

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN "BLUE" CHURCH

5900 Applebutter Hill Rd. Coopersburg, Pa 18036
610-965-9500 e-mail: bluechch@ptd.net Website: stpaulscoopersburg.com
Pastor: Rev. James Hammond 610-437-1960; jjtrev1@verizon.net
Blue Church Cemetery – 484-201-5048 or 484-375-5875;
e-mail: bluechurchcemetery@gmail.com

Fourth Sunday of Advent ✦ December 19, 2021

**PRELUDE – "O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM"
– HUGH LIVINGSTON, JR.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the Holy Trinity ✦ one God, who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

Silence is kept for reflection

God for whom we wait,
in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you. We fail in believing that your good news is for us. We falter in our call to tend your creation. We find our sense of self in material wealth. We fear those different from ourselves. We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love. Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.

God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, ✦ your sins are forgiven. You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy. God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace. **Amen.**

HYMN #257 O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

ADVENT WREATH BLESSING & LIGHTING 4TH CANDLE

P: We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, open our eyes to see your presence in the lowly ones of this earth. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent among us in the Word made flesh. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

Fourth candle is lit.

**HYMN #240 "LIGHT ONE CANDLE TO WATCH FOR MESSIAH"
(STANZA 4)**

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray...Stir up your power, LORD Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST LESSON: MICAH 5:2-5A

PSALMODY: LUKE 1:46B-55 *(Spoken responsively)*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
48for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed:
⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great things for me and holy is your name.
50You have mercy on those who fear you, from generation to generation.
⁵¹You have shown strength with your arm and scattered the proud in their conceit,
52casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.
⁵³You have filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.
54You have come to the aid of your servant Israel, to remember the promise of mercy,
⁵⁵the promise made to our forebears, to Abraham and his children forever.

SECOND LESSON: HEBREWS 10:5-10

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the 1st Chapter.
C: Glory to you, O Lord.

HOLY GOSPEL: LUKE 1:39-45(46-55)

P: The Gospel of the LORD.
C: Praise to you, O Christ.

4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT: ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE READINGS....

Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and the blessed virgin Mary’s magnificent song of praise the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in no uncertain terms that Christ’s advent is for “the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” It is the kind of tension in which the church always lives as when in the holy communion—with high delight—“we proclaim the Lord’s death.”

MICAH 5:2-5A: *The prophet Micah, having pronounced judgment upon Judah, speaks of a future shepherd-king who, like David, will come from the small town of Bethlehem. (Ephrathah refers to the area around Bethlehem.) This king will restore Israel and bring peace. New Testament writers understood this passage to be referring to Jesus.*

HEBREWS 10:5-10: *The author of Hebrews uses the image of religious sacrifice to convey the significance of Christ’s coming. Through obedient acceptance of God’s will, Christ allows his own body to become the greatest sacrifice of all, one through which we are made a holy people.*

LUKE 1:39-45 (46-55): *We are presented with Elizabeth, John’s mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth’s inspired greeting and Mary’s song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.*

PRAYER FOR THE DAY: My spirit magnifies the Lord.
(Luke 1:46)

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK: Come to us, faithful and loving God. Fill us with the treasure of Christ’s life and bless us with faith, hope, and love. Amen.

BLUE CHURCH PRAYS FOR... Marie Berghold, Cyndi Cline, Sandra Denora, Irene Frederick, Gwen Gibiser, Ann Greensweig, Ray Hammond, Anita Johnson, Frank Kelly, Larry Wempe, Stephen, Brian

Other concerns:

Note: This is a short-term list, for those who are in “acute care” situations—hospitalized or in recovery, dying, facing the recent death of a loved one, or presently facing a severe life crisis. The names of those for whom we pray

will be kept on the list for one month. If you wish to have them placed back on the list please contact the church office.

LEADING OUR WORSHIP

CELEBRANT The Rev. James Hammond
ORGANIST Dr. Jennifer Dodd
ASSISTING MINISTER Dick Storat
LECTOR Dick Storat
GREETER Joyce Fulford
CHURCH COUNCIL REP Paula Clark

WEEKLY GIFTS, PRESENTED TO THE GLORY OF GOD:
ALTAR FLOWERS.....in honor of Chase Coleman’s Birthday.
BULLETINS...by David Link
SANCTUARY LAMP...by Joyce Fulford
COMMUNION BREAD & WINE...by Joyce Fulford

LOOKING AHEAD

FRI. DEC. 24 – 7 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.
SUN. DEC. 26 – 10:30 AM Worship – 1st Sunday of Christmas

ELCA Good Gifts provides more than 50 different gift-giving options that grow the church, fight hunger and transform lives. These gifts, starting at just \$10, provide direct support for the churchwide ministries of the ELCA.

Simply take an ornament from the Advent Tree in the Narthex. Make your check payable to Blue Church and deposit in the offering plate or mail to the church.

BLUE CHURCH FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	<u>NOVEMBER</u>	<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>
RECEIPTS	\$ 7,922.00	\$115,501.06
EXPENSES	\$62,371.75	\$184,739.62
<u>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</u>	\$(54,449.75)	\$(69,238.56)

ENDOWMENT FUND WITHDRAWN TO COVER EXPENSES
\$18,800.00 **\$3,800.00**
ENDOWMENT FUND INTEREST/REFUND **\$0**

The Sheets to sponsor Altar Flowers, Bulletins, the Sanctuary Candle, and the monthly Communion Wine for 2022 are on the bulletin boards in the Narthex. It is an opportunity to honor a loved one, commemorate a special occasion, or celebrate a milestone. Please make sure to sign the appropriate chart.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS ARE NEEDED FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR. Please prayerfully consider volunteering for this important part of the life of Blue Church. Speak to Pastor Jim, Ron Fried, Deb Stover, or any other Council members.

ONE OF THE STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS IN THE SANCTUARY IS IN NEED OF URGENT REPAIR. More information will be forthcoming in this necessary project.

A “WORK DAY” IS SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29TH AND THURSDAY DECEMBER 30TH AT 9:00 AM TO SCRAPE THE BUBBLY PAINT OFF THE NARTHEX TO GET IT READY TO BE REPAINTED. Talk to John Sumoski or Roger Knappenberger for more information on this project.

AFTER NEW YEAR A WORK PARTY WILL BE SCHEDULED TO POLISH THE BRASS IN THE CHURCH. Dates and times will be announced.

THIS WEEK IN THE CHURCH YEAR...

Monday, December 20 – Katharina von Bora Luther, renewer of the church, died 1552

Born to an impoverished nobleman, Katharina (Katie was five when her mother died, and she was sent to live in a convent. She later took vows as a nun, but around age twenty-four she and several other nuns who were influenced by the writings of Martin Luther left the convent. Six children were born to Katie and Martin. Though initially Luther felt little affection for Katie, she proved herself a gifted household manager and became a trusted partner. She was so influential that Luther took to calling her “My lord Katie.”

LESSONS

Micah 5:2-5a – 1st Lesson

- ² *But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.
- ³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labour has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.
- ⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock in the
strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be
great
to the ends of the earth;
- ⁵ and he shall be the one of peace.

If the Assyrians come into our land
and tread upon our soil,*
we will raise against them seven shepherds
and eight installed as rulers.

Hebrews 10:5-10 – 2nd Lesson

⁵Consequently, when Christ* came into the world, he said,

'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me;

⁶ in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure.

⁷ Then I said, "See, God, I have come to do your will, O God"

(in the scroll of the book* it is written of me).'

⁸When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sin-offerings' (these are offered according to the law), ⁹then he added, 'See, I have come to do your will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰And it is by God's will* that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Luke 1:39-45 (46-55) - Gospel

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is

the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be* a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

⁴⁶ And Mary* said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants forever.'

St. Paul's Lutheran "Blue" Church
Prayers ✕ Fourth Sunday of Advent ✕
December 19, 2021

A: In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence, responding,

"Your mercy is great."

A brief silence

A: Nurturing God, you give us life and care for our every need. Use the church's gifts and ministries for your service, bringing your word to all who seek your transforming grace. Hear us, O God.

"Your mercy is great."

A: Creator God, you proclaim your boundless love for all that you have made. Renew barren lands, polluted waters, and melting ice caps. Make us servants of your creation that brings forth abundant life. Hear us, O God.

"Your mercy is great."

A: Righteous God, you bring down the mighty and lift up the lowly. Strengthen those who seek justice. Bless the work of community organizers, activists, journalists, and all who call our attention to imbalances of power. Hear us, O God.

"Your mercy is great."

A: Compassionate God, you proclaim your love and mercy. Show your loving kindness to teen parents and those who are pregnant. Comfort any struggling with infertility and those who await test results, are in treatment and hospice care, and others in need. Today we pray especially for: Marie, Cyndi, Sandra, Irene, Gwen, Ann, Ray, Anita, Frank, Larry, Stephen, Brian, and everyone who has asked for our prayers or known only to the Lord. Hear us, O God.

"Your mercy is great."

A: Gracious God, you fill the hungry with good things. Bless the feeding ministries of Blue Church and community. Guide us to share your bounty with those who hunger or live in poverty. Hear us, O God.

"Your mercy is great."

A: Faithful God, you stir up the hearts of those who love you. We give you thanks for those who, like Mary, were courageous in their witness. Give us such courage until that day when you fulfill all things. Hear us, O God.

"Your mercy is great."

Pastor: God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus. Amen.