

# The Lantern

MOUNT LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

DECEMBER 2013

WILMINGTON, DEL. | EST<sup>d</sup> 1812



## Poinsettias & Alternative Gifts

Once again this year you are invited to remember and/or honor special people and ministries with the purchase of Christmas poinsettias to help our church close its operating expense deficit. The cost is \$11 for each poinsettia ordered. Alternative gifts are also welcomed and appreciated. Please place your order by Tuesday, Dec. 17. Phoebe is also available to take any order over the phone at 652-8411.

## Angel Tree Celebration - Dec. 14

Please join in this special time of celebrating Christmas when Angel Tree families, We Kids Rock families and our church families come together to sing, make Christmas cards, decorate cookies and enjoy lunch. It promises to be a fun filled morning with lots of joy and laughter and truly the more, the merrier!

We have been blessed to receive the names of 19 children to provide gifts for this Christmas season. The children have been nominated by a parent who is incarcerated. We are asked to provide a gift of clothing and a game or toy for each of the children. You can sign up for a single gift or both items for a child or children. Sign-up sheets are available in Fellowship Hall or call the church office at 652-8411 to sign up. The gifts need to be wrapped and delivered to the church no later than Thursday, December 12 for sorting and distribution at the December 14 party.

## An Advent Invitation

The Worship Team lovingly invites you to sign up to participate as an individual, group or family in one of the Advent Candle lighting and readings on:

- Sunday, December 1 - Candle of Hope
- Sunday, December 8 - Candle of Light
- Sunday, December 15 - Candle of Joy
- Sunday, December 22 - Candle of Peace
- Tuesday, December 24 (5pm & 7pm) - Christ Candle

You are especially invited to help if you have never been able to do so in the past. At least two people are needed for each of the six services. The sign-up sheet is available on the table in Fellowship Hall or call the church office at 652-8411.



## December 7: Ronald McDonald House

Mt. Lebanon UMC will be providing dinner for the families at Ronald McDonald House (RMD) on Saturday, December 7. This is a time to provide a meal for the families with children being treated at A.I. duPont Hospital. We will be preparing this dinner in the RMD kitchen, and a menu will be posted along with the sign-up sheet.

In previous years this December dinner has been a very popular dinner at RMD so please sign-up if you're interested in helping and perhaps doing a little singing of Christmas carols. There will be a sign-up sheet in Bambarly Hall with suggestions. If you are unable to attend the dinner but would like to contribute please contact Barbara Ewing at 764-3572. If you are planning to join us at RMD, please plan to arrive between 3:30-4pm so that we are ready to begin serving dinner at 5:30.

Ronald McDonald House of Delaware provides a safe, affordable "home away from home" to families of seriously or chronically ill or injured children who are being treated at area hospitals. Many of the families staying at RMD return during the evening for a break after a long day at the hospital. By providing a meal and fellowship we give a bit of comfort, hope and peace to the families staying at RMD.

## Budget Update (Oct. 20 - Nov. 17)

As we prepare for the Christmas Season and the celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, please keep the financial situation of our church in your prayers. We would also ask you to look upon the mission of this church as a primary place to 'invest' funds at this year's end. Giving is an investment in the gospel of Jesus Christ. During this Christmas season consider taking a portion of what you plan to spend on gifts, parties, eating out to support Mt. Lebanon and its ministry. Through the ministries of Mount Lebanon UMC we are striving each day to Serve God and Proclaim God's love by growing a dynamic center of ministry.

*"Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh."* (Matthew 2:11)

With our declining financial situation we are in a situation where we do not have the cash flow (i.e. money in the bank account) to support our operating budget. In November the Administrative Council endorsed using the Endowment allocation for 'New Ministries' (\$12,890) toward our operating expenses in order to bridge some of our >\$30,000 shortfall.

Mt Lebanon's operating expenses consists of ~63% staff compensation, 17% building and grounds (heating, air conditioning, electricity, supplies and maintenance), 10% apportionments, and the remaining 10% distributed across the various committees/activities (e.g. Christian education, evangelism, administrative, youth ministry, etc).

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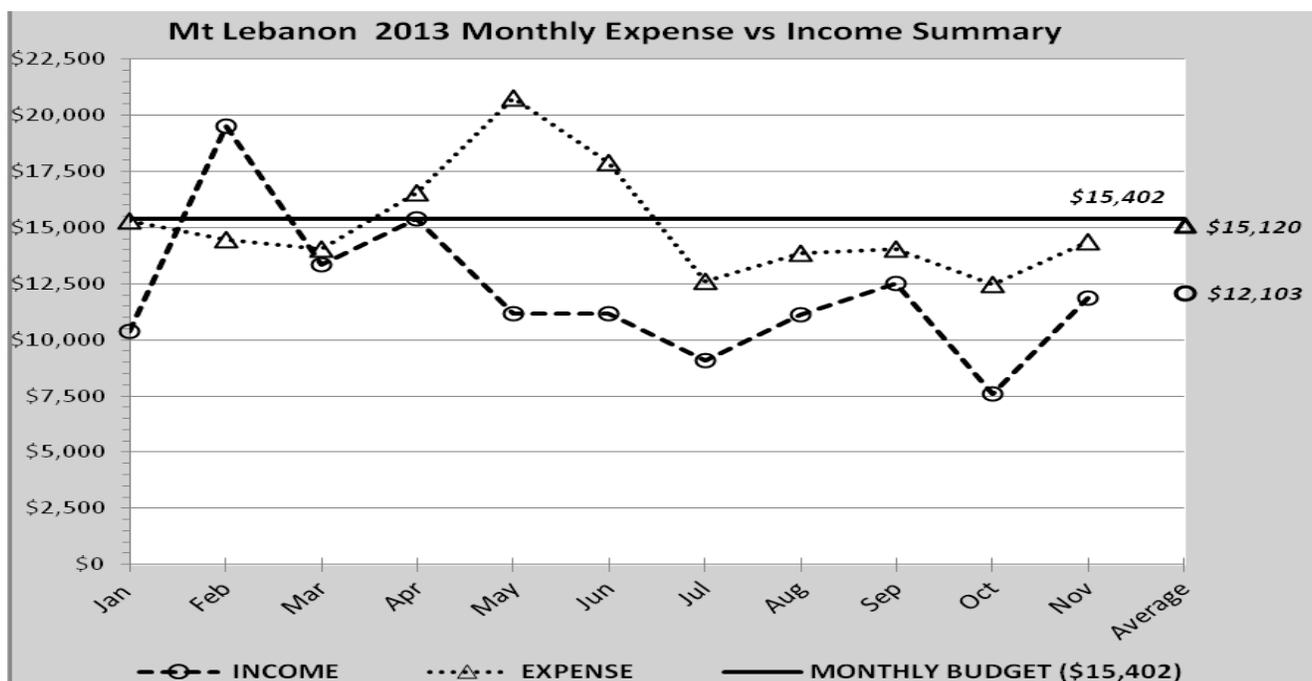
I WANT TO GET GOD SOMETHING AWESOME FOR CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR, BUT WHAT DO YOU GET THE GUY WHO MADE EVERYTHING?

## Altar Flower Fund Reminder

In order to keep our record up-to-date, please contact Phoebe if you are not sure your payment has been made. The cost for altar flowers is \$25.

## Warm Tree: A Wonderful Tradition

Brr, it's getting cold out! That must mean it is time to break out the Charlie Brown Christmas tree. The tree will go up in Bambarly Hall to receive your donations of gloves, mittens, hats, scarves and warm socks to be shared with families at Neighborhood House in Southbridge and those who come into the Food Closet at Brandywine Community UMC. The tree will go up on December 8 and will stay up until January 5. Thank you in advance for the generosity and compassion you have for others.



## "Handling the Holidays"

by Rev. Constance Hastings, MSCC, NCC  
Daybreak Counseling Services, Inc.

For those who are grieving the death of a loved one or a lost relationship, life has changed. Holidays will be different. It is not a choice of pain or no pain, but how to manage the pain we feel. The important thing is to do what is comfortable for us and any family we have. We must understand that as grieving people we do not function at normal capacity. We have definite limitations. Therefore, it is important to evaluate our priorities and decide what is really meaningful for us.

First, we must acknowledge and accept our feelings. Tears, depression, and loneliness are all natural reactions to loss. At the same time, we don't have to feel we are betraying anyone if we are able to enjoy some of the festivities.

We must decide if we can handle comfortably things such as whether or not to talk about our loved one openly, whether to stay at home for the holidays, to spend them with friends or family, or to get out of town to a different holiday environment altogether if possible.

Ask the following questions before making a decision on participating in holiday activities: Do I really enjoy doing this? Is this something that can be shared with other family members or friends? Do family members enjoy doing this? Would Christmas be Christmas without it?

Try making changes. Some suggestions to the situation easier to handle might be to open presents Christmas Eve instead of Christmas morning (or vice-versa), have dinner at a different time or place, possibly with different people or even attend Christmas services at a different church.

Remember or honor your loved one. Write down and put in a stocking special thoughts and feelings about the loved one who has died. Light a special candle in memory of your loved one. (This can be used on other special occasions such as birthdays and anniversaries.) Purchase a living tree or plant as a Christmas memorial. These can be placed in a church, planted in the yard, or placed on the grave.

Concentrate on doing something for someone else. Donate your time at a local soup kitchen, shelter, or just spend time with someone who is shut in and has few visitors. Give a gift in memory of a loved one. Invite someone who might otherwise be alone to celebrate with you.

Evaluate your coping plans. Do your plans isolate you from those who love and support you best? Do your plans allow for you to meaningfully express what Christmas means to you? Have you let others know of any changes you are making so they can have appropriate expectations of you and know best how to help you?

Whatever you do, try to remember these things: Take one day at a time. Be realistic. Set limits and do those things which are most meaningful. Know that whatever you choose to do this year may not be what you decide to do next year. Remember, exhaustion changes perspective and blows everything out of proportion. Get enough rest to make getting through the holidays easier.

The world likes to portray sweet images of Christmas. But the real situation of Christ's birth wasn't that idyllic. A young girl, found to be pregnant, becomes a single mom without a real husband. The only thing that convinces her fiancé to stick with her is an angel from heaven. When she is near delivery, they are ordered by the government to travel several days, and upon arrival, they wind up sleeping in a barn where she goes into labor without the assistance of women and family to help. She wraps her baby in rags against the cold and covers him with manger hay to make a bed. Picture Christmas how it really was and see how life can be so wrong.

So this was how God's Son was supposed to be born? Many religions of the world demonstrate to people how to find God, but Christianity is the only religion where God comes and finds us. For in His coming, Christ lets us know that when life is so wrong and not what it should be, that's when God shows up.

*"By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."*  
(Luke 1:78-79)

*Daybreak Counseling Services is a nonprofit clinical pastoral counseling agency that not only addresses the presenting issue or problem but also allows for the inclusion of spirituality within sessions. It is supported through payments determined on a sliding scale basis, private grants, and individual donations. Rev. Constance Hastings, a nationally certified counselor and United Methodist deacon, sees clients at St. Paul's UMC and Atonement UMC with both day and evening hours. Call 302-745-1042 for information or to make an appointment.*

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# WORSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

With Pastor Jennifer on Study Leave since September 2, we praise God for guiding and bringing us to December and the Season of Advent. We will be blessed to have Pastor Karen Covey Moore lead our Communion Service on December 1, as well as services on the 15th, the 24th at our Christmas Eve traditional service, and again on the 29th to lead our final Healing Service in 2013.

Our special friends, boe harris and Ragghi Calentine will lead worship on Native American Sunday on December 8. If you have met boe and Ragghi, you remember how extraordinary their music and storytelling are. If you have not met them, you are especially encouraged to be present for a memorable worship experience. Our own Denise Hudson, Lay Speaker, will lead us in worship on December 22.

## **Sunday, December 1 - First Sunday of Advent**

*Communion*

Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44

Sermon: Awake! Be Vigilant!

## **Sunday, December 8 - Second Sunday of Advent**

*Native American Sunday with boe harris & Ragghi Calentine*

Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

## **Sunday, December 15 - Third Sunday of Advent**

Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-25

Youth Puppet Ministry

Sermon: Christmas Choices

## **Sunday, December 22 - Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

Lay Speaker: Denise Hudson

## **Sunday, December 24 - Christmas Eve**

Children's Service at 5pm

Traditional Service with Communion at 7pm

Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96

Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20

## **Sunday, December 29 - Healing Service**

Isaiah 57: 4-19

Luke 4:16-21

Sermon: The Healing Power of Love



*May December, the Season of Advent and the birth of our Savior, be a time when our minds are aware of those who have less, our hearts are filled with love for God and our hands and feet are active serving God's children, our brothers and sisters.*

## *Readers*

12/1 Barbara Videtto

12/8 Denise Hudson

12/15 Tracy Hopkins

12/22 Chris Portante

## *Fellowship*

12/1 Tracy Hopkins & Claudia Lathem

12/8 FFYG

## *Ushers*

12/1, 12/8 Barbara Ewing & Kathy Neilson

12/15, 12/22 Donna Peterson & Sheri Videtto

12/24 (7pm) Ann Brechtel

12/29 Denise Hudson & Kay Shoemaker

## **Upcoming Worship Services**

**1/5** Communion and Epiphany of the Lord Sunday  
Pastor Jennifer returns!

**1/12** Baptism of the Lord Sunday  
Congo Partnership Guest Speaker

# December

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Painting Class 1pm	<b>3</b> Domino Group 10am Prayer & Praise 7pm Shipley Bible 7pm	<b>4</b> Bible Study 10am Trustees Meeting 7pm	<b>5</b> Imagine the Future Mtg. 7pm	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> RMH Dinner 5pm
<b>8</b> Emmaus Reunion 1pm	<b>9</b> Painting Class 1pm	<b>10</b> Domino Group 10am Prayer & Praise 7pm Shipley Bible 7pm	<b>11</b> Bible Study 10am	<b>12</b> Growing in Faith 7pm	<b>13</b> Food Closet @ BCC 9am-noon	<b>14</b> Angel Tree Christmas Party 10am Family Promise Dinner 5:30pm
<b>15</b> Family Advent Event - 5pm	<b>16</b> UMW Meeting 11am Painting Class 1pm	<b>17</b> Domino Group 10am Prayer & Praise 7pm Shipley Bible 7pm	<b>18</b> Bible Study 10am	<b>19</b> Growing in Faith 7pm	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Church office closed - Holidays Domino Group 10am Prayer & Praise 7pm Shipley Bible 7pm Christmas Eve Serv. - 5 & 7pm	<b>25</b> Church office closed - Holidays	<b>26</b> Church office closed - Holidays	<b>27</b> Food Closet @ BCC 9am-noon	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Church Office closed	<b>31</b> Church Office closed Domino Group 10am Prayer & Praise 7pm				<b>2013</b>

# *Reflections...*

I must admit that I dread the annual avalanche of commercials that bombard us during the Christmas season, all with the intent of encouraging us to spend (or borrow) to show those around us how much we care for them. Not only is the materialism of our society on full display at this time of year, but calendars quickly become full of parties and social events in the traditions of the season. In the midst of the holiday noise, it's hard to stay focused on our Savior, Jesus Christ, and the true meaning of Christmas.

My mom, Joanne West, recently went to be by His side, and this has caused me to reflect on this time of year and to think about what Mom would have to say about all of this. For those of you who knew my mother, you know that she usually didn't hesitate to let you know what she was thinking. So as I gaze heavenward, I ask Mom what she would say about the holiday hubbub.

Mom was born in humble circumstances, in a small coal-mining village in upstate Pennsylvania. She carried simple values and resourcefulness throughout her life, and never became enamored with possessions. That made buying gifts for my mom very challenging; it wasn't unusual for us to see one of our birthday or Christmas gifts to Mom somewhere in her house, still in its original wrapping, waiting for the right opportunity to "re-gift" it to someone else.

It finally dawned on us that what Mom wanted more than anything else was to spend time with us. It wasn't about the gifts, or the material expressions of love. It was about spending time with her, sharing life in a way that had more value than any store-bought gift.

I think about Mary, sitting at the feet of Jesus, and her sister Martha, pleading with Jesus to ask Mary to help Martha with hospitality chores. Jesus chides Martha, saying, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:38-42).

As Mom now sits at the feet of Jesus, I can hear her saying, "Don't get caught up in what's not important. Just spend time with Jesus." I have to believe that's what He wants for us this Christmas season. Time in prayer, time in the Word, time in service to others, time in gathering with Christian brothers and sisters – just spend time with Jesus.

Peace to you,

David West

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## **MOUNT LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

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Worship Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School at 9 a.m.