c Elmer's white glue

2 c shaving cream

2 Tbsp cornstarch

1/2 tsp saline solution (with boric acid)

Pour the glue into a large mixing bowl. Add the shaving cream. Gently mix in the cornstarch. Add in your contact solution slowly until it becomes less sticky. Knead the slime in your hands to make sure it is well combined.

Don't forget to get your grocery gift cards at church, which benefit the preschool. They are available on Sunday mornings at the Welcome Desk, and in the church office during weekly office hours. There is no easier way to support Charlton Preschool!



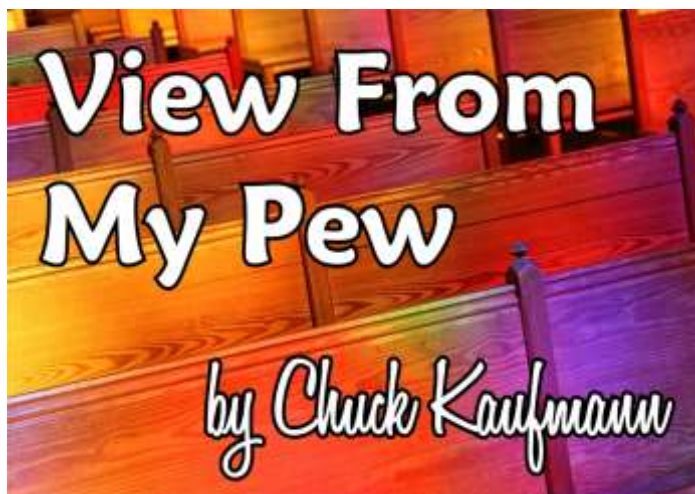
In response to a comment I overheard this past weekend, I'd like to reprint the following article I wrote in December 2018.

Contrary to what many people may think, I don't believe there is a "war on Christmas". You often hear people say this when they're debating whether to say "Happy Holiday" or "Merry Christmas".

First of all, let's look at each of these phrases. The word 'holiday' comes from the Old English term "holy day", which is actually quite appropriate. Did you know that in December, there are over 20 different religious celebrations, with half of them being Christian oriented? And since we don't actually celebrate Christmas until December 25th, it's probably more appropriate to say "Happy Holidays" to someone, unless you prefer to say "Happy Advent"!

Now let's consider the phrase that many in the church consider to be 'politically correct': "Merry Christmas". The word 'merry' is defined as 'lively' or 'jovial'. It has a British heritage, where it often used to refer to someone who is slightly and good-humoredly drunk. Yikes! Why are we taking a stand on using the word "merry", when it has no reference to this most holy celebration? Perhaps wishing someone a "Blessed Christmas" would be more fitting.

I think this debate comes up every year because we feel that saying "Happy Holidays" is just another example of 'taking Christ out of Christmas'. We can't escape the fact that the Christmas season has become quite secular, with stores decorating earlier and earlier to make more money. In many ways, Christmas has always been a secular holiday. The decorating of evergreen trees and the giving of gifts are both ancient



traditions from the celebration of the winter solstice. In fact, the church co-opted the pagan feast of the winter solstice and set December 25th as the celebration of Christ's birth. Scholars have long debated on the actual date of the birth of Jesus, but most agree it most likely wasn't in December.

What would happen if we would jump off the bandwagon of those who are crying about a 'war on Christmas' and put our energies into following the example of Jesus, who showed love and compassion to everyone he met, even those he disagreed with? It is true that Jesus would take a stand about something he felt passionate about; but it is important to recognize that he would do so on matters of substance and not just talking points. Jesus is more concerned about how we live our lives each and every day, and not so much about the debates we have on social media or around the dinner table.

So this Christmas season, I encourage everyone to decide how you would like to greet another person, whether it be "Merry Christmas", "Blessed Christmas", "Happy Holidays", "Happy Holy-Days", or even "Happy December". And may each time you say it be an internal prayer of compassion and good-will to those you offer it to.

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

IN SYMPATHY

The sympathy of the church congregation is extended to the families of ...

Jean Porr, who passed away on September 11, 2022.

Zoe Mumford, who passed away on September 17, 2022.

Gloria Walters, who passed away on November 3, 2022..

Tamra Foltz, who passed away on November 4, 2022.

Whenever I think of you,
I give God thanks.

Philippians 1:3



We would like to thank our Charlton family for all the prayers, cards, meals, and visits during my recovery and chemotherapy.

Judy McMillen

Thank you to everyone at Charlton for your prayers, cards and meals during my recent health battle. It is greatly appreciated.

Laurie Woodward

Thank you to each of you who have made a donation toward my scholarship fund. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Pastor Miguel

On behalf of the Mission Golf Classic, we would like to thank all the people who played, donated prizes, or worked behind the scenes to make this fifth 'annual' event the best yet. We were able to raise \$5,157 for the mission outreach of Charlton Church.

George Zimmerman, chairperson

A great big "THANKS" to all who baked, sold, cooked, planned, set up and cleaned up for our Craft Show. It was a great day!

Barb Goss

A very big thank you to those who helped to bake pumpkin rolls and fruitcakes again this year, which raised about \$1,000.

Thanks also to those who baked cookies, breads, fudges, candies and other yummy good, and also manned the Bake Sale table at the Craft Show all day. The table raised about \$800.

Sandy Bovard

On behalf of the Neighborhood Center we would like to thank you for your donation of \$1,076 made on October 6. The Neighborhood Center relies on the generosity of community donors such as yourselves and is grateful for you support.

Quetrina Sims-Shelton, M.Ed.
Interim Executive Director

CHARLTON CHURCH

A United Methodist Community

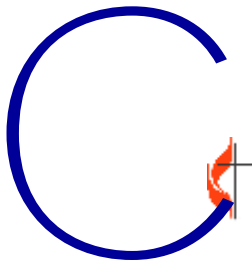
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**Making Disciples of Jesus Christ
for the Transformation of the World**



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Sommer Garber

Custodian

Debra Hughes

Nursery Attendant

Wendy Criste

Nursery Attendant

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS

Martha Brown, Al Goss, Mark Holmgren, Kay Lengle, Carrie Livingston, Mark Malone, Marjorie Martin,
Eric Miller, Scott Pribanich, Tom Schreiber (chair), Heidi Stanalonis, Marleen Steele
Kathy Hoover serves as Council Secretary.

Want to keep up-to-date on what's happening at Charlton Church?
Be sure to 'like' our page at www.Facebook.com/charltonchurch