

The Lantern

MOUNT LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

DECEMBER 2015
WILMINGTON, DEL. | EST^d 1812



NOTICE TO THE CONGREGATION

Our pastor, Rev. Jennifer Kerby, will be out on medical leave from Dec. 3, 2015 through Jan. 2, 2016 due to a necessary surgical procedure. Please be assured that she is not facing any life-threatening illness and that she has every intention of returning to us in January of the New Year.

Worship services for December have been carefully planned during her absence. Pastoral care will be provided for the month by Rev. Karen Covey-Moore who is well known to this congregation. To contact Rev. Covey-Moore for any reason, please call the church office at 652-8411 during regular business hours, or Lay Leaders Harry West at 998-9124 or Maxcy Hanby at 690-4639 and they will forward your call to her.

Please refer any church business concerns or issues during the month to Chris Portante, chair of SPRC (Staff-Parish Relations Council). He can be reached at 750-8353.

Your prayers and cards of caring for Pastor Jennifer's smooth and speedy recovery will be gratefully received; please refrain from phone calls, emails and texts during this time so that she can concentrate on her healing. Thank you.

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. Poinsettias will be available to pick up after the Christmas Eve service. Alternative gifts are also welcomed and appreciated. Please place your order by Sunday, Dec. 20. Phoebe is also available to take any order over the phone at 652-8411.

— Phoebe Chan

Prayers of Sympathy and Comfort

...to Rev. Jack Simperts, a former pastor of Mt. Lebanon and now retired, on the death of his daughter, Deborah Ann Simperts, who passed away on Friday, November 13th. Services were held on Saturday, Nov. 21 in Easton, Md. Cards of care and concern can be sent to: Rev. Jack Simperts, 7400 Burgess Court, Easton, MD 21601.

Rejoice



Adult Sunday School Topics

12/6 — ADVENT: A SEASON OF BLESSINGS

When many people are rushing headlong into preparations for Christmas, it's easy to overlook the blessings of the season. What are these blessings, and how can we recognize them? How does our faith call us to receive these blessings and offer them to others?

12/13 — WELCOMING THE OUTSIDER

In a culture where shootings and violence are all too frequent, Christians are called to welcome outsiders. What are the risks and benefits of fulfilling the call to love others? What is the role of the church in helping ourselves and outsiders experience the healing power of love?

12/20 — EMOTIONS AND FAITH

The animated movie "Inside Out" explores the emotions of an 11-year-old child who is adjusting to a move with her parents to a new city. What does the movie say to us about the way emotions affect our thoughts and actions? How does our faith guide us as we experience, acknowledge, and express emotions?

12/27 — SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The General Assembly of the United Nations has approved 17 goals for sustainable development for nations all over the world. What are the major issues addressed by the goals? How does our faith guide us as we consider what is needed to achieve these goals?

All are welcome to join us for any of these discussions, which begin at 9 a.m.

Reflections...

The Christmas season in our society has become a time of great expectation and preparation as we go about decorating our homes, planning and attending special concerts, school events and social gatherings and shopping for those special presents for those we love. Likewise, in the church, Advent is a time of great expectation and preparation though our focus is in a very different direction. While we certainly look back to the birth of Jesus, celebrating his willingness to leave heaven and join the human experience and we look in the present day to make room once again for Jesus in our hearts, our Christian hope looks ultimately to Jesus' promised second coming and God's fulfillment of the salvation, healing and restoration of heaven and earth.

For many of us, thinking about that second coming evokes images that are more fearful and gloomy than what we typically associate with the Christmas season. The idea of standing before the King of Kings in judgment is no light thing; neither are the images in Revelation of the great woes poured out on earth or the final great battle between heaven and the forces of evil. And yet that is the very essence of the Christian hope; understanding and trusting that in the midst of the horrors and devastation that we must face, God's purposes and power will see us through to that beautiful, divine life that was intended from the beginning. We see a foretaste of that promise in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as we remember the pain and despair of his crucifixion that opened the way to that hope-filled promise of resurrection and eternal life. Christmas without Easter, the death of the innocents without the death of Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem without the Christ of Calvary is an incomplete expression of our faith.

It may be this Advent and Christmas season that you are facing some circumstance of trouble, grief or emptiness that darkens your days or fills you with fear. Be assured that if this is so, you are on the path of Christ. In the midst of all that seeks to draw us into those places of hopelessness and despair, let me encourage you to look up to the heavens and look beyond what you can see to what the Christian faith holds to be true – that God is not yet done with any of us or with this world; there is yet God's ultimate goodness and justice to be revealed. May you rest in that assurance and be inspired to act here and now for that day. May your Advent and Christmas season be filled with hope, faith, joy, peace and the love of Christ that has enabled and sustained all things throughout all time (Colossians 1:15-20).

Pastor Jennifer Kerby

Worship Team Update

A dedicated team of people have been meeting together for the last year to study, discuss and learn more about the theological and historical essence and essentials of worship. This group is NOT a worship committee but rather a team of people looking to establish some new understandings of how and why we worship together and how best our congregation might address the very diverse interests and needs of our church family. Part of that process has been reading and discussing great deal of material. The following is one of those articles from Enuma Okoro and Shane Claiborne's book "Common Prayer: a Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals."

There is an old saying many Christians use, "Offer the Lord a sacrifice of praise," referring to Hebrews 13:15. In many circles, this notion of a "sacrifice of praise" almost becomes cliché. (Perhaps because worship does not often come at much cost, especially compared with the sacrifices of the saints who've gone before us.) But when we worship with folks of different traditions, there are times when we may hear a prayer that uses language we might not naturally use or sing a song that isn't really our style. That is part of what it means to be a member of a community as diverse as the church is. And perhaps that also helps shed some light on why it might require some sacrifice for us to give up ourselves.

When a song isn't working for you, consider praising God, because that probably means it is working for someone else who is very different from you. Offer your worship as a sacrifice rather than requiring others to sacrifice for your pleasure or contentment. There is something to the notion of becoming one as God is one; it doesn't mean that we are the same, it just means that we are united by one Spirit. After all, we can become one only if there are many of us to begin with.

Liturgy puts the brake on narcissism. Certainly, there is something beautiful about contemporary worship, where we can take old things and add a little spice to them, like singing hymns to rock tunes or reciting creeds as spoken word rhymes. But liturgy protects us from simply making worship into a self-pleasing act. So if a song or prayer doesn't quite work for you, be thankful that it is probably really resonating with someone who is different from you, and offer a sacrifice of praise.



CONAM Corner

Since it's the season of politics in the US, here's a glimpse of how Native people are serving in elected office throughout our nation from an excerpted article from *IndianCountryMediaNetwork.com* written by Mark Trahant:

At least 73 American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians serve in 17 state legislatures. This is important for a couple of reasons. First, if you look at the body of work of these state senators and representatives, you'll find them advocating for better services, more funding and improving relationships between tribal nations and state governments. Second, state offices are a source of talent for higher elective posts, ranging from Congress to the White House. Remember it was in only 1996 when Barack Obama was elected to the Illinois state Senate.

...The state with the largest number of Native American legislators is Oklahoma with 14. It's also the only state with a balance between Democrats and Republicans (8 Democrats and 6 Republicans). To put that number in perspective: Nationally of the 70 elected Native Americans in state legislatures, 58 are Democrats and 12 are Republicans.

...It's also worth noting that tribes in Maine have three automatic delegates to the legislature. The offices are similar to delegates to Congress from the District of Columbia and other U.S. Territories. The practice began in 1823. The Maine tribal delegates can serve on committees but cannot vote. According to a Maine legislative history: There was an attempt in 1939 to change delegate system and two years later the legislature "ousted the Indians entirely from the Hall of the House, their status being reduced to little better than state paid lobbyists. Since 1965, a gradual change for the better has occurred. Salaries and allowances have increased, and seating and speaking privileges were restored in 1975, after a lapse of thirty-four years."

And to get an idea of what's happening on the national level, here's an excerpt from a Wikipedia article entitled "Members of the 111st United States Congress."

Compared with the European American, African American, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American communities, American Indians, who comprise 1.5% of the population, are the most underrepresented group. Tom Cole, a Chickasaw, and Markwayne Mullin, a Cherokee, are the only registered American Indians currently in Congress.

Tracking Native American members of Congress is complex, since many people of mixed blood are not registered as part of the American Indian population. Charles Curtis, who was three-eighths Native American and had ancestry from a variety of different tribes, was elected in 1892 as the first U.S. representative from this group.

Several of the nation's major tribes have been represented in Congress in limited number. Charles David Carter (served 1907–27) was the first Chickasaw in Congress; William Wirt Hastings (served 1915–35) was the first Cherokee in the legislature; Ben Reifel (served 1961–71) was the first Sioux to win election to the body. Other than Curtis, only a few members of the U.S. Senate have been American Indians. Robert Latham Owen (served 1907–25) and Ben Nighthorse Campbell (served 1993–2005 after several previous terms in the House and the first Cheyenne in Congress) are the others to have earned that distinction.

DID YOU KNOW?

Interesting Carol Fact #1

In 1818, Father Joseph Mohr, the priest of Oberndorf near Salzburg, Austria asked the local schoolmaster Franz Xaver Gruber to compose a tune for a lyric he had written. "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht" has now been translated into 140 languages, and in 2011 was declared an "intangible cultural heritage" by UNESCO.

During the Christmas truce on the Western Front in 1914, "Silent Night" was sung simultaneously by troops in German, French and English, as it was the only carol all sides knew.

Interesting Carol Fact #2

The first song ever broadcast was a carol. On Christmas Eve, 1906, the Canadian inventor Reginald Fessenden (1866-1932) played "O Holy Night" on the violin and sang the final verse while broadcasting from his Brant Rock radio tower in Massachusetts. This was the first broadcast of the human voice anywhere and was picked up by receivers several hundred miles away. Fessenden, not Marconi, was the true inventor of radio.

From *1,339 QI Facts to Make Your Jaw Drop* by John Lloyd, John Mitchinson & James Harkin, reprinted in the *Daily Telegraph*, 24 Dec. 2013.

The Little Tree that Grows Warmer with Age...

We will be decorating our little Charlie Brown Christmas tree during the month of December with hats, scarfs, gloves and mittens that will be shared with the children who visit Neighborhood House in Wilmington's Southbridge neighborhood. Thank you in advance for all that you can provide.

— Iva Boardman, Missions Co-Chair

Angel Tree Ministry Party

We are blessed to have received the names and gift wishes for 25 children who have been nominated by a parent who is incarcerated. The sign-up sheet will be posted in fellowship hall beginning November 29. We are asked to provide a piece of clothing and a toy for each of the children. You are invited to sign up for a single or multiple gifts as you are able. The gifts need to be wrapped and delivered to the church by Thursday, December 17. Our angels will receive the gifts at our December 19 Christmas celebration party when Angel Tree and Mt. Lebanon families come together to sing, make Christmas cards, decorate cookies and enjoy lunch together. The party starts at 10 a.m. and will end around 12:30 p.m. All are invited to come because we are all young at heart.

— Iva Boardman, Missions Co-Chair

Youth Faith Quest Learns about...

Judaism

We are blessed to have Rabbi Yair Robinson of Beth Emeth Congregation join the youth on Sunday, December 13 for an afternoon session talking about the Jewish faith and relations with Christianity over the centuries. Please keep all our youth in your prayers as they seek to grow in their understanding and faith. — Pastor Jennifer Kerby

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Thanks to Dad Hengeveld

12-28-1999

FROSTY THE SNOWMAN'S CALL TO THE
MINISTRY WAS SUCCESSFUL UNTIL HE
ACCEPTED A CALL TO LOUISIANA

Prayer for the Broader Community

There are no coincidences in God's timing. I keep finding myself in God's perfect will and perfect timing in my life. The timing of this prayer is no exception: I was asked to write the prayer for the broader community for the December *Lantern* a few months ago and as recent events took place in Paris, it made complete sense to me.

Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, we bow down in awe of the Grace, Mercy, and Hope you provide to us freely and abundantly.

We confess that we take them for granted. We confess that our greed and entitled mentality often supersede our desire to be in relationship with you.

As we begin the season of Advent and get ready to celebrate the birth of your Son Jesus Christ, we want to offer you thanks and gratitude for all the blessings of knowing You: comfort, peace, joy, understanding, resilience, grace, forgiveness, renewal, good news, strength, and most of all, love.

Lord, while we are trying to reconcile in our minds the violence perpetrated around the world with your goodness and peaceful ways, and as we are trying to explain it to our children and grandchildren, grant us wisdom and strength. Comfort us, help us feel your Presence, surround us with peace.

Father, you told us in Matthew 5:44 to pray for our enemies. Although we are not equipped as human beings of fleshly ways to do so, we ask you to help us, to equip us, and to send us on our way to do your good work and proclaim your Good News to all: our prayer today is that the souls of the victims who lost their lives in the violent terrorist attacks in Paris and around the world find their way home to You and for their loved ones to seek comfort in You.

Our prayer is also for our enemies who perpetrated the violence and lost their lives in the process and their loved ones who are suffering. Help us have mercy on them. Finally we pray for the terrorists who still think that killing people is the answer, for the peaceful Muslims who are victimized because of the actions of a few, and for the war refugees who need asylum and shelter and who are being denied these as a result of the recent attacks.

May we live in peace with our neighbors, without fear but with compassion, safe on the knowledge that Our God walks among us and that his Holy Spirit guides us.

We offer our petitions and intercessions to our Friend and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

— Laurence Birkett

Finance Report

Since it is almost the end of the year, I wanted to give you an accurate idea of the Church's financial picture. As you can see from the chart, our total expenses outpace our giving by around \$20,000. The good news is that church leadership has kept both of these numbers consistent over the past three years. This is impressive since costs have risen. Our budget is projected to be around \$160,000 in giving and \$180,000 in expenses, we should be roughly on target with that over the next month.

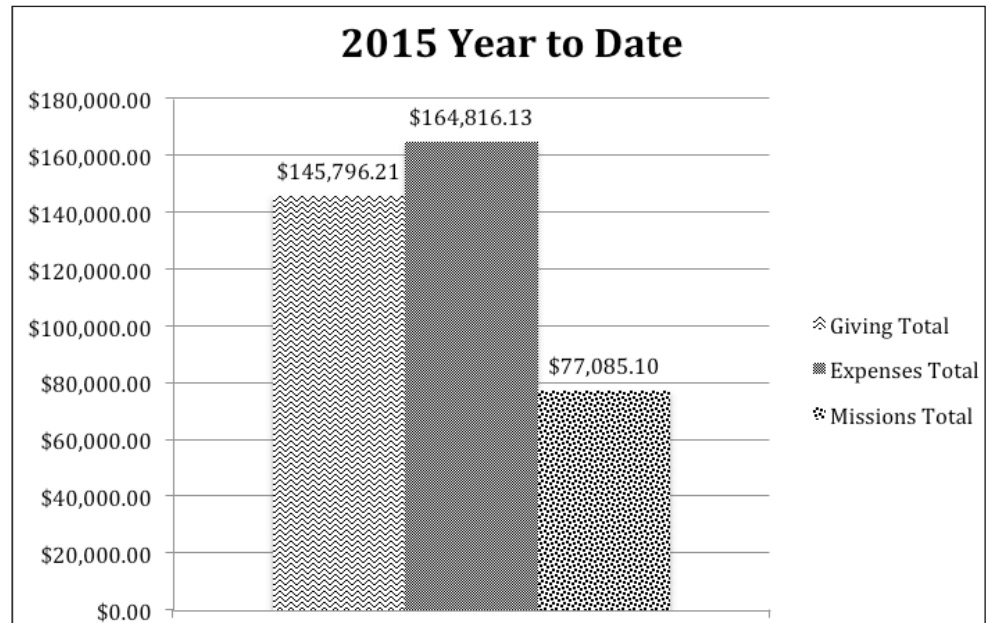
The missions amount is the money that has "flowed through" our church and into missions. We will easily hit \$80,000 and may make it to even \$90,000, which would mean that we raised an amount equal to ½ our budget for missions programs. Those programs include Turn the Tide, the food closet, Megan Mercy Mission, all the conference-supported causes that we take collections for, and others. This does not include all the donations of food, clothes, and other items or the number of volunteer hours that our members provide.

In the upcoming weeks you can expect a fundraising letter asking that, if you can, you consider giving extra in the month of December to offset our budget shortfall. Any amount helps, and we are grateful for; but for a goal, I would ask that you contribute an additional month of giving. In that same letter, we will ask that you prayerfully consider you pledge for next year and return those cards to the church.

I hope you see all the good that our church does and how impressive our commitment to missions is. None of that would be possible (or remain possible) if we do not adequately fund our church to cover its operational expenses. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Have a Blessed Advent and Christmas

— Becky Byrd, Finance Co-Chair



December Servants

Ushers

Dec. 6, 13 H. West, T. Hopkins, D. Peterson
 Dec 20, 24, 27 TBD

Reader

Dec. 6 boe harris and Ragghi Calentine
Native American Ministries Sunday
 Dec. 13 Denise Hudson
 Dec. 20 Harry West, Ann Brechtel
 Dec. 24 Kay Shoemaker
 Dec. 27 Donna Winans



COMMENTS? CONCERNS? SUGGESTIONS?
 Contact our Editor, Chris Portante, at:
 cportante@gmail.com or 302.750.7353

DECEMBER WORSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

SUNDAY, DEC. 6

Second Sunday of Advent — Faith

Micah 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

Native American Ministries Sunday with special guests boe harris and Ragghi Rain Calentine

SUNDAY, DEC. 13

Third Sunday of Advent — Joy

Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

Mr. Don Schuler preaching

SUNDAY, DEC. 20 — 6:30 pm

Fourth Sunday of Advent — Peace

Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:47-55; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45

Lessons and Carols

THURSDAY, NOV. 22

Christmas Eve Communion & Candlelight

Isaiah 9:2-7; John 1:1-14

Rev. Karen Covey-Moore preaching

SUNDAY, DEC. 27

First Sunday after Christmas

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:45-52

Christmas Carol Hymn Sing

Ms. Julia Tulloch preaching



MOUNT LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Worship Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School at 9 a.m.