

HILLTOP HERALD

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.churchohilltop.org

LINGLESTOWN, PA

DECEMBER 2017

Advent Offering Envelope

Enclosed is your Advent Offering Envelope. We ask that you be generous, and encourage a gift of \$1-\$2/day throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons. Envelopes may be placed in the offering plate any Sunday.



Advent and St. Lucy!

Advent is not just "the days before Christmas." Rather, Advent is a season of the church year in its own right, a time of intense preparation and prayer in anticipation of our Lord's imminent return. At this time of year we pray with a special fervor, "Come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly. Come soon."

- ◆ *Sundays - Dec 3, 10, 17, & 24.* Each Sunday we will light a candle on our Advent Wreath. (Following worship after the second service on December 17, we will be decorating our church home for the Christmas season.)
- ◆ *Wednesday - Dec 13, 7:30PM.* On this evening, we will crown our 28th St. Lucy, and celebrate the life and witness of this special saint of God. All girls ages 6-12 are eligible.

Potluck Dinner, Advent Wreath/Centerpiece and Gingerbread House Making

A fun evening for all ages is planned for *Sunday, December 3*. Please join us for a covered dish dinner beginning at *4:30PM in*

Fellowship Hall. After dinner, you are welcome to make an Advent wreath, a centerpiece, or decorate a gingerbread house — or all three! Here's what you need to know.

Potluck dinner: Last names beginning A-O bring a main dish; P-Z bring a dessert. **Gingerbread House:** Bring a bag of candy to share for house decorations. **Advent Wreath or Centerpiece:** A five dollar (\$5) donation is requested to help with supplies. There is a sign-up sheet in the Great Room. We hope to see you there for this annual tradition!

Christmas Eve



There will be *three* opportunities for you to worship on this Holy Night -

- ◆ *4:00PM* - A family-oriented *Service of Lessons and Carols*, with special music provided by the children of our church family. We will hear the traditional Christmas story and Pastor Kerns will gather with the children for KidsWord.
- ◆ *7:30PM* - This Festival Service of the Nativity of our Lord with Holy Communion will focus on the Christmas story from St. Luke's Gospel and the carols of the season. Our Adult Choir will "sing", and our Handbell Choir will "ring."
- ◆ *10:00PM* - A service of Candlelight and Holy Communion. We will listen to readings and sing the carols so associated with this Holy Night.

NOTE: There will be one service on Sunday morning, December 24 and December 31 at 10:00AM.



Annual Christmas Project

Our Church and Community Committee is sponsoring its *23rd annual Christmas project*. We have two goals this year:

- ◆ To provide Christmas gifts for two needy families in the Harrisburg area; and,
- ◆ To provide Christian Churches United with Kmart and Walmart gift cards to supply additional families with needed items through the HELP Ministries Program.

Please take a moment to scan the gift lists in the Great Room, and select the gifts you would like to purchase; or, if you prefer, select a gift card. For more details, see the Great Room display, or the Sunday bulletin announcement page.

Be a Heating Angel



The Church and Community Committee also is sponsoring a second project during the 2017 Christmas season — the **Be A Heating Angel Project**, which provides emergency heating fuel to needy families in the Harrisburg area throughout the winter months.

Monetary donations will be presented to Christian Churches United for distribution to those who need it most. *How can you help?* Take an angel envelope from the basket located in the Great Room. You can donate any amount you wish to make. Enclose your contribution in the

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angel envelope (checks made payable to Christ Lutheran Church). Write your name and envelope number on the outside of the envelope. Place it in the offering plate by Sunday, December 10, 2017.

NOTE: Mail-in donations are also most welcome!

ADULT SOCIAL GROUP

We are looking for a volunteer to host the annual *Christmas/Epiphany party*. It is usually held on a Friday evening. The date, if your schedule permits, would be January 5 at 7:00PM. Please email Sherry at secretary@churchonthehilltop.org or call the church office (717-545-4211) if you may be interested in hosting. Thank you!

Poinsettias



Enclosed with this newsletter is a form for ordering poinsettias (\$13 each), which will be used to decorate our church home.

NOTE: The deadline for receiving your forms (with payment, please) is Tuesday, December 19. (You may take your plant home with you following the 10:00PM service on Christmas Eve.)

LUTHER'S BREAKFAST CLUB

The Post-Confirmation class will meet again on *Sunday, December 3* at 9:15AM in Room 4 on the lower level. Enjoy an open discussion of current events and how the gospel relates to our lives now. Anyone who is post-confirmation and on is invited to join us and, as always, bring a friend.

WELCOME

TO OUR NEW MEMBER —

We welcome our newest member, April Shiber, who was received into membership by transfer from Jordan Lutheran Church in Orefield, PA, on October 15. Please greet her and welcome her to our church family.

-tone CHIMES

Our tone chimes director and the church family miss our kids and their tone chimes performances. Practice is scheduled each Sunday at 10:00 AM in the tone chime room (#6), but we haven't had enough kids for practice. That means not enough for them to play. We ask that parents of the children make sure that their kids are here so we can have a full group and so they can ring their chimes for the congregation. Pastor Kerns

Sunday Church School Practice for Christmas Eve

The Sunday School children are excited about singing at the 4:00PM Christmas Eve service! Students will practice during the last 15 minutes of Sunday School on December 3, 10, and 17. December 17th we'll meet at 9:45AM. They will be singing two songs for the congregation. Lyrics will be provided for practice/review at home. If your child would like to sing with them, please email Jenn Miller at gregorycm@comcast.net or just come to Sunday School and let us know that you are ready to lend your singing talents. Thank you!

Musicians Wanted!

We are looking for *musicians* to share their talents for the 4:00PM service on Christmas Eve. Please contact Sue Daniels (717-652-3810) or speak with her after services.



Annual Congregational Meeting Part 1—Sunday, December 3

The Annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, December 3, immediately *following the 10:30AM service*. In the first part of our Annual Meeting, we will elect new members of our Nominating Committee (5 one-year terms) and our Congregation Council (4 three-year terms). We will also be approving the 2018 budget. A copy of the proposed budget is enclosed with this mailing. (Part 2 will be held on February 4, 2018.)

PRAYER LIST

Please be advised when adding a name to the prayer list, (which is printed on the weekly announcement page), the name will be kept on the list for two weeks. In an effort to be good stewards of the prayer list, we ask that you please update your prayer request so that we can maintain an accurate listing. We currently will keep a name on the list for two weeks and then remove it if the office doesn't receive a new request. Please help the office keep the prayer list up to date and renew the names. We do not want to miss someone who is in need of prayer. Thanks!

**BE ON THE LOOKOUT —
ACOLYTE TRAINING
IS COMING!**



A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR...

Let there be peace on earth and good will to all people. Peace is something that is longed for by many people who live in war torn countries around the world. Verse one of the Christmas hymn "It Came upon the Midnight Clear" calls for "Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heavens all gracious king." Maybe that is the point that we miss in that we have a gracious king who has come to us as Emmanuel, God with us. He comes to us as the Prince of Peace and yet we find war and terror all around the world.

Maybe we need to just stop this Advent season and Christmas season and think about the Prince of Peace and how does that direct our lives. If we stop and remember that it was the Virgin Mary who was approached by the Angel Gabriel to inform her that she would be with child and that she shall name him Jesus, we can find comfort in her saying "Yes." Yes, you can count me in as part of this mystery and in the coming of the Son of God. Maybe peace can come if we all would just say "count me in." "Count me in as part of the celebration of the Emmanuel" can be our battle cry and then maybe, just maybe, we can then be part of the peace that passes all understanding.

Think about it, a virgin gives birth to the Son of God. That mystery has been part of our faith lives since we heard the Christmas story as a child. But it is with great sadness as the news of shootings and people being rammed by a truck, and hurricanes and earthquakes and fires are part of the headlines right now. There are people in Puerto Rico who still don't have much drinking water and some are still without electricity. How do the victims of these tragedies see peace for their lives right now?

This Christmas is going to be difficult for many people because of these tragedies. It is evident also from those who are struggling to make ends meet in their lives. A phone message left in the office recently came from a woman asking for help for her children for Christmas. How does the Prince of Peace come into her life at this time so that she and her children may have some peace at Christmas?

Advent is a time of journey as we await the coming of the Christ Child at Christmas. Let us wait in anticipation of his coming in peace; that is, peace for all people on the earth near and far so that they may find some joy in the Prince of Peace. We are offering the opportunity to help out families at

Christmas with gifts and to help needy families with resources for heating assistance. This is a way for us to be the face of the tiny child in our community and maybe a sign of peace for those who are struggling with the circumstances of life this season and beyond. Find a way this season to be the face of the Christ Child who was born for all people. Who knows? Maybe you will be able to spread a little peace by doing so.

May the time of waiting this Advent Season and the joy of the Child in the manger bless you. Cheryl and I want to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a joyful New Year.



May the peace of Christ be with you always. Pastor Kerns

Stewardship Snippet

"Lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory." –1 Thessalonians 2:12b

Look at how you use the important gifts God has granted you: your time, your energy, your health, your relationships, and your money. Are you using them to live a life worthy of God? That's what stewardship is all about – using all our gifts for Godly purposes. So how you doing?

(Rev. Robert Blezard)

Spending time in prayer can have a great impact on our faith lives and our life in general. Psalm 66:20 states, "Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me." According to Henri Nouwen, pastor and teacher, "Without prayer we become deaf to the voice of divine love and become confused by the many competing voices asking for our attention. How difficult that is! When we sit down for half an hour—without talking to someone, listening to music, watching television, or reading a book—and try to become very still, we often find ourselves so overwhelmed by our noisy inner voices that we can hardly wait to get busy and distracted again. Our inner life often looks like a banana tree full of jumping monkeys! But when we decide not to run away and stay focused, the monkeys may gradually go away because of the lack of attention, and the soft gentle voice calling us the beloved (son or daughter) of God may gradually make itself heard." As we enter this very busy season, take time to just sit and talk with God in prayer and sit and listen to the silence. Pastor Kerns

A Word of Thanks . . .

- ◆ “Pastor & Congregation, I just wanted to say thank you so much all your prayers and for the beautiful flowers. Pastor, thank you for visiting me and making me feel like I have the best pastor in the world! Liz Stank”
- ◆ “Dear Christ Lutheran, thank you for your two boxes of food donations. Ecumenical Food Pantry”
- ◆ “Christ Lutheran Church, thank you very much for the gift of the altar flowers. It was unexpected and beautiful! We so very much appreciate your generosity and thoughtfulness. Lisa and Dominic Visconti”
- ◆ “Pastor Kerns and members of Christ Lutheran Church, I ask you to join me in thanking everyone responsible for making our participation in the 250th anniversary celebration of Lower Paxton Township a success. First, I'd like to thank Linda Weller for her planning and preparations. Next, thank you very much to the folks who helped me out during the event: Gail Hrobuchak (and for helping with set-up), Carol Maxwell, Marilyn Book, Melissa, Derrick, Aldora, Mollie, and Dexter Gebhard, Sabrina, Tim, Carter and William Sobers, and Karen and Fred Holmes. I know everyone had a great time representing our church even though it ended up being a pretty muddy experience! Karen and Fred, thank you also for helping me take down everything. I think I would still be there fighting with the tent had you not been there with your expertise! Finally, a BIG thank you to Marlene Bayer for the wonderful posters that we used for generating volunteers and for displaying on our table at the event. The posters were fantastic! With much gratitude, Donna Murray”
- ◆ “Dear Pastor Kerns and members of Christ Lutheran Church, thank you for your increased giving to support the mission of the Lower Susquehanna Synod. With your help, we can strengthen the ministries of our church and reFORM + reNEW + reVISION! We can equip leaders to engage all ages and generations in lifelong spiritual renewal and discipleship. I greatly appreciate your generous response and your gracious support and I pray God's blessings in your life as together we strengthen our shared ministries and mission.

Yours in Christ,
James S. Dunlop, Bishop”

Thank You

Congratulations and Best Wishes!



Lisa (nee Potteiger) and Dominic Visconti were united in marriage here, at Christ Lutheran Church, on Friday, October 20, with Pastor Kerns presiding.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Melinda (nee Romanko) and Michael Knight on the birth of their son, Alexander Raymond Knight on August 30. The vital statistics? 7 lbs., 3 ozs. and 19 1/2 inches. His proud grandmother is Kathy Romanko.



AND...

Kenny and Jessica Stank on the birth of their daughter, Jocelynn Grace Stank on October 17. The vital statistics? 7 lbs., 3 ozs. and 19 inches. Her proud grandparents are Liz and Scott Stank.



AND...

Kelly (nee Bugden) and Sean Breckenridge on the birth of their son, William Bugden Breckenridge on November 9. The vital statistics? 7 lbs., 6 ozs. and 19 3/4 inches. His proud grandparents are Linda and Bob Bugden.



Baptized in the Name of Jesus...

Alexander Raymond Knight, son of Melinda and Michael, was baptized at our worship service on “All Saints Sunday”, November 5.

May God guide his footsteps in his journey of service and of faith!



Snow Closings

A reminder - should the weather make you wonder if worship has been cancelled, please check:

- ◆ TV Channels 15, 21 or 27
- ◆ Radio stations WHP 580AM, 97.3FM, 99.3FM
- ◆ Websites abc27.com, cbs21.com, or cw15.com.

In addition, you may call the church office to check if a message has been recorded on our answering machine. And of course, in all situations, please use your best judgment - while we want you here for worship, we want you to be safe most of all!

Youth Happenings ...

CLY (Grades 7-12)

- ◆ December 3, 6-8:30PM - Meeting
- ◆ December 10, 6-8:30PM - Christmas Meeting