

# CORNERSTONE

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## “THERE IS A PLACE FOR YOU AT ST. PAUL’S”

December 2020

St. Paul’s Lutheran Church

Volume 26, Issue 11

### JESUS COMES TO CALL US OUT

*“And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.”*  
(Luke 4.7)

This verse from Luke’s Gospel brings to mind very special and cherished images: a specially crafted shelter containing Mary, Joseph, sheep, shepherds, and perhaps a star and angel. Of course at the center of the scene is a newborn baby. Perhaps this verse also brings to mind beloved Christmas carols, like Silent Night and Hark the Herald Angels Sing. And it might remind us of a gaily decorated church with a sparkling Christmas tree and candles all through the sanctuary. The verse might also bring to mind family and friends, near and far, who have come to celebrate the holy day. It is a familiar, comfortable and comforting scene.

Given our current circumstances, these images and memories will at best be virtually portrayed or not seen at all. While this reality might discourage or dampen our enthusiasm for Christmas, we would do well to plunge ourselves into the meaning and significance of the birth of Jesus - the center of all these images and merrymaking.

We might remind ourselves that Jesus was born into a hostile world to an oppressed people. Within two years of his birth, King Herod sent his army/police to slay all male children two years or younger! Jesus’ birth did not immediately improve the lot of the shepherds, members of the poor, underclass. And his birth did not improve international relations between the Magi and King Herod. Soon after Jesus’ birth, the Holy Family took on the plight of the dislocated when they escaped to

Egypt in order to avoid the murderous police sent from Jerusalem.

Finally, let us not forget that Mary and Joseph were not wealthy or privileged. At first they didn’t receive a warm welcome in Bethlehem. In fact, there is no mention that the assistance of a midwife or even neighboring women were available to Mary as she labored in childbirth.

But what was that message that the angels sang in the sky to the shepherds and shepherdesses: *“Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you goods news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord . . . Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors.”*

Regardless of our circumstances, we are invited to give God the glory and to celebrate the arrival of our Savior and Lord into our world and into our hearts and homes.

This wonderful announcement is made to those of us who are struggling to keep our children safe from the virus while feeding, clothing, sheltering and providing for their education. The announcement is ringing in the ears of the seniors who live at home, in senior facilities or are lying in the hospital. It is a joyous announcement to first responders and all the service people who spend what seem like endless hours helping and assisting our families and neighbors.

If ever there were a time to sing with loud voices *“Hark! The Herald Angels sing. Glory to the newborn king; peace on earth, and mercy mild.”* This is an announcement that is also sent out to the impoverished of the world, living in the slums of Argentina, in the refugee camps of the Middle East, and in the pockets of poverty in the USA. This is an

announcement that is sent to those suffering from various addictions (rich and poor) and those who are lost searching for meaning in their life.

This year's celebration of Christmas may not look like the Christmases of the past and may not live up to our expectations and memories; however, the message is still true and genuine: God's Love came down from heaven on Christmas and continues to come down for all of God's people, regardless of their current circumstances.

*"Come, let us adore Him, come, let us adore Him, come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!"*

### +Pastor Paul for the PLUM Pastoral Staff



### December 2, 2020 Pastoral Team Staff

Changes As you are aware, Malinda Gilberti has been a part of the PLUM Pastoral Team as an intern in the candidacy process for Minister of Word and Sacrament (Pastor). This is a process that has multiple steps with the final determination to be made by the ordination committee. Mandy's committee, the Northwest Pennsylvania Synod's Committee on Ordination, has decided Mandy's candidacy for ordination is concluded. She was not authorized to move forward with ordination at this time. She is eligible to apply for candidacy again with the same synod in a year if she discerns that is what she is called to do. Mandy's presence among us and her call to care for the members of our PLUM congregations has been a blessing. The Pastoral Team, with approval from the PLUM Board, has offered Mandy a staff position as Minister of Pastoral Care. Mandy has accepted that position and will continue with us as she discerns her next steps. We will support and pray with her as she considers her

options. What does this mean for our PLUM congregations? The most notable change is that instead of calling her Vicar Mandy, she will now be Minister Mandy. She will retain all the responsibilities of leading worship as a lay person including preaching, teaching and lay administration of the sacraments. **Minister Mandy** will give special attention to members who are disconnected from the congregational community, whether this disconnection is related to sickness, frailty, disaffection, or disinterest. She will also focus on care of our children and youth across PLUM. Please join us in welcoming **Minister Mandy** to the PLUM Pastoral Team in this new designation.



Please join friends from PLUM for an **ADVENT FAMILY BIBLE STUDY**. The study will begin on December 1, 2020 on ZOOM. The study will be held on Tuesday at 1:00 and Thursday evenings at 7:00. We will explore the meaning behind the four candles of the Advent Wreath: HOPE, FAITH, and JOY AND LOVE.



### AT HOME TAIZÉ PRAYER SERVICES

During this time of the Coronavirus and Social Distancing, Prayer is a source of Comfort.

Please join us in Taizé Prayer from the safety of your homes on Friday, December 4, 2020 and Friday, January 8, 2021. The time for worship will be 7PM. To participate in the Taizé Prayer services, go to PLUM's [Zoom page](#). If you have questions, call Pastor Sue (412-496-4889) or Pastor Brenda (412-390-8005). Thank you.



Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries  
cordially invites you to  
**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES**

December 24, 2020

**ON ZOOM**

**7:00 p.m.** Family-friendly Service with Holy  
Communion

**11:30 p.m.** Candlelight Service with Holy  
Communion

Zoom online: <https://zoom.us/j/401596541>

Zoom by phone: (646) 876-9923  
Meeting ID: 401596541

**PARKING LOT SERVICES**

**4:00 p.m.** at Hope Lutheran Church,  
353 Ridge Ave., Forest Hills

**4:00 p.m.** at Resurrection Lutheran Church,  
7600 Steubenville Pike, Oakdale

**9:00 p.m.** at Lutheran Church of Our Saviour,  
1570 Clay Pike, North Huntingdon

## *Adopt-A-Family*

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Each year the Hospitality Committee sponsors the Adopt-A-Family for the Christmas season and each year the response is bountiful.

This year, St Paul's Lutheran Church continued to respond. As we prepare this newsletter article, tears come to our eyes, because the Lord has provided. The St. Paul's family has donated from their hearts and the generosity is overwhelming. (At this time we have \$1,524.00) They have heard Luke 6:38 (The

Message – The Bible in Contemporary Language) 'Give away your life; you'll find life given back, but not merely given back – given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting is the way. Generosity begets generosity.' and they have responded. Council will make the final distribution decision this week and the proceeds will be distributed. As we travel our Advent path let each of us remember, even if it is on Zoom, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Please accept our gratitude for supporting this project. May God bless and keep you in His care.

Ann Morrocco



**SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY WISHES** to Anna Mae DeWalt who will be celebrating her 101<sup>st</sup>. birthday on Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>. If you wish to send her a card, her address is 145 Latimer Avenue Strabane, PA 15363.



## **HYGIENE KITS**

On behalf of the Hospitality Committee, thanks are extended to John Straka, Shawndel Kelley, Carol Ferens, Corey Ferns, for joining us on November 14, 2020 and assembling 25 Hygiene Kits. We were few in number but we shared our talent as well as God's love. **Now that the kits are completed we must add \$10 for each kit. This money will be received by Advent donations and \$50 has already been collected so we need to receive \$200 more.**

Advent time is when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus who gave us our greatest gift, eternal life. We have so much to be thankful for this Christmas in spite of this pandemic. Thank you for your continued support and generosity and May God bless and keep you all in His loving care during this holiday season.

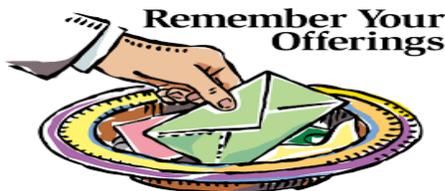


## MISSION SUPPORT UPDATE

St. Paul's voted to contribute \$2,800.00 to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod ELCA for Mission Support in 2020. As of November 30<sup>th</sup> we collected and have sent \$2,405.00 to the synod office. At this time we are \$395.00 of meeting our pledge. We have met or exceeded our pledge in the past years. Let's try very hard to meet our pledge again this year. Remember that every dollar helps. Thank you.



Charlotte Stemmler	December 2
Lindsey Nimal	December 3
Anna Mae DeWalt	December 5
Ann Morrocco	December 6
Jordyn Porter	December 6
Bridget Layton	December 11
Jonathan Bowland	December 13
Rev. Brenda Henry	December 17
Aaliyah Gilpin	December 20
Scott Latta	December 31



Church offering for December can be sent to the church office or dropped off at the church office (call Jill 724-747-4418) for deposit. Deposits will be made on Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup> and Monday, December 28<sup>th</sup>. Any offerings received after December 28<sup>th</sup> will not be counted for 2020.



**Keep in your prayers:** Anna Mae, Mark, Albert, Kristin, Jason, Pam, Virginia, Misty, Matthew, Jennifer, Betty Jane, Rich, Rachel, Pat, Donna, Randy, Anna Mae, Eddie, Steve, Barbara, Tom, Charlotte, John, Mark, Kelly, Mike, Carol Jean, Lee, the Miller, Paulick, Galano, Burchesky, Mele, Richmond, Porter, McGrail, Johnson families, all those suffering from the coronavirus, our Bishops, our Synod, our PLUM pastors and members and our church. **If anyone needs to be added or deleted, please contact Jill at 724-747-4418 or email [stpaulscbg@verizon.net](mailto:stpaulscbg@verizon.net) . I would like to update the list for the January newsletter.**

