



The Messenger



Chalfont United Methodist Church * 11 Meadowbrook Lane, Chalfont, PA 18914-2810
Phone: (215) 822-2807 * e mail: office@chalfontumc.org

December 2016

WORDS FROM THE BIBLE - "THE REAL MEANING OF CHRISTMAS"

THE PEOPLE WHO WALKED IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and evermore.

The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:2, 6/7)

IN THOSE DAYS A DECREE WENT OUT FROM CAESAR AUGUSTUS THAT ALL THE WORLD SHOULD BE ENROLLED. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each in his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee from the city of Nazareth, to Judea to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary his betrothed, who was with child.

And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (

Luke 2:1-7)

AND IN THAT REGION THERE WERE SHEPHERDS OUT IN THE FIELD, KEEPING WATCH OVER THEIR FLOCK BY NIGHT. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you; you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a heavenly host praising God and saying

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE AMONG MEN WITH WHOM HE IS PLEASED!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (Luke 2:8-20)

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.

In Him was life, and the life was the Light of Men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. (John 1:1-5/14)

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

New Address: Rev. and Mrs. Gerald Ihle's new address is: 1001 East Oregon Road, Lititz, PA 17543-9205.

Congratulations: on the birth of **Amelia Marie Mooney**, who was born on November 2, 2016. She is the daughter of **Mike** and **Tessa Mooney** and the sister of **Emmett**.

Condolences: to **Don Reese** and his family on the death of his wife, **Diane Reese**, on November 15, 2016.

THANK YOU

Thank you to all of the people who supported CUMC by showing up to help make our church beautiful for the Christmas season; and to everyone who shared an excellent pot-luck supper after the work was complete.

Thank you from Rev. Charles Green for your \$252.00 donation towards mission work with children in the Republic of Moldova.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the pot pie fundraiser. The UMW raised \$578.00 towards our missions projects

CHRISTMAS AT CHALFONT

Please join us for worship this Christmas holiday.

Our first service is at 4:00 pm on Saturday, December 24. Join us in the Family Life Center for our café/causal worship. Enjoy some coffee/tea and light refreshments before the service. Our praise team, Beacon, will be leading us in worship.

Our second service will be at 8:00 pm in the sanctuary. Special music will be provided by our choir, and Communion will be served at this service. Both services will include the Christmas story and carols; both will close with candle-light.

On Sunday, December 25 (*Christmas morning*) we will be gathering for one worship service at 9:30 am in the sanctuary. There will not be an 11:00 am service on December 25th. (*There will also be no Sunday school.*)

On Sunday, January 1 (*New Years Day*) we will follow our normal Sunday schedule. There will be worship at 9:30 am in the sanctuary and at 11:00 am in the Family Life Center. (*There will also be no Sunday school.*)

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Thanks to all who ordered pot pies during our recent fundraiser. We hope you enjoy these tasty meals!

Remember that our collection of hats, gloves, and scarves for those in need continues through the holidays. Thank you to all who support this mission project.

Pick up for cookies takes place on Saturday, December 10 between 9:00 am and 11 am - or Sunday, December 11 after church. Cookies cost \$8.00 per pound.

Our best wishes for a wonderful Christmas to all of you and your families!

As we head into 2017, consider joining the United Methodist Women. We welcome new members! Check our board in the Family Life Center for dates of upcoming meetings and events.

CHRISTMAS REMEMBRANCES

As an alternative to buying gifts, a donation may be made towards the purchase of a sheep with Heifer International, help providing assistance to the food pantry at Manna on Main Street, or supporting the work of Chalfont UMC. In this age of "too many things" it is an excellent way to for the gift giver and gift receiver to share in a good cause.

Donations should be made by December 11th if you wish to have to the person's name included in the Christmas Eve Service bulletin.

2016 STATE OF THE CHURCH REPORT

As I reflect on this year - I am encouraged with regards to the direction Chalfont United Methodist Church is moving. We have two scripture passages which we believe are our guiding principles here at Chalfont. They are (*Matthew 11:28-30*) - "*Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep*

company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly" (The Message) and (John 14: 12-14) "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it" (NRSV).

As a result, the goals we set for 2016 were to help us begin to live into our mission of being a retreat center for prayer and healing.

We have put together an "Outdoor Spaces" team. This team is putting together a comprehensive design plan for the development of the outdoor property. Our goal for 2017 is to create a courtyard in the space between the library and the sanctuary on the street side of the building. This is a first step toward developing the property to be used as a retreat center and will provide additional useable/visible/handicap accessible outdoor space.

An eight- week small group study was held this spring for the purpose of training and teaching on hearing from God and healing ministries. We had twelve people attend the training and are now looking for ways to include this ministry into the life of the church as well as find ways to reach out to the community.

A pleasant unexpected surprise is the addition of an electronic sign. We received \$20,000.00. (\$10,000.00 of that was from an outside anonymous donor) in donations for a new electronic sign. We are hoping that this will help make our presence known in the community. Installation of the sign is expected to be completed by the middle of December. We are looking forward to having a place to advertise our ministries and also to help community organizations like the local fire company and elementary school advertise their events.

Our new administrative organization began this year. We now have one Leadership Board. This

board replaced the Staff Parish Committee, the Finance Committee and the Trustees. It oversees the strategic planning and administrative tasks of the church. The previous system had proved to be too cumbersome for this church. Each year we had multiple positions open (*especially chairperson positions*) and our Church Council meetings were poorly attended. Attendance at our new Leadership Board meetings has increased dramatically. Several months we had 100% of our members in attendance. The Leadership appreciates not having to attend as many meetings.

Unfortunately, our financial deficit made this year a difficult one in terms of planning for our future. The Leadership Board had numerous conversations and spent much time in prayer as to the best way for us to move forward. We have been running a \$4000/month deficit with few reserves. The projected time frame indicated that we would be out of money by the beginning of 2017. We scheduled a couple of congregation meetings to inform the congregation. We asked for a second mile giving and received approximately an extra \$1000/month in pledges.

We also began renting space to "The Way" a Korean language congregation. This has helped us cut the monthly deficit in half.

We realize we still have a long way to go but we believe that God is not done with Chalfont yet. We believe the addition of the new electronic sign will help us reach new people and I have begun to attend a two- year financial program, "The Financial Leadership Academy." The goal of the academy is to help pastors develop skills in financial leadership in order to produce healthy congregations. We are hoping the skills I learn from this program will enable us to become a financially healthy congregation.

Despite our current financial difficulties we believe the future is bright for Chalfont UMC. God has given us an awesome vision and mission and continues to provide for us in unexpected ways. I am humbled and privileged to serve this congregation and am looking forward to an exciting 2017.

Merry Christmas everyone! Pastor Barb

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CHALFONT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
11 Meadowbrook Lane
Chalfont, Pennsylvania 18914-2810
(215) 822-2807
Web Page: www.chalfontumc.org

STAFF DIRECTORY

REV. BARBARA SEEKFORD	Pastor
REV. ERIN MAURER	Deacon, Worship Leader
CRIS FRISCO	Director of Music
PATRICIA L. KERR	Church Administrator

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IMPORTANT DATES

Saturday, December 10

(Pick up UMW cookies from 9:00 to 11:00 am)

Sunday, December 11

(Third Sunday in Advent)

Sunday, December 18

(Fourth Sunday in Advent)

Saturday, December 24

*(Christmas Eve Services:
4:00 pm - Family Life Center
8:00 pm - Sanctuary)*

Sunday, December 25

(Christmas Day: combined service - 9:30 am - Sanctuary)

Sunday, January 1

*(New Years Day: 9:30 service - Sanctuary;
11:00 service - Family Life Center)*

“WALKING WITH: THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE”

What: East District Conversation on Race Relations
When: Friday, January 20 and Saturday, January 21
Time: 6 pm *(Friday evening with dinner; recess at 9 pm)*
8 am *(Saturday morning; adjourn at 3 pm)*
Where: Washington Crossing United Methodist Church
Who: East District clergy and laity
Cost: \$35 per person *(includes dinner, breakfast, lunch)*
Registration deadline: December 21, 2016

To register, send your name, mailing address, email address, name of your church, with a check payable to “East District Superintendent Clergy Fund.” Mail to East District Office, c/o Clarita Krall, Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, United Methodist Church, 3470 Huntingdon Pike, Huntingdon Valley PA 19006. *(The memo line should read “Conversations on Race Relations.”)* **Registration deadline is December 21, 2016.**

Please consider joining me at this important event. I've room in my car for 3 people. Contact me if you are interested in attending with me. (bjseekford@gmail.com or 610.310.8349)
Pastor Barb