

CHARLTON

WINTER
2025

CHIMES

A detailed illustration of a nativity scene. The Virgin Mary, in a white robe and blue veil, kneels in adoration of the infant Jesus who lies in a manger filled with golden straw. Joseph, with a beard and brown robe, stands behind her. Three wise men in ornate, colorful robes (purple, gold, and green) stand to the left, offering gifts. A young boy in a dark robe kneels to the right. In the foreground, three white lambs are visible. The background features a stone archway under a starry night sky with palm trees.

*Let every heart
prepare Him room*

Doris Lelinger

Let every heart prepare him room.

As they say, we are a product of our environment. As children, we grow up with the values that are instilled within us by our parents. But as we grow older and experience the world for ourselves, we begin to struggle with the bigger questions about life and who we want to be.

But throughout our life's journey, our environment continues to have an effect on who we are. It doesn't matter if we are in our 20's, our 50's or our 80's, our environment continues to have an effect on us.

It may be good to define that our 'environment' refers to the surroundings or conditions in which a person lives or operates. This includes our relationships with family and friends, the neighborhood in which we live, the type of work we do (or have done), the people we interact with, the groups we are involved with, the media we consume, etc. All of these things have an effect on how we look at the world around us.

As we begin our Advent journey, we pray that the words of the famous carol would ring in our ears:

Let every heart prepare him room.

What does this mean to each of us as we reflect on our lives today? What do we need to do to prepare our hearts and to make room for the light and life of Jesus in our lives? Do we need to change anything about our environment that would allow us to be a follower of Jesus in the world today?

May God open our minds and our hearts this Advent season to hear again ... and perhaps experience anew ... the story of how God came to be Emmanuel, God with us.

Charlton Chimes

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A Message from the Pastor ...



How Traditions Shape Tomorrow's Vision: From Advent to Renewal

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)

What Christmas or New Year's Eve tradition do you remember from when you were a kid?

Traditions are more than just things we do; they are living reminders of who we are, where we come from, and where we are going. Advent, Christmas, and New Year's Eve are three seasons of year that show us how traditions shape our lives today and help us get ready for the future.

That's why I wanted to write about some of my Chilean traditions and some of our American traditions to highlight how significant they are to both of our cultures.

For example, Advent is a season to wait and hope. I remember gathering around the advent wreath which was on a little coffee table in the living room, and every night during the four weeks before Christmas Eve, we lit the Advent candles. It was time to think about the hope of waiting for the Messiah, Jesus Christ. You might recall something like that. These traditions remind us that waiting isn't a waste of time; it's getting ready. These traditions help us stay in the present by helping us slow down, contemplate, and realize that HOPE is always on the way.

Decorating the Christmas tree in the US and Chile or eating *pan de Pascua* (a sort of Panettone) and *cola de mono* (like eggnog) in my native country are more than simply enjoyable things to do at Christmas. They are ways to remember and have fun. They make us think about how important family is, how giving we should be, and how happy we should be with what we get. These traditions keep us rooted in LOVE, in the love that God, the Father, has for us, that sent us His Only Begotten Son, to live among us. So, we don't forget the Gift that will change our lives.

Fireworks and making resolutions on New Year's Eve are traditions in both countries, that stand for new beginnings and hope. They remind us that every end is also a fresh beginning. These traditions make us think about the future, dream, and promise to move forward. They keep us in the present and make us open to what can happen tomorrow.

Traditions are like bridges. They connect people from diverse ages, cultures, and communities. They give our present significance by reminding us of our shared values, and they shape our future by offering us HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE, which all feel new at the start of a new year.

As we get ready for 2026, let's not think of these traditions as just things we do every day. Instead, let's think of them as sacred rhythms that keep us moving toward a new vision of the future that is coming. Advent teaches us to wait with hope, Christmas teaches us to celebrate with love the birth of Jesus, and New Year's Eve teaches us to be brave and courageous as we turn a new page in the book of life. Traditions remind us that when we live in the light of Christ, our present is meaningful, and our future is bright. Volunteering, or simply being present for someone in need, each step taken in faith is a step towards realizing the potential that God has given us. Considering the lives of Moses, Peter, and Isaiah, we are challenged to respond to God's call with faith and courage. Let us step out of our comfort zone and discover what the Lord has for us. We'll be surprised!

Pastor Miguel

“Journey to the Manger”

An Advent & Christmas Sermon Series

As we embark on the sacred season of Advent and Christmas, we invite you to join us in a journey of expectation and preparation, as we anticipate the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our sermon series, titled "Journey to the Manger," will guide us through the rich themes of this sacred time, inviting us to reflect on what it means to await the miraculous birth of Christ and the transformative power He brings into our lives.

Each Sunday leading up to Christmas, we will explore scripture that speaks to the hope that Advent offers. From the call to be spiritually awake in Matthew to the roots of righteousness depicted in Isaiah, we will uncover the significance of God's promises and how they resonate with our lives today. We will engage with the figures of scripture, from John the Baptist to Joseph, each teaching us about faith, trust, and the beauty of waiting.

Christmas Eve will culminate our journey with the joyful celebration of Christ's birth. We will gather to reflect on the gift of God's presence, sparking joy, love, and peace in our hearts as we embrace the essence of the season. The following Sunday, we will consider how we are called to carry that light into the world, embodying the message of hope and renewal that Jesus brings.

This Advent and Christmas, let us open our hearts to the message of the coming King, preparing not just for the celebration of His birth but also for the ways He desires to work within us and through us, inviting others to experience His incredible love and grace. Together, may we journey to the manger and beyond, carrying His light into a world that so desperately needs it.



November 30, 2025: First Sunday of Advent

"Awakening to the Light" (Matthew 24:36-44)

As we begin our Advent journey, this sermon emphasizes the importance of being spiritually awake and prepared for the coming of Christ. We are reminded **to live in anticipation, aligning our lives with God's purpose, and reflecting on the urgency of our faith in daily living.**

December 7, 2025: Second Sunday of Advent

"Roots of Righteousness" (Isaiah 11:1-10)

This sermon focuses on the hope and restoration promised through the coming Messiah. We explore the imagery of peace and justice portrayed in Isaiah, highlighting how the roots of righteousness can grow in our lives and communities as **we prepare our hearts for Christ's arrival.**

December 14, 2025: Third Sunday of Advent

"Rejoicing in the Waiting" (Matthew 11:2-11)

On this Sunday, we reflect upon the joy found in waiting **for Christ's coming, inspired by John the Baptist's questions about Jesus' identity. We explore how our doubts can lead to deeper faith and joy, and how we are called to share the good news of hope in a world that often seems hopeless.**

December 21, 2025: Fourth Sunday of Advent

"There's a Song in the Air"

The choirs of Charlton UMC and Enola Emmanuel UMC join forces to lead our **worship as we hear the Christmas story and consider how God's great love for us was revealed in the form of a baby.**



December 24, 2025: Christmas Eve

"The Gift of God's Presence" (Luke 2:1-14)

On Christmas Eve, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the greatest gift of all. This **sermon invites us to experience the joy and wonder of God's presence among us**, illuminating how His arrival brings peace, hope, and love into our lives and the world.

December 28, 2025: First Sunday after Christmas Day

"Carrying the Light" (Matthew 2:13-23)

In this sermon, we explore the aftermath of Jesus' birth and the challenges faced by His family. We are reminded that following Christ may lead us through trials, yet we are called to carry the light of His presence into our lives and share it with others.

Love Boldly.
Serve Joyfully.
Lead Courageously.

Learning and Practicing
the New Vision of the United Methodist Church



The Council of Bishops, in conjunction with the Connectional Table, unveiled a new vision statement for The United Methodist Church on May 1, 2025. This **vision reflects our deep commitment to embodying God's dream for the world** and sets the tone for us as we begin this new year together. As the first sermon series of 2026, we are not only invited to hear this vision but also to live it out in real and tangible ways.

The vision declares: The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections. This statement complements our longstanding mission, inspired by Matthew 28:1–20, to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Together, mission and vision remind us that discipleship is both a calling and a practice.

The vision encourages us to embody three guiding principles. To Love Boldly is to passionately love God and, like Jesus, embrace people of every age, nation, race, gender, and walk of life. To Serve Joyfully is to journey with a Christ-like heart alongside the most vulnerable, offering care and **compassion with joy. To Lead Courageously is to follow Jesus’** example by resisting evil, injustice, and oppression, striving for peace, justice, and reconciliation.

As Bishop Tracy Smith Malone has said, “This new vision is not simply a statement or a plan, it is a catalyst for **transformation.**” Therefore, over the next six weeks, this sermon series will challenge us to seize the opportunities before us, to follow where God leads, and to engage more fully in our mission. Let us be ready and willing to learn, to be stretched, and to be transformed together as we bring this vision to life in our lives.

Sunday, January 4, 2026 – Epiphany Sunday.

“God’s Vision” (Matthew 2:1-12)

This sermon examines how the magi’s gifts in Matthew 2:1–12 challenge us to offer our first gifts of the year in faithful stewardship, dedicating our finances and lives to God’s vision. A vision that calls us to Love Boldly, extending Christ’s compassion beyond comfort. We are invited to Serve Joyfully, giving with gratitude and delight. And we are challenged to Lead Courageously, guiding others toward the light of Christ.



Sunday, January 11, 2026 – Baptism of the Lord

“Love Boldly” (Matthew 22:37–39; John 13:34–35)

This sermon centers on the radical love of Jesus, a love that crosses boundaries and embraces all people. We reflect on how loving boldly means passionately loving God and extending that love to every person, regardless of age, race, gender, or background. It challenges the church to be a sanctuary of inclusion and compassion, modeling Christ’s love in tangible ways.

Sunday, January 18, 2026 – Second Sunday after Epiphany

“Serve Joyfully” (Psalm 100:1; Nehemiah 8:10; John 13:14–15; 1 Peter 4:10)

This sermon explores joyful service as a mark of discipleship. With Christ as our example, we are called to journey alongside the vulnerable, offering care with gladness and compassion. Service is not a burden but a **joyful response to God’s grace. The congregation is** invited to discover the strength and delight found in serving others with open hearts.

Sunday, January 25, 2026 – Third Sunday after Epiphany

“Lead Courageously” (Joshua 1:9; Ephesians 6:10)

This sermon calls disciples to courageous leadership in the face of injustice and oppression. Drawing from biblical examples, we reflect on how following Jesus means resisting evil and striving for peace and reconciliation. The church is challenged to be prophetic and bold, leading with integrity and hope in a world that desperately needs healing.



Sunday, February 1, 2025 – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

“Disciples in Action: Love, Serve, and Lead” (Micah 6:6-8)

This sermon integrates the previous themes into daily discipleship. Love, service, **and lead are not abstract ideals but lived realities.** Micah’s prophetic call reminds us that discipleship is grounded in justice, kindness, and humility. The congregation is invited to reflect on how these values shape their everyday decisions, relationships, and witness.

Sunday, February 8, 2025 – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

“Connected in Christ: A World Movement of Grace”

(1 Corinthians 12:12–14, 27)

The final sermon celebrates the global connection of The United Methodist Church. Grounded in 1 Corinthians 12, we rejoice that many parts form one body in Christ. Through the new vision—Love Boldly, Serve Joyfully, Lead Courageously—we live united in purpose and mission. Together we are called to keep building bridges of grace and justice across cultures and continents.



Sunday, February 8, 2025 – Transfiguration Sunday

“Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies” (Matthew 17:1-9)

As we prepare to begin our new Lenten series, we take a moment to remember the transfiguration of Jesus. On the mountaintop, the disciples witness Jesus’ divine glory shining through human form, a glimpse of heaven’s light before the shadows of the cross. This moment of transfiguration reminds us that Christ’s glory not only illuminates the mountain but also guides us through the valleys of faith. How does the light of Christ reveal God’s presence in our ordinary days?





ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICES

Sundays at 10 AM

November 30, December 7, December 14

Sunday, December 21 at 10:15 am

**A service of word and music
presented by the combined choirs of
Charlton UMC and Enola Emmanuel UMC**



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

7 PM — Service with Candlelight and Children's Message

9 PM — Service with Candlelight and Holy Communion

CHRISTMAS SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday, December 28

Worship at 10 AM



EPIPHANY WORSHIP

Sunday, January 4 at 10 AM

Service of Holy Communion

As you may or may not be aware, according to the liturgical church calendar, the first Sunday of Advent (which is November 30 this year) is the beginning of the Christian Year.

Advent

So while chances are that you are reading this newsletter 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!"



Christmas at Noon



CHARLTON THURSDAY LUNCHTIME CONCERT SERIES

- Thurs, December 4** Come and enjoy "The Sounds of the Season" with harpist Louis Lynch
- Thurs, December 11** Come and enjoy "Holiday Classics Through the Decades" with soprano Jeanette Keezel
- Thurs, December 18** Come and enjoy "Christmas with the Trumpet and Organ" with Scott Pribanich and Chuck Kaufmann

Come and enjoy the 30 to 40 minute noontime concerts at Charlton Church. The Soup Guy will have a light soup lunch available following the program. Donations will be accepted, but not required.



Please note there are NO Fellowship Thursday events during the month of December.



Church Christmas Card



As we have done over the past few years, 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 write your greeting on the Connection Card, drop it off at the church office, or email it to office@charltonchurch.org. All submissions should be in by Monday, December 8th. If you wish, you may desire to make a donation to the Shares of Ministry in place of purchasing cards and postage.



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 or find it difficult to worship with us on Sundays.*

Barbara Bless
1139 Loop Dr
Harrisburg, PA 17112

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

Ed Brady
6815 Blue Ridge Ave.
Harrisburg, PA 17112

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

Carol Brown
6 Silk Mill Drive
Apt. #611
East Pennsboro, PA 17025

Bill Cooker
622 Sunnyhill Lane
Harrisburg, PA 17111

Janet Cunningham
3525 Canby St #133
Harrisburg, PA 17109

Dot Dunkle
Homeland Center #305
1901 N. 5th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102

Pat Enders
7005 Clearfield Street
Harrisburg, PA 17111

Donna Garrettson
5713 Oak Ave
Harrisburg, PA 17112

Dennis Heimbaugh
346 Palm Cove Way
York, SC 29745

Fran Kimberlin
Thornwald Home
442 Walnut Bottom Road
Carlisle, PA 17013

Bernadette Kreiser
7738 Farmdale Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17112

Dee Miller
Bridges at Bent Creek
2100 Bent Creek Blvd.
#207
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

Mary Miller
1579 English Dr
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

George and Dossie Minges
6901A Clubhouse Court
Harrisburg, PA 17111

Joy Morris
Viva Senior Living
Room 129
150 Kempton Ave.
Harrisburg, PA 17111

Joanne Shover
15 Charlton Rd
Harrisburg, PA 17112

Sig Sunday
Sarah Todd Home #20
1000 W. South St.
Carlisle, PA 17013

Carolyn Swartz
173 Oaklee Rd
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Marilyn Weaver
428 Springlake Rd
Harrisburg, PA 17112

Betty Zeiders
13 Charlton Rd
Harrisburg, PA 17112

George Zimmerman
600 Freemason Dr.
Roosevelt Building #4
#4648
Elizabethtown, PA 17022

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.

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 hand warmers 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 of encouragement 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.



CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS

CHARLTON EGGS — Our famous peanut butter eggs and coconut eggs are now available during the holy-day season while supplies last. They are \$1.50 each, and are available for sale in the church lobby on Sunday mornings or in the church office.

PRAYER JARS — Also available in the lobby are our Prayer Jars for \$5. Give the gift that can make a difference in someone's life!

SOUP GUY GIFT CERTIFICATES — Support a small business and give the gift of a meal to someone. You can buy them online or through the church office.

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.

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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4

12:00 pm — CHRISTMAS AT NOON

Join us for a 40 minute concert with harpist Louis Lynch,
followed by a light soup lunch in the multi-purpose room.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

10:00 am — COOKIE EXCHANGE

Bring a batch of your favorite Christmas cookies
already baked and ready to share
and exchange so you can go home with a variety of cookies.
Some of the cookies will be shared with homebound members.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11

12:00 pm — CHRISTMAS AT NOON

Join us for a concert of holiday classics
with soloist Jeannette Keezel,
followed by a light soup lunch.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14

10:00 am — WORSHIP WITH CHILDREN

Join us for a worship experience
led by the children of Charlton.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18

12:00 pm — CHRISTMAS AT NOON

Join us for “Christmas with the Trumpet and Organ”
withi Scott Pribanich and Chuck Kaufmann.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

10:15 am — SERVICE OF WORD AND MUSIC

Led by the combined choirs of Charlton UMC
and Enola Emmanuel UMC.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

7:00 pm — Worship service with children’s message.

9:00 pm — Worship service with holy communion.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31

5:00 pm — COVERED DISH DINNER

Join us for an evening of fellowship and fun. Bring
your favorite game to play with your church family.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1

12 pm — PORK ‘n’ SAUERKRAUT LUNCH

Join your Charlton family for an informal lunch.

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

THE WEARY WORLD REJOICES

A famous Christmas carol, “O Holy Night,” has a lyric that might resonate with many of us this year: “A thrill of hope! The weary world rejoices.”

As we enter the Advent season, do you feel weary? You’re not alone.

You could even say that being weary and worn out is an acceptable place from which to approach this Advent season. Because Advent exists to remind us that, while darkness surrounds us and troubles exist, the hope of Christmas isn’t far away.

It may seem distant. It may even seem impossible this year for you to feel hopeful. You might have lost your job. Or maybe you’re feeling isolated from those you love. You may have even grieved the loss of a family member or friend.

Looking around, all you might be able to see right now is darkness. If you try to adjust your eyes, blinking into the night, there seems to be no light. The weight of sickness, death, injustice and pain seems too heavy. Or maybe you’re just tired. Numb. Ready to pull the covers over your head and try this whole Christmas cheer thing again next year. Don’t feel guilty. Instead, acknowledge the very real darkness of this world and you’ll have eyes to see Advent through the same lens as the people waiting for a Messiah thousands of years ago.

For 500 years from their last prophet, Malachi, the people of Israel hadn’t heard anything from God about their redeemer. God’s chosen people must have cried out to him, asking how long it would be before their hope, their salvation, would arrive. It was too dark, and God seemed to be silent. Has he felt that way to you this year?

Though he may have felt far away to them, God was so much closer than his people knew — gently planning Jesus’ entrance into the world in the most unexpected way.

Over the next four weeks of Advent, we’ll reflect on four perspectives of those present at the nativity scene.

We suggest you take a “Lectio Divina” approach to our Advent and Christmas Devotional. Lectio Divina, which is Latin for ‘divine reading’ is an ancient practice of repetitive reading, allowing the Spirit of God to speak through the text.

We encourage you to reach each week’s devotional each day of that week ... over and over again.

Read it slowly and deliberately, trusting that God will speak to you through the words of this devotional made available by Wycliff Bible Translators.

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

Week 1: MARY

November 30 thru December 6

READ LUKE 1:46-50

Mary had every right to be scared. She was young, betrothed and now told she was pregnant. And to top it all off, the news was delivered by an angel — you know, spiritual beings that tend to terrify people. As Mary processed the news, I can only imagine what was going through her head. Would her family disown her? Would people in town make assumptions and gossip? Would Joseph believe any of this? Would she be rejected? Disparaged? Or worse?

But the thought Mary chose to settle on wasn't one of fear but of faith: "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true" (Luke 1:38, NLT).

It would be nice to say that our typical response to fear is always Mary's response: a song of praise and hopeful expectation. But let's be real. Fear creeps into our minds and souls like the slow roll of a dark cloud before a storm. How do you respond? Retreat? Isolate? Hold your fear close to your chest and spiral into endless "what-ifs"?

Let's look at Mary's response. After Mary visited Elizabeth, she turned her attention to God in a song known as the Magnificat (which means "my soul glorifies the Lord"). There are a few things in this song that are helpful as you seek to ground yourself in hope when fear swirls around:

Mary began with praise. Her song is about singing God's glory, and though I'm sure Mary had so many questions about what it meant to give birth to the Savior, she opened with rejoicing instead of concern.

Mary remembered her part in God's story. Mary knew that God was in control; he was the one who created and empowered her. Her faith helped her understand that her part of the story was not the end of the story.

Mary remembered God's goodness and justice. Mary didn't just reflect on the blessings God bestowed or the promises he made to Israel; she reflected on how God would also set wrong things back to right (vs. 51-53).

Mary dispelled fear with praise. She put aside insecurity with the truth of who God was, remembering her role in his story. And she looked past concerns of rejection or gossip, recalling that she served a God of justice.

And because of that, Mary could hope. And so can you.

REFLECT: When have you felt overwhelmed by fear? How did you respond?
What emotions do you think Mary felt when the angel delivered the news?
How can Mary's response to God's news encourage you this Christmas?

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

Week 2: JOSEPH

December 7 thru 13

READ MATTHEW 1:19-21, 24

Out of all the characters in the nativity, there is one we don't know much about: Joseph. The most we hear about him comes from Matthew's account of Jesus' birth; there, we learn that Joseph was greeted by an angel of the Lord in a dream and was told that he should not be afraid to take Mary as his wife. Joseph woke up and believed the angel.

We learn some important things about Joseph in this short passage:

Joseph was a "righteous man." Not a lot of characters in Scripture are noted especially for their righteousness. Joseph is. When he could have made a public spectacle about Mary's perceived infidelity, Joseph showed kindness by choosing privacy. He had plans to honor Mary as a person by divorcing her secretly. Instead of shame for Mary, Joseph was willing to take the path of dignity.

Joseph was also fearful. Normally, angels scare people so much that they tell people not to fear them; however, the angel of the Lord tells Joseph to not be afraid of something different: to take Mary as his wife. Joseph was likely worried about public disgrace, humiliation and maybe even being cut off from his family. God knew that and met Joseph in the middle of that fear.

Joseph chose to believe the unbelievable. It was an unbelievable circumstance, but Joseph chose faith in God's direction over trusting the voices of his family and community. What do you think that cost him?

Joseph was willing to lose a lot in order to follow God's direction — he likely risked his reputation and relationships with friends and family.

When we look around at our world, it's tempting to think about all we risk losing if we follow what God tells us to do. And Joseph most likely had doubts and questions; he was human after all. But his questions and doubts led him back to the truth that God is in control. He was Joseph's ultimate source of truth and assurance.

God's words spoken through the angel were the only reason why Joseph was willing to take such a huge risk. God's words to you through Scripture are the reason you can step out boldly to obey him.

REFLECT: Have your perceptions about Joseph changed? If so, how?
What can Joseph's response to his dream teach us about trusting God?
What is one thing God's prompting you to do but might require a risk?

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

Week 3: THE SHEPHERDS

December 14 thru 20

READ LUKE 2:15-18, 20

Imagine being on a remote beach in the middle of the night.

Walking along the soft, cool sand of the beach, your eyes might need time to adjust to the darkness around you. There are no streetlights, no lamps, no flashlights around. But then you look at the sky and stand in awe, mesmerized by the beauty and clarity of the numerous stars.

Because there's no artificial light to detract from them, these stars seem brighter and clearer than you've ever seen them.

Sometimes it takes being in total darkness to see the light that's been around us the whole time. What had been distant is now startlingly clear.

Now imagine the shepherds standing in total darkness the night that the angel came to them. They were probably yawning, scanning the dark horizon for predators that could attack their flocks. Their eyes, too, had adjusted to pitch blackness with only the night sky as their source of light.

Scripture says that when an angel appeared, "the glory of the Lord shone around [the shepherds]" (Luke 2:9b, NIV). Instantly, the shepherds were terrified. Between the angels themselves and the brilliant light of God's glory, it's understandable.

Typically these "outsiders" were kept away from society, but now they were suddenly in the spotlight. They were seen. They probably never expected the news of the Messiah's birth to come to them or that God would use shepherds to declare the arrival of the Lamb of God.

God spoke to unlikely people: to a lowly virgin girl, to her tradesman betrothed, to lowly shepherds. These unlikely people were to become his messengers in the most unexpected ways.

Years later, more unlikely people — women — were chosen to deliver the news that Jesus had been resurrected. You might feel like an unlikely candidate, but God can use you to declare the Savior this Christmas season! He can use you to bring light that breaks through a weary, dark world.

REFLECT: When was the last time you received good news? Who delivered the news to you?
If you had heard the news of Jesus' birth from a shepherd, how would you have responded?
God uses unlikely people to bring about his kingdom on earth. How can that fact encourage you this week?

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

Week 4: THE ANGELS

December 21 thru 27

READ LUKE 2:13-14

Angels are terrifying.

We know little for sure about angels apart from the fact that they're spiritual beings. They seem to serve a variety of roles, from warriors to guardians to heralds used by God to deliver his messages. They're messengers in the Christmas story. An angel appeared to Zechariah.

And then a named angel, Gabriel, appeared to Mary to tell her that she would give birth to God's son. An angel then appeared to Joseph in a dream to let him know about this news too.

The next time an angel appeared in this story, it was to shepherds in a field. We spent time talking about shepherds and how we can learn from their example, but what about the angels? What do they have to teach us about joy in the midst of uncertainty?

The angels were joyful because they had an advantage: they knew the king arriving that night and the hope he would bring mankind. They knew what the weary world did not yet know: hope was coming.

This was a pivotal moment in human history, and this group of angels came together to declare the best news the shepherds would ever hear.

The "vast host" was a vast number of the Lord's spiritual servants. You might even call it a heavenly community reflective of the community of believers who will one day be praising God before his throne together (Revelation 7:9).

We know the rest of the story because we have the Bible. We know that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah (Acts 4:10-12) and that he died for our sins and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:4). We know he's sitting at God's right hand (Romans 8:34) and will return for us again (John 14:3). We can rejoice in this truth!

The vast host of angels rejoiced together. The shepherds received that joy and spread it to others. Light was spreading, illuminating the darkness. In the midst of your own dark times, you might think that you can't find words of joy and hope within yourself to lift to God. In those times, you can reach out to others in God's community so they can encourage you by declaring his promises over you.

REFLECT: How has your understanding of angels changed as you've grown older?
Who are people you've reached out to in dark or uncertain times in your life?
Who is someone you can "sing God's promises over" this week?

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

A THRILL OF HOPE

December 28 thru January 4

READ ROMANS 15: 1-13

Mary, Joseph and the shepherds couldn't have known the roles they'd play in a story that's foundational to our faith as Christians. But when nothing around them seemed to make sense, when the world felt weary and hopeless, they clung to the promises of God and trusted in his goodness. Then they shared about that goodness with others. Little by little, hope spread.

Even the Magi, who traveled a great distance to find the One foretold, did not fully understand the role they would play in the greatest story ever told. But their gifts were an immeasurable gift to the holy family, preparing them for the difficult journey they would travel.

We've all been hit by hard times. Weariness weighs us down. But one of the best things we can do to lift our spirits this Advent and Christmas season is to do what the characters in the nativity did and spread Christmas hope and joy to those around us.

Who are the family members in your life who need words of reconciliation, encouragement or support to free them for the life that God has in store for them?

Who are your friends who need to know that you are there for them to celebrate life's achievements and to sit with them during moments of grief and despair?

Who are the neighbors ... both those you know and those you may not know yet ... who may benefit from a simple smile or kind word?

Spread some love and encouragement this Christmas season to your friends, family and all those who cross your daily path. Remember that the Christ Child who was born two thousand years ago lives on in the lives of those who follow him.

Together, we are the heart and hands of Christ in the world today.

And the world today is in desperate need of the hope, love, peace and joy that comes from God.

**NEW YEAR'S EVE
COVERED DISH DINNER
5:00 PM**



**NEW YEAR'S DAY
PORK 'n' SAUERKRAUT
12:00 PM**



FELLOWSHIP THURSDAYS

Join us each Thursday of the month for a different fellowship gathering.

1st Thursday – CHARLTON FAMILY TABLE @ 12 Noon

Join the Charlton family in our multipurpose room for a light lunch and time of fellowship around the table. Donations accepted. Some months may include an activity or entertainment.

2nd Thursday – WOMEN'S and MEN'S LUNCHEONS @ 12 Noon

The women and men each have their own luncheons in a local area restaurant. Pay for your own meal. Location given to those who sign up.

3rd Thursday – HOT TOPIX DINNER DISCUSSION @ 6:00 pm

You're invited to join us for dinner in a local restaurant and have a discussion how our faith relates to the 'hot topics' in the news. Pay for your own meal. Location given to those who sign up.

4th Thursday – MEET 'n' EAT LUNCHEON @ 12 Noon

Everyone is invited to join us for fun and fellowship at an area restaurant. Pay for your own meal. Location is given to those who sign up.

**Sign up for these events on the Sunday Connection Card
or by calling the church office at 717-545-2000.**

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, **220** ...

Yes, 220 ... that's how old Charlton Church is about to be!

Charlton Church will celebrate our 220th anniversary in 2026 with a series of events we are calling “Generations of Faith”, based on Philippians 1:6, *“I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”* In this newsletter, we begin a series of articles with the history of Charlton Church.

So, let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start ...

In 1803, the Evangelical Association (originally called The New Methodist Association) was founded by Jacob Albright because Methodists were not open to German people. German was spoken in our church for years. In 1806, a revival took place and after hearing Jacob Albright preach in the Linglestown area, Leonard Crum formed a class of followers. It is very likely that Crum's Class met for worship in the home of Leonard Crum, for he had a very large home and it was common in those days to worship in a home when there was no church available. And so, in 1806, Crum's Church was built on Colonial Road. The ground was given by Leonard Crum. Due to it being a farming community, services were held in the afternoon.



Crum's Church, circa 1868

The cemetery which was adjacent to Crum's Church still remains. The founders of our congregation are laid to rest there. We still own the cemetery and are responsible for its care.

In 1891, there was a split in the Evangelical Association and due to a Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision, most of the people had to leave Crum's Church and became known as the United Evangelical Church. The place they found to worship was Brown's School House which was located about a half mile east of the present site of Charlton Church. This building was used during the week for school purposes. The desks which the pupils used during the week were used on Sundays for pews. This made it extremely difficult to kneel for prayer, and in those days they always knelt for prayer. Thus, the people thought of building a new church.

Stay tuned for the next part of the Charlton story, as well as more information about events being planned to celebrate our anniversary!

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 — MISSIONARIES

Charlton Church has a long history of supporting missionaries. December's offering support Michael and Grace Al-Zoughbi as they minister to the people of the Middle East.

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 90 families in our community.

HARVEST HOME DONATIONS

Thank you to everyone who packed a pantry bag to bless the families of our Giving Grace program. Through your efforts, we will be able to distribute these on the first Wednesday of December.

We would like to thank our faithful Giving Grace volunteers who make this mission of Charlton Church a reality. We are always looking for new volunteers who pack bags, prepare diaper packs, pick up donations from local grocery stores and pass out items at our drive-thru distribution each month. Contact the church office if you are interested in helping in the future.

GIVING GRACE COLLECTION

Our community outreach serves families from a wide variety of cultures. As an added blessing to our Giving Grace non-food items, we want to continue providing 2 lb. bags of rice to the families. 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 \$252 was also raised by selling items at the Craft Show.

In 2025, GH@W made the following items: 525 hats, scarves, mittens, and headbands; 122 baby blankets, sweaters, booties, and lap blankets; 5 dish cloths, pot holders and scrubbies, 22 prayer shawls, and 2 full size afghans.

Hats, scarves and mittens were donated to Bethesda Mission, Chambers Hill Elementary, Charlton Preschool, Foose Elementary, Hannah's Pantry, Lawnton Elementary, Southside Elementary and Susquehanna Middle School. Baby items were donated to Morning Star Pregnancy Services. Items left over after the Craft Show were sent to PA Wounded Warriors.

Prayer shawls are available at Charlton for anyone who would like one.

God's Hands @ Work will resume meeting in January, gathering on the first and fourth Tuesday of the month at 1:00 pm. They are always looking for donations of yarn, so keep them in mind when cleaning out your closets or finding some on sale while shopping.



*"And do not forget
to do good
and to share with others,
for with such sacrifices
God is pleased."*

Hebrews 13:16

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Thank you to everyone who filled a box for Operation Christmas Child this year. Our church family packed and collected 79 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 funds to fill additional boxes.

— CHARLTON CHOCOLATE FACTORY —

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 January 19. 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!



Sunday, February 8
11:30 am
after Worship

Join us after worship on Super Bowl Sunday for a light lunch as we celebrate the SuperBowl of Caring. Various soups will be available for a donation of your choice. All of the proceeds will be given to the Central PA Food Bank. Then be on the lookout during the big game that evening when they announced how much money was raised across the country on that day for the **SuperBowl of Caring!**

The church office tries very hard to ensure that everything is included on the official printed church calendar that arrives with your newsletter. However, there are often new programs or updates to scheduled events. This is why it is so important to read your weekly bulletin. If you are unable to get a Sunday bulletin and are not able to download one from the church website, be sure to call the church office to have one emailed or sent to you!

Several years ago, members of the then-Administrative Council went to a church security seminar sponsored by local law enforcement. The seminar raised several difficult questions for church leadership to consider, most especially whether a church should be locked during worship services to prevent an unwanted intruder who had violent intentions. Because the council was not of one mind, the issue was tabled and never revived.



The issue was recently raised at a Leadership Council meeting. And, once again, it proved to be a difficult discussion because of varying perspectives. The Council did agree that we should give this more thought, but added that it shouldn't just be about locking doors on Sunday morning; it should include putting procedures into place for a variety of circumstances, such as a fire, medical emergency, natural disaster, etc.

At a subsequent meeting, the Executive Committee of the Leadership Council, following the 'safer than sorry' adage, decided to **temporarily** begin the practice of locking doors until the topic could be properly researched and a final decision is made.

It was at this time that we polled members attending church on the question of whether we should lock the lobby doors once worship has begun.

14 people responded **NO**, with a common theme that first responders would not have access in an emergency.

37 people responded **YES**, with a common theme that it is a sad commentary on our culture, but that they would feel safer with the doors locked.

This is a difficult conversation and decision for the Leadership Council to undertake. However, they are united in their desire to do what is in the best interests of our church family.

It was decided to create a safety team that will assess, research and set guidelines for safety and how to deal with emergencies of all kinds, including medical, fire, intruder, natural disaster, etc. While this process is underway, we will continue to lock the lobby doors once the worship service has begun. During the time that the doors are locked, the lobby will have an attendant present in the lobby, with guidelines in place for that person to follow.

On a side note, it is important to note that first responders have access to the church building at ALL times, even when there may not be anyone in the building.

If you would be interested in being part of this Safety Team to research these issues, please contact the church office.



From the Church Kitchen

Crockpot Macaroni and Cheese

Recipe provided by Marlene Steinour 12/21/2009

16 oz cottage cheese

16 oz cheddar or sharp cheese

2 cups macaroni (uncooked)

2 1/2 c. boiling water

1/4 c. butter

salt/pepper to taste

Put all ingredients in your crock pot on high for about 2 hours.

You may need to add a bit more water after it has cooked a while, especially if you added any extra cheese.

You can also bake this in the oven @ 350 for 1 hour.

This recipe was recently taste-tested and approved by the egg makers in October!

Charlton Preschool continues to develop children's love for education and God. Charlton Preschool offers children ages 3-5 a safe, fun, engaging program to help mold young minds for a life long love of education.

Our three classrooms have enjoyed a joyous start learning about themselves, each other, classroom expectations, their community, fire safety and using our five senses. Fall is a fantastic season for the children to learn about thankfulness and different ways to give thanks to God!

Pastor Miguel's "Music in Motion" on Mondays continues to bless our school with beautiful and often silly memorable songs engaging young minds while keeping spirits full of God's love.

Thank you to Charlton Church, all the parents and supporters of Charlton Preschool, for we could not do this without you.



SYMPATHY

The sympathy of the church congregation is extended to the family of James Saur, who passed away on October 20, 2025.



To Our Church Family,

God bless you with the same peace, hope, and love that you bring to the lives of others. Thanks to all of you for your kind and comforting words at the passing of Jim.

Love, Ed and Pam

Thanks to all who sent me cards and called after my stroke. With Jesus by my side and prayers from the congregation, I can expect good results. So keep praying! Love to all.

Sincerely, Bernadette Kreiser

Dear Bette and partners in 'God's Hands at Work',

Thank you so much for supporting our ministry with your beautiful handmade blankets. They will be a blessing to both our babies and their moms. May God bless each of you in return.

Sincerely, Morning Star Staff

A Note from the Church Staff:

The staff of Charlton Church would like to thank each of you ... not only for your cards, gifts and snacks ... but also through your support and appreciation all year long!

Pastor Miguel, Chuck, Marianne,
Sarah, Sommer, Debra and Wendy

Whenever I think of you,
I give God thanks.

Philippians 1:3

A Note from Leadership Council:

It is often difficult for a church to adequately say "thank you" to those volunteers who are always ready to help out whenever there is a need. And it's often dangerous to list people by name, because inevitably you leave someone out. So to those of you who selflessly give of your time and efforts, know that you are appreciated!

CHARLTON CHURCH

A United Methodist Community

Where Faith Meets Life

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



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Marjorie Martin, Marcy Miller (chair), Rick Pritchard, Tom Schreiber, Heidi Stanalonis, Marleen Steele

Want to keep up-to-date on what's happening at Charlton Church?

Be sure to 'like' our page at www.Facebook.com/charltonchurch