



The Messenger



Chalfont United Methodist Church * 11 Meadowbrook Lane, Chalfont, PA 18914-2810
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December 2014

In The Midst of.....

Once upon a time in a little country town called Bethlehem God's Upper Story and our Lower Story collided and the world was forever changed! On that most holy night over 2000 years ago a star lit up the sky and angels came to proclaim the good news to shepherds that a child was born, a son was given to us. His name was Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Can't you just hear the choir of angels singing?!

We have a tendency to romanticize the Christmas story but the truth is that the birth of the Messiah took place among messiness and chaos with people just like us. Joseph and Mary experienced many struggles and frustrations. Just think for a moment about Mary's life after receiving the news that she was going to become pregnant with God's child. What do you think she felt when she realized that the angel's prophecy had come true? Do you think she was nervous? Do you think she wondered how this was going to play out? Do you think she wanted to be traveling in her last trimester of pregnancy? When we reflect on that night we see that Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem for a census registration, not a vacation. Do you think their first choice was to have their child born in a feeding trough? Joseph and Mary had to obey the rules and rulers of their day, even as God's Upper Story plans were beginning to unfold a different kingdom. Alan Culpepper puts it this way, *"The glory of Christmas came about by the willingness of ordinary people to obey God's claim on their lives"* (*New Interpreter's Bible, p. 53*).

Today, 2000 years later, God still continues to look for ways for "the glory of Christmas" to enter into our lives. God wants to surround us with his everlasting love, peace and joy in the midst of our daily lives, every day of the week, not just on holidays and special occasions. The shepherds found him in a manger, in a stable full of animals, which you must admit was a most unlikely place to meet God! *If they found him there, then today, you and I can find him in the unlikely places of our lives as well- wherever we are.*

God's work unfolds, not despite life's other tasks, but in the midst of them. God is always working, God doesn't stop moving, or breathing new life into us. That is who God is and that is what God does. That is why we need not despair in the midst of our own struggles, frustrations, grief or sorrow (*our own personal mangers, if you will*). The Christmas story reminds us that the everyday and ordinary become holy and sacred when God is present.

As we enter into this holiday season may you once again experience the glory of Christmas, and God's power and presence unfolding in the midst of your daily life. *Pastor Barb*

HANGING OF THE GREENS

The Hanging of the Greens will be held on the 1st day of Advent, Sunday, November 30th. This year during the 9:30 and 11:00 services there will be a telling of why we use many of the elements that appear in our Christmas decorations. This will help to introduce some of the new decorations made for this Advent/Christmas season. (*thank you to Pat Kerr, Marcia Weikert and Judy Vandegrift for the new banners and decorations*)

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Choir: On Sunday, November 16, the **Chancel Choir** was joined by the **Children's Choir** for a joint anthem during the 9:30 church service. The Children's Choir will also sing on December 14 at the "Sounds of the Seasons" concert. They are directed by Rev. Erin Maurer. *(Thank you, Erin, for getting our children singing!)*

New Members: A warm welcome to our new members who joined the church at the 9:30 Service on Sunday, November 23; **Patrick & Anne Wheitsel** (*children - Zachary & Tori*), **Joanne & Albert Lupino**, **Stephen Belsky & Lois Blaine**.

New Addresses: **Joan Schumacher** (*Pine Run Community, 5 Tupelo Cluster, Doylestown, 18901*); **Jim Ellsworth** (*Lakeview, 2425 Lower State Road, apt. 217, Doylestown, 18901*).

THANK YOU

Thank you for the generous \$500.00 donation to the Food Larder. We are deeply grateful to you for your support in serving the needy that depend on the Food Larder for assistance.

Thank you for the donation of \$280.00 for the Lord's mission to children in the Republic of Moldova.

Thank you for the gift of \$197.00 to the Red Bird Mission which is providing spiritual, educational, health and outreach ministries for people in remote Appalachia in Kentucky

The Sunday school would like to thank two of our mothers, Mrs. Kris Karcher and Mrs. Kelly Taylor, for teaching several weeks over the summer. The regular teachers appreciated having some time off. It is nice to know that they will fill in when needed during the school year too. Thank you, ladies.

SOUNDS OF THE SEASON II

A CHRISTMAS CONCERT

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14

7:00 PM

This unique concert is a celebration of all the arts programs at Chalfont UMC. The Chancel Choir, Children's Choir and CUMC's praise band will be joined by professional soloists and orchestra members to present an exciting program of all types of music for the Christmas season. The concert is free of charge and open to the community. Child care will be available.

The choir and orchestra are under the direction of Cris Frisco; Beacon is lead by Rev. Erin Maurer.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

LADIES NIGHT OUT/SILENT AUCTION

The United Methodist Women would like to thank everyone who supported our Ladies Night and Silent Auction. We enjoyed a delicious chicken parmesan dinner with a side of pasta and a tossed salad, topped off with home made cakes. **The UMW would also like to thank the United Methodist Men for serving the dinner and cleaning up.** They did a great job.

We had 106 items to bid on for the silent auction.. We raised over \$2,500.00 to be divided among The Memory Café, Doylestown FISH, Manna on Main Street, "A Women's Place" and Laurel House. We have four remaining Gift Certificates that can be purchased for a donation. They are for: **Images Salon in Snyder Square Shopping Center, Hatfield** (*for a woman's hair cut and also one for a man's hair cut*); **The Hair Café, 464 Town Center, New Britain**; **The Sugar Salon & Spa, 3425 Limekiln Pike, Chalfont.**

Please contact Gail Schnell if you are interested in making a donation for one on these remaining Gift Certificates.

DISTRICT UMW

On October 11th, Judy Vandegrift, Nathalee Darde, Gail Schnell, and Grace Williams went to the East District UMW Meeting. We were able to take with us 30 of the health kit bags that will be sent to the girls and young women in Nigeria. *(Thank you to everyone who donated items for the health kits.)*

COOKIE SALE **December 12 and 13** **\$7.50 per pound**

We are in need of bakers to help make this a success. We are in need of different kinds of cookies, fancy, dipped, bar cookies, be creative. Please no peanut butter. *(Look for the forms in the weekly bulletin.)*

MITTEN TREE

The Mitten Tree is set up in the Narthex to collect mittens, gloves and scarves to be distributed to the Anne Silvermans Health Clinic in Bucks County, and The Salvation Army in Montgomery County.

The last day for donations is Dec 14, 2014. As the cold weather approaches, these items will be greatly appreciated by the families in Bucks and Montgomery Counties who receives them.

CALENDAR

11/26 - Wednesday - Community Thanksgiving Service - New Britain Baptist church (7:30 pm)

11/30 - Sunday - Hanging of the Greens Service

12/13 - Saturday - UMW Cookie Sale

12/14 - Sunday - Sounds of the Season II Christmas Concert (7:00 pm, sanctuary)

12/24 - Christmas Eve Services: 4:00 pm- Family Life Center; 8:00 pm - Candlelight communion in Sanctuary

TRUSTEES REPORT

The trustees have been pretty busy lately. *The biggest project is the decision to convert the church heating system to natural gas.* This has turned out to be much more involved and has taken longer than anticipated, but it's looking good for completion by the end of December. It turns out that lots of people and businesses are switching to gas to save money! We got a total of five bids and our current oil supplier, Bi-County Fuels, came in lowest. As reported last month, PECO has already installed the gas line from the Rt. 202 side of the church. We also need to have a stainless steel liner installed into our chimneys to meet code which is being done Nov. 18. If everything goes well, we should be enjoying cheaper and cleaner heating for the coming 2015 season. We expect to save at least \$10,000 per year in fuel costs, which means we should save enough to pay for the system in the first year or so.

Other, less involved, recent and current projects are: fixing the cracks in the parking lot, replacing the lights on the cross, re-routing the basement sump-pump drain to avoid the icy mess near the driveway, and cleaning the gutters (*hopefully Saturday, Nov. 22*). We even had a mini-project to extract a skunk (*live!*) from one of the window wells near the basement door. *The skunk is fine and no one got sprayed!*

With the departure of the Jensens, we lost a very active member of trustees, Joan. We much appreciate the endless hours she devoted to helping keep the church in good shape.

But now we are short a member and we have no female members on the trustees. Our rules call for us to have a percentage of members be female, so if any of you ladies reading this have an interest, please talk to Jeff Warren. And of course we can always use any able-bodied men to help also. We are equal opportunity!

Finding Your Story in God's Story

We will take a break to celebrate Advent and Christmas. Sunday December 28 The Story will resume. If you haven't enrolled in a small group this is a good time to consider joining.

TOYS FOR TOTS

Helen Kokemor and Kathy Wicks will be working together to collect for Toys For Tots. Last pick up date at church will be Friday December 12th. Toys must be new and unwrapped. We will put a box in the family life center.

Any questions please call Helen Kokemor (215 822-8013) or Kathy Wicks (267 245- 2853).

CHRISTMAS ALTERNATIVE GIVING

This year why not give a gift in the name of someone who really doesn't need another box of candy, plant, or small trinket to show your appreciation. Think about the following organizations that could really use your help in making someone's life easier.

Chalfont UMC Discretionary Fund - We know that Christmas is a difficult time for many people not only around the world but right here in our own community. They often turn to the church when they are in need of food, gas, shelter, etc. With winter and Christmas rapidly approaching we know that people will soon be looking for help. Unfortunately our "community needs fund" or "discretionary account" has already been depleted this year. Would you please consider making a donation to this important fund? Help us, help our community. 100% of the funds in this account are put towards community needs. Thank you..

Heifer International – Right now, families all over the world who struggle to find enough food to eat are looking for an opportunity to improve their lives and rise out of poverty. Families receive livestock and training that could provide them with a steady supply of milk, cheese, eggs and income. Not only will their nutrition improve, but they'll also be on their way to brighter futures filled with hope and happiness.

Americans for Native Americans : Food for Kids Backpack Program – Food for Kids sends home a backpack filled with child-friendly food each weekend. These children often have nothing to eat from their school lunch on Friday until they return to school on Monday morning. ANA currently sponsor 8 schools at \$3,000 each, allowing 25-30 children in each school to be part of the program for one school year. There are many schools on the waiting list.

Moldova Children's School - The funds are used to purchase clothing for the most needy of the children at the boarding school; for supplies and other items needed by the school itself. Funds collected will be forwarded to the First Romanian Baptist Church of Philadelphia, one of our partners in this mission.

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REV. KENNETH L. BEALE, SR.	Pastoral Care Minister
REV. ERIN MAURER	Deacon, Worship Leader
CRIS FRISCO	Director of Music
PATRICIA L. KERR	Administrative Assistant

IMPORTANT DATES

Wednesday, November 26

(Community Thanksgiving Eve Service - New Britain Baptist Church - 7:30 pm)

Sunday November 30

(1st Sunday in Advent - Hanging of the Greens Service)

Sunday, December 7

(2nd Sunday in Advent)

Saturday December 13

(UMW Cookie Sale)

Sunday, December 14

(3rd Sunday in Advent; Sounds of the Season II, Christmas Concert - 7:00 pm, Sanctuary)

Sunday, December 21

(4th Sunday in Advent)

Wednesday, December 24

(Christmas Eve Services: 4:00 pm in the Family Life Center; 8:00 pm Candlelight service in the Sanctuary)

Join us for

SOUNDS OF THE SEASON

A Christmas Concert
for the Church and Community

Choirs
Orchestra
Band

Sunday, December 14
7:00 pm