

Celebrate Christ at Christmas



Pastor Quentin Wallace

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." (Luke 2:13-15)

One of my favorite Christmas songs as a child is one written by Bing Crosby and Carol Richards, "Silver Bells." This song captures the urban experience of Christmas. For your convenience, I have included the lyrics:

*Silver bells, Silver bells,
It's Christmas time in the city.
Ring-a-ling, hear them ring,
Soon it will be Christmas day.*

*City sidewalks, busy sidewalks,
Dressed in holiday style,
In the air there's a feeling of Christmas.
Children laughing, people passing,
Meeting smile after smile,
And on every street corner you hear...*

Growing up in Baltimore at Christmas time was exciting. I recall a department store that would create the best Christmas displays in their window

and how the crowds would wait with bated breath each year to see. In fact, stores and advertising agencies would establish the atmosphere for Christmas shopping as early as Thanksgiving. Each year the Thanksgiving Day parade would conclude with Santa Claus on the final float. From that point, the season builds over the next four weeks and concludes on Christmas day.

Because my parents were able to afford the amenities of the season, Christmas for my sister and me was very enjoyable. We had decorations that included Christmas lights, a tree, and the cans of spray snow for the windows. For Christmas dinner, we enjoyed the traditional foods: turkey, ham, candied yams, cornbread stuffing, sweet potato pie, pound cakes, and so forth. Most importantly, this was the time I received new gifts (toys). The process was actually very simple. I would provide the list of my desires to my parents, and they would deliver it to Santa. To receive these gifts, I would have to be on my best behavior until Christmas to assure I received what I had requested.

For me as a child, waiting for Christmas Eve was extremely difficult. I recall once asking my mother if I could go to bed as early as noon on Christmas Eve as a means to speed up the process. Several decades later, things have greatly changed. Both my mom and dad have gone to their heavenly rewards, along with other cherished

family members. I no longer reside in Baltimore, and the neighborhood I lived in as a child, should I ever decide to visit, is no longer the same.

Nonetheless, Christmas continues to provide me with warm fuzzy memories and continues to invoke a great level of excitement. Although I love to receive material gifts, my joy is in knowing that God's gift to the world, the infant Christ whose birth we celebrate each year on December 25th, grew up and carried out his mission of salvation.

Jesus called disciples, taught humanity about heavenly things, died on the cross to pay our sins, was resurrected, and now resides in heaven with the Father interceding for us.

I pray for the many people who do not know the "Christ" in Christmas or get to know our Savior and have a life changing experience. Perhaps God can use us to share the good news with those who don't know what Christ's birth is truly about. Nonetheless, for Christ followers, this is our season to share the good news, as we rejoice and cherish God's great love for us by sending Jesus to save us.

Merry Christmas!

Short & Sweet

NOTES OF THANKS

Arline Rutt sends thanks for the 75 birthday cards she received. She enjoyed reading every one of them!

Phyllis Kepner would like to thank everyone who remembered her with cards, prayers, and well-wishes during her recent hospitalization and recovery.

GIFTS GIVEN...

In memory of **Idabelle Reist**, from Bob Moss for the Memorial Fund.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Christmas poinsettias will be available for purchase beginning Sunday, November 26. The plants will be displayed in the Sanctuary on Sunday, December 17th, through Christmas Eve, December 24th. There are a limited number of plants, so place your order early. The cost is \$6.00 per plant. You may call the church office at 717-393-1561 or place your order with the volunteer secretary on Sunday morning. Thank you in advance for helping to beautify the Sanctuary at this joyous time of year.

CHRISTMAS COOKIE SUNDAY

It's that time! Time to start thinking/baking Christmas cookies! It is a custom at Covenant for our wonderful bakers to share their cookies on Christmas Cantata Sunday. This special time of holiday hospitality will be held this year on Sunday morning, December 24. Please bring your cookie donations to the Gathering Area kitchen early on December 24 or during the week before. If you bring them in early during the week, please be sure to mark them for this special occasion. Thank you!

AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS PROGRAM

On Friday, December 29, the American Guild of Organists will present a program of Christmas music at Covenant Church. It will include a mini recital and a Christmas Carol sing along. This is a wonderful way for the chapter to share their art with the community and bring a musical wrap up of the Christmas season to an appreciative audience. The service will begin at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, December 29, at Covenant United Methodist Church. A free will offering will be received. Please mark your calendars now and plan to attend.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST

The Men's Breakfast for December has been scheduled for Saturday, December 16, 7:30 a.m. at the Centerville Family Restaurant, 100 Centerville Road. We chose the third Saturday because we wanted to avoid any conflicts with the family for the holiday season. We will continue our thinking about "What it means to be a Man of God," drawing from the person of Joseph, father of Jesus.

Looking ahead, the Men's Breakfast will return to the fourth Saturday of January (Jan, 27, 2018) and continue to meet at the Centerville Family Restaurant. The men of Covenant [that means you] are invited to come for breakfast and bring a friend. It is a neat way to introduce them to your friend, Jesus, and the men of our church! Remember we begin with breakfast orders at 7:30 a.m. sharp, and conclude our meeting time by 8:30 a.m. You are invited to stay after if you wish to share with each other.

CHRISTMAS POST IS HERE

Covenant Youth On A Mission is once again activating their in-house postal system. You may mail your cards to your Covenant family and friends by using the in-house post found in the Gathering Area. You may put your cards in the slots by last name, or one of our youth post-persons will do it for you. Please leave a donation in the festive can next to the letter box. Don't forget to look for cards addressed to you. Suggested donation is twenty or twenty-five cents per card. All donations support our youth. In our new electronic society please consider sending holiday greetings the "old fashioned" way. Blessings to you.

IN NEED OF OLD MAGAZINES

The youth will be working on a project next month for which they will need old magazines that they may cut words from. Please place old magazines in the "Magazines" box in the Gathering Area. Thank you.

MOOS BAKE SALE

Calling all bakers...the MOOS bake sale will be held on Thursday, Dec. 14, at Fulton School. Please drop off your baked goods at the church by noon on the 14th. Place them in the Gathering Area. Thank you.

VOLUNTEER SECRETARY OPPORTUNITY

Would you be interested in volunteering one Sunday a month to sit at the Welcome Desk? We are in need of a volunteer secretary. Please call the church office at 717-393-1561 if you are interested.

We Worship Together



December 3—1st Sunday of Advent

Holy Communion

Contemporary Worship (9:00) and Traditional Worship (10:20): Pastor Wallace will bring the message at both worship services. The Chancel Choir will sing at the 10:20 a.m. service, and Holy Communion will be observed. Dan Hoover, flutist, will play a prelude and also accompany the Chancel Choir anthem.

December 10, 2017—2nd Sunday of Advent

Contemporary Worship (9:00) and Traditional Worship (10:20): Pastor Wallace will preach the message at both services. The Chancel Choir will sing at the 10:20 a.m. service. A mission minute will be part of the services.

December 17, 2017—3rd Sunday of Advent

Contemporary Worship (9:00) and Traditional Worship (10:20): Pastor Wallace will preach the message at both the 9:00 a.m. & 10:20 a.m. services. The Chancel Choir will sing at 10:20 a.m.

At 4:00 p.m. a Blue Christmas worship experience will be held in the sanctuary led by Pastor Don Zechman. It is a service of remembrance and hope for those who are mourning or struggling during this season, while those around them are celebrating.

December 24, 2017—4th Sunday of Advent

Contemporary Worship (9:00) and Traditional Worship (10:20): Pastor Wallace will preach at the 9:00 a.m. service. During the 10:20 service, the Chancel Choir will present the Christmas cantata entitled *The Glory of the Lord* by Fettke.

December 24 — Christmas Eve

There will be two Christmas Eve services, the first at 7:00 p.m. and the second at 10:00 p.m. At the 7:00 p.m. service the Kingdom Kids will sing "Mary Did you Know?" by Lowry. Come and worship the newborn King!

December 31 — 1st Sunday after Christmas

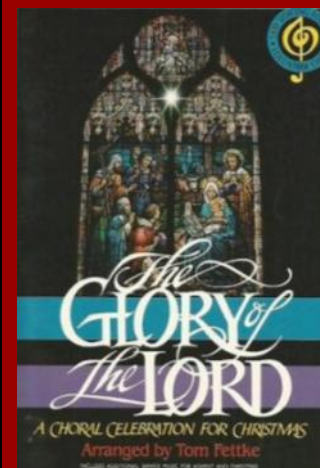
One Combined Service at 10:20

Roger Kresge, Certified Lay Speaker, will preach the message "Party Time!" at this combined service. Special music will be provided. Pastor Don Zechman is guest organist.

"Blue Christmas" Service

The holiday season is hard for some of us, but we as a church community want to remind you that you are not alone. Part of the reason for Jesus' coming was to bring hope and comfort.

On Sunday afternoon, December 17, at 4:00 pm, Pastor Don will be conducting a unique Christmas season experience. "Blue Christmas" is a Service of Remembrance and Hope, for those who are mourning or struggling during this season while those around them are celebrating. The service will include scripture, prayer, candle-light, quiet meditation, and the sacrament of communion. If you, or someone you know, could benefit from this kind of Christmas experience, you are invited to come.



**Cantata Sunday
December 24
10:20 a.m.**

The Glory of the Lord is a magnificent choral celebration for Christmas, arranged by Tom Fettke. Traditional, contemporary, and classical selections are blended in a work that the congregation will find uplifting, meaningful, and memorable. Bring your friends and neighbors to this wonderful celebration of the Christmas story.

Volunteers for December

December 3

Anchorite: 10:20 - Marilyn Keener

Hallway Greeter: 10:20 - Grace Fisher

Lobby Greeters: 8:40 - Faye Zechman & Brenda Roth; 10:00 - Lori Brown & Tina Butler

December 10

Anchorite: 10:20 - Carol Brower

Hallway Greeters: 10:20 - Bill & Nancy Grau

Lobby Greeters: 8:40 - Cindy & Bob Hean
10:00 - Joann Scheid

December 17

Anchorite: 10:20 - Glenn Miller

Hallway Greeter: 10:20 - Denise Troop

Lobby Greeters: 8:40 - Mary Lou Hill;
10:00 - Sandy & Guy Carrigan

December 24

Anchorite: 10:20 - Charles Miller

Hallway Greeter: 10:20 - Ruth Barr

Lobby Greeters: 8:40 - Sara & Alex Cuebas; 10:00 - Janice & Harold Ulmer

December 31

Anchorite: 10:20 - Joann Scheid

Hallway Greeter: 10:20 - Vickie Leman

Lobby Greeters: 10:00 - Janice & Harold Ulmer

DECEMBER USHERS

Don Dale, Head Usher

Dave Beznoska, Bill Grau, Jr.,

Donald Herr, Ron Kimmich

Covenant Members in Business



Conestoga Innovations Promotional Products (for all your advertising needs)

Wanda Snyder, 1.800.759.8885 or
sales@conestoga-innovations.com

CTC Lollipop Company

414 N. Pine Street, 717.509.5916
Tues.-Fri. 11am-7pm; Sat. 9am-2pm

Dale Building Designs

Donald A. Dale, 872.4263
2086 New Danville Pike, Lanc., 17603
www.DonDaleDesigns.com

Groffs Family Funeral & Cremation Services, Inc.

Thomas S. Buter, 394.5300
528 W. Orange St.

Interiors by Kristen

Kristen Stemmer, 875.4014
2086 New Danville Pike, Lanc. 17603

JM Services

Jeff and Brad McGary
Interior & Light Exterior Painting,
Handyman, and Junk Removal
717.330.9616 or jcmcgary@comcast.net

Kresge Computer Consultation

Roger Kresge, 299.4613 or
rkresge123@comcast.net

Miller Optical

Glenn & Maryanne Miller, 393.2020
Glasses, Contacts, and Exams
Lancaster & Willow Street

Richard B. MacDonald

Attorney at Law
312 W. Orange St., Lancaster
717.394.1508

Steve's Automotive Technology

Steve Sultan
PA Safety and Emission Inspections
1027 Dillersville Rd #16
666.3646

Willard Hypnosis Center

Roger J. Willard
3304 Main Street, Conestoga PA 17516
717.872.7561 or willardhypnosis.com

Changing Racism, A Worthwhile Event

From Roger Kresge, Lay Leader

2017 has been a challenging year. As one of the requirements of the Certified Lay Minister program, prospective CLMs must participate in the Eastern PA Conference's "Changing Racism" event, usually held twice a year at a hotel near our conference headquarters in King of Prussia. I attended the most recent one at the end of October; the next one is coming up in April.

I recommend it highly, but bear with me when I say that, while this is a challenging and worthwhile event, it is not an especially enjoyable one. Don't go expecting to have fun! Attendance is limited to about 20 people in order to make it possible to have much more candid and intimate discussions. Most of the attendees are church lay leaders, active United Methodist clergy, and candidates for various levels of ministry.

The course description says participants will learn concrete strategies for:

- * Developing skills for addressing and changing attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate bias, discrimination, and other obstacles to equity
- * Understanding the personal costs to everyone of privilege and disadvantage
- * Recognizing institutional racism and other forms of systemic oppression and discrimination that affect members of historically excluded groups
- * Changing dysfunctional intra-racial and interracial behavior that undermine effective partnerships
- * Learning to acknowledge and interrupt the subtle (and often unintentional) dynamics that play out between "modern" forms of oppression and "internalized oppression".

One of the most interesting parts of the weekend was the several hours we spent discussing not just racism, but many of the other "isms" that permeate the culture around us, like ageism, sexism, classism, elitism, genderism, anti-semitism, and many more. These "isms" are often used to exclude or even oppress groups of people.

Cost for the event is \$300, including hotel, meals and materials. It's not a 'commuter' event; attendees are required to stay in the hotel. It runs Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. The next one is April 20-22, 2018. I'll be glad to try to answer any questions you may have.

Here's to Good Health

December Health Tip

That first Christmas the angels brought to the shepherds good news, their message was: "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you, he is Christ the Lord."

Over the past year I have tried to share with you some tips or ideas about how to live healthier. Sometimes it is good to repeat some of those health tips. The biggest tip I can share with you to stay healthy this holiday season is to wash your hands! You know you need to wash your hands after going to the bathroom, eating a meal, sneezing, and blowing your nose. But let me remind you there are other times you need to wash your hands to keep healthy and prevent the spread of germs.

If you ever eat out with me, the hand sanitizer gets passed around after turning in the menus. Any time you arrive home after taking off your coat or jacket, wash your hands. Of course, hands need to be washed before starting to prepare food or setting the table. Wash your hands after playing with the children. When you are finished reading the paper, wash your hands. I think you get the idea. Wash your hands!



The health tip this month is remember to wash your hands! The shepherds shared their news (a tip that would bring health to the soul) about the arrival of a new born baby that would become the Savior of the world. They gave the best tip to live a healthy life! Accepting Christ as your Savior is the way to wash away the "germs of sin" in your life! Now that is a tip for a healthy life everlasting!

Merry Christmas!

Cindy Smith,
Wellness Coach



Women's Fellowship Saturday

SAVE THE DATE!

Women's Fellowship Saturday will be held on December 9th at 10 a.m. All teenage girls and women of Covenant are invited to an informal get-together in the Gathering Area. A small group of women met in September to find ways to strengthen relationships and build new connections between the women at Covenant.

When do we get a chance to get to know each other better? Between worship, Sunday School and choir, our Sunday mornings are often too busy to meet and greet new and "old" friends. Join us for a relaxed gathering and light refreshments. This is your SAVE THE DATE notice: you will each receive a personal invitation, so please plan to join us. If you have any questions, please see Minister Brenda or Chris Kimmich.



Way To Go!

The results are in from November's Extraordinary Give event. Over \$8,000,000 was donated during this one-day giving event. Through our various United Methodist connections, we supported several ministries in and around Lancaster. Thanks for your gifts, and congratulations to these excellent organizations on the funding they will receive:

Anchorage Breakfast Program	\$14,317	Gretna Glen Camp	\$37,200
IMPACT! Missions	\$10,251	LUMINA	\$9,115
Shalom Partnership	\$4,750		



OK, Time to Get Serious

During this year we have been working hard to implement a new "cloud-based" church management system. The basics are complete, but now it's time to get serious about using it to help our church grow and prosper as we do the work of the Lord. You've already seen announcements about some of the new options, and some of you are already taking advantage of these new tools. As we move into 2018, we will begin rolling out several new features of the system, like:

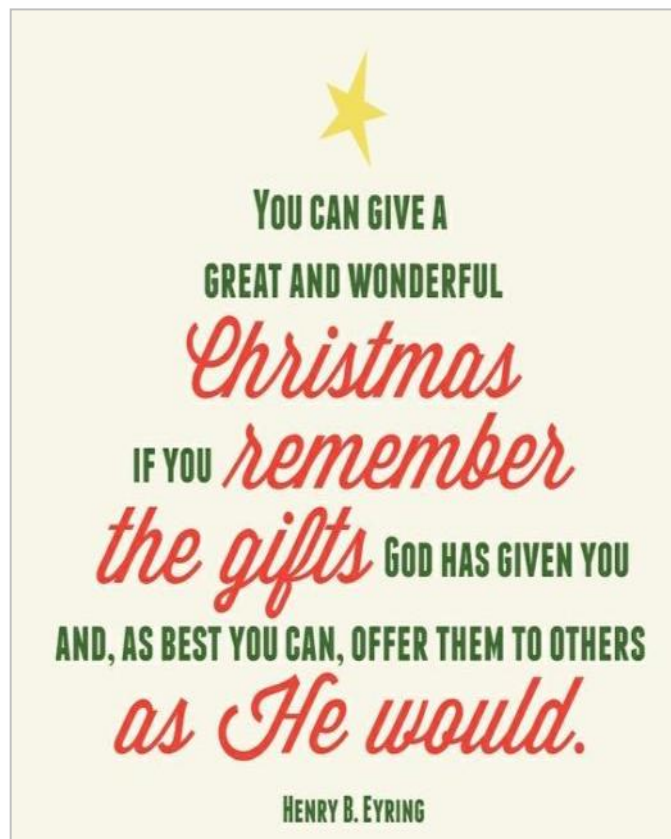
- Electronic/online giving
- Text messaging to your cell phone
- Bulk emails
- Automated voice calling
- Online access to your church giving information

However, in order to fully implement these new tools, we must ask you to help us update your personal information so we have your email address and cell phone number. By the way, no one is required to use any of these new features, although you will find that they may come in handy. We will also offer introductory training sessions so you can learn how to use electronic/online giving, and log into the church system in order to view your giving reports, update your personal information, and so on.

In the meantime, please contact technical coordinator Roger Kresge (roger@covenant-umc.com), or office manager Ginny Landis (ginny@covenant-umc.com), if you have any questions.

Online Holiday Shopping

Remember that you can help Covenant Church while you do your holiday shopping online. Just go to www.umcmarket.org and sign up to create a free account. Hundreds of online shopping sites will donate a percentage of your purchases to Covenant Church. You'll find that you can use UMCMarket for travel, car rentals, restaurants, and much more.



Covenant UM Church

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Senior Pastor's Phone:

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The Reverend Donald E. Zechman, Nurture & Worship

The Reverend Sally Ott, Visitation & Witness

The Reverend Theodore C. Mefferd, Pastor Emeritus

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