

The Messenger



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December, 2020

Happy Advent Season, everyone! I hope your December is starting well and that you are excited about the holidays. One of the things I love most about this time of year is celebrating the holy season of Advent. The weeks prior to Christmas day are set aside for us to practice the spiritual discipline of waiting. I am not going to lie – waiting has never been my strong suit! I am not, by nature, a patient person. Over the years, my impatience has been tempered by God’s Holy Spirit so that I better manage my emotions. I often think that God gets a good chuckle from watching me struggle – yet again – when something triggers my impatience!

When I was a little girl, this season of waiting, that time between Thanksgiving and Christmas, was awful. It felt like each day crept by four times longer than normal. I was sure Christmas would never get here! Now, as my adult years outnumber my childhood years, I live in that strange space where time seems to both fly by and poke along. I am still excited about Christmas – I love the magic of presents under the tree, twinkling lights, and joy filling the world. Part of me still feels like it takes SOOO long for Christmas Day to arrive. But the other part of me yearns for things to slow down because some days feel like they speed by so quickly. I read once that “the days are long, but the years are short.” The days sometimes seem to drag, but when I look back on them I cannot believe how much time has passed. I want so much to relish and appreciate each moment but too often they seem to slip through my fingers.

Advent, to me, captures that space of yearning for time to slow down tempered with the eagerness for Christmas to finally get here. Advent looks toward the arrival of the Christ child, Emmanuel, which means “God is with us.” While we wait, we also celebrate the fact that we are already redeemed by Christ’s birth, death, and resurrection.

The Name, “Emmanuel,” only appears three times in scripture, twice in the prophecies of Isaiah and once in Matthew, which sees the fulfillment of Isaiah’s promise. For only three namings in scripture, this view of God has captured our attention throughout the ages. Matthew 1: 23 says, “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, “God is with us.”

God with us – is there anything we can ever hear that is more joyful, comforting, and incredible? God is with us! What do we have to fear, to worry about, to suffer, if God is with us? This is the greatest promise our Savior gives to us. In this Advent season of 2020, “waiting” seems especially poignant. We are waiting for an end to the pandemic, waiting to see how a new administration will impact the White House, waiting for an end to violence and war, waiting for so many things. There can be such anxiety in waiting, yet God invites us to practice spiritual waiting. Advent calls us to pause, to wait expectantly for the miraculous thing that is coming. This season try to practice spiritual waiting – learning to let go of worry, skepticism, frustration, and the need to control things. Just let the serenity of God’s enduring promise that He is, indeed, with us to take away anything other than eagerness, excitement, and joy over God’s unfathomable gift. Emmanuel is coming – let us be prepared to receive Him. Amen.

Happy Advent,

Pastor Holly



YOUTH NEWS

As the end of 2020 approaches us, I pray that we can take the month of December and truly remember what is important. This has been a whirlwind year, but we must push forward and continue to do God's work.

I have planned a special mission project for our youth during the month of December. It is such a wonderful time of the year to share God's love and we will share that love with others as we work on this special Christmas mission project. I pray that the youth will be able to come together on December 9th to work on our project together. Blessings to everyone as we begin the celebration of the birth of our Savior!

Thank you!

We ended the month of October with a community drive thru trunk n treat and it was absolutely wonderful!! We were blessed to share some sweet treats with some of the cutest trick or treaters. I would like to say thank you to everyone that helped make the event such a wonderful success, I simply could not have done it without all of your support! I am already looking forward to next years event!

**Many Blessings,
DeShawn**

Candle Lightings Each Week of Advent



First Sunday – November 29

Christ came to bring us salvation and has promised to come again. Let us pray that we may always be ready to welcome him. May the keeping of Advent open our hearts to God's love and the light of Christ pierce the darkness of sin. May the Christmas season fill us with peace and joy as we strive to follow the example of our Savior.

Today, we light the first candle of Advent as a symbol of Christ our Hope. May the light sent from God shine in the darkness to show us the way of salvation. O come, O come, Emmanuel.

Second Sunday – December 6



Today, we relight the flame of Hope as a sign that the Hope of Christ never fades. We light the second candle of Advent as a symbol of Christ the Prince of Peace. May the visitation of your Holy Spirit, O God, make us ready for the arrival of Jesus, our hope for the world. O come, O come, Emmanuel.

Third Sunday – December 13



Today, we light the enduring candles of Hope and Peace. We light the third candle of Advent as a symbol of Christ our Joy. May the joyful promise of your presence, O God, make us rejoice in our hope of salvation. O come, O come, Emmanuel.

Fourth Sunday – December 20



Today, on this last Sunday of Advent, we relight the eternal flames of Hope, Peace, and Joy. We light the fourth candle as a sign of Christ the Way of Love. May the Word sent from God's infinite and perfect Love lead us to the way of salvation. O come, O come, Emmanuel.

A Christmas Eve Prayer for the Christ Candle



Gracious God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counselor, Almighty God, Emmanuel. With joy and thanksgiving we gather to celebrate again the timeless story of Christ's birth. On this most holy night, we relight the Advent candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. May the light sent from God shine in the darkness and the visitation of Your Holy Spirit make us ready for the arrival of Jesus. May the delight of Your presence fill us with unending rejoicing and may the Word sent from God lead us to salvation. In the excitement of this night, quiet our hearts that we may know the peace and fullness of this holy time. Shine, O Light, in the darkness of our world. Sing, O angels, in the stillness of our hearts. God, we offer glory in the highest and ask peace on earth. Amen.

We will have a guest speaker on Sunday, December 13th. Adam Kolmetz will join us again to bring the message. Jan White, our lay leader will conduct the service.

Below are our figures through **November 30th**

General Fund Income	\$ 189,104.61
General Fund Expense	\$ 203,193.64
Capital Improvement Fund	\$ 1,405.00



It's a new day in the life of our church, encouraged by the positive uplifting things taking place in these challenging times. People are being strengthened by the love of Jesus being reflected by our members. Almost daily you hear of goodness and encouragement expressed. Pastor Holly is doing a great job and our gratitude goes out to her.

As finance chairman I can assure you the church is good financial shape. The figures above do reflect a shortfall in income (church offerings) and expenses for the year. Normally in December members give to catch up on their tithes and help with any shortfalls. Our church did obtain a Payroll Protection Program Loan administered by the Small Business Administration. The only requirement was that documentation be provided for 60 days of salary. This was provided and an application for forgiveness has been submitted. The loan proceeds were placed in a savings account. Very little of this amount have been used. When the loan is officially forgiven, it will boost our income by approximately \$20,900 for the church and \$35,600 for the Little Lambs Daycare. Just a note, the Daycare is and has been paying its share of church expenses, making a profit, and paying interest and principle on their loan.

Going forward please consider returning your pledge cards not only for your finance committee but also for ministry chairpersons, as we plan our budgets and attempt to utilize your talents and gifts that we are so blessed to receive. Our Treasurer and Financial Secretary will pass this information on to us.

Planning, yes we are planning for that glorious day that we can return to normal. We will be stronger. There is so much love, sharing and caring taking place today that it can be no other way.

God Bless!

Tom Thompson, Finance Chair

December, 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
		1 Building Closed	2 Building Closed	3 Building Closed	4 Building Closed	5 Building Closed
6 10:00 Worship Online Only	7 If no new cases, building re-opens 4:30 GED	8 6:30 Daycare-Zoom 4:30 GED	9 6:00 Classes for all ages	10	11 6:30 Celebrate Recovery-The Place	12 Fish & Loaves
13 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship	14	15	16 6:00 Classes for all ages	17	18 Fish & Loaves 6:30 Celebrate Recovery-The Place	19
20 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship	21	22	23	24 Office Closed Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26
27 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship	28	29	30	31		

From The Administrative Board

Per a unanimous vote of the Administrative Board, a policy was set that if we had a positive case of COVID in someone who had been at church, the building would close, except for the daycare, for two weeks. We have had a positive case. Worship on 11/29 and 12/6 will be online only. There will be no Sunday School or small group meetings during this time.

We continue to pray for all of those affected by the virus and for continued health in our church and community.

**Return Service Requested
May God Bless:**

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