

THE LIGHTED CROSS

BERWYN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



2019



December 1

Advent Begins

December 7

UMW visit homebound

December 22

10:30 am Choir program
Lessons & Carols &
Christmas Brunch

December 24

7pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

January 9

Soupy Thursday Returns!

February 15

All Church Potluck Supper

March 7

Tools for Ministry workshop

Join Us For Worship

8:30 am Worship

10:30 am Traditional Worship

Communion is observed on the First Sunday of the Month

CHRISTMAS BRUNCH

Our annual Christmas Brunch will be held on Sun. Dec. 22, 2019 after the 10:30am service of Lessons and Carols presented by the chancel choir. Please remember there will only be the 10:30 service on that day.

The menu will feature breakfasts items such as quiche, pancakes, sausage links and oatmeal. Those items will be served at your table. Lunch items will be available from a buffet table in the middle of the room. Featured items will be roast pork loin, baked chicken breasts, cheesy potatoes and zippy carrots. Please save room for assorted desserts including cream puffs.

Reservations for this dinner will be taken on Sun. Dec. 8 and 15 or you can call the office by noon Wed. Dec. 18th. The price for the meal is \$10.00 for adults and children over 10, children 5-10 is \$5.00 and children under 5 are free.

We hope you will join us for the service and the brunch. We look forward to seeing you all.



ADVENT

The season of Advent constitutes the four Sundays before Christmas and is a season of preparation and anticipation for the birth of Christ at Christmas. Advent begins this year on December 1.

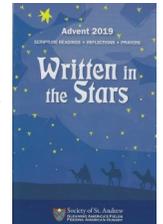
This season is a time for remembering the longing of the ancient Jewish people for a Messiah and our own longing for and need of forgiveness, salvation and a new beginning. The season is often noted by the use of greenery which has traditionally been associated with royalty and everlasting life.

Advent is also marked by the use of an Advent Wreath of four candles in a circle, and a larger candle in the center. The four candles are often used to symbolize Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace, and one additional candle is lit on each Sunday of Advent. The larger center candle, the Christ Candle, is lit on Christmas Eve.

Advent is also a time for personal reflection and devotion as we prepare ourselves for the new life to come in Jesus Christ. This year we will again supply a booklet for you to use in your personal devotionals. This booklet, "Written in the Stars," is provided for us by the Society of St. Andrew and contains a scripture selection, devotional and prayer for each day from December 1 through Christmas day.



Come and worship with us at Berwyn during this Advent Season. We offer our regular 8:30 and 10:30 Worship Services on December 1, 8 and 15, a special choir concert of Lessons and Carols at 10:30 on December 22 (no 8:30 service that day) followed by our Holiday Brunch, and a family candlelight service at 7:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve.



PASTOR'S LETTER

Friends, we are approaching the beginning of one of the most special times of year, the Christian season of Advent. Advent is a time of anticipation, a time of hope and expectation, where we, with much longing, look forward to the day of deliverance; the day when God, through the person of Jesus Christ, enters our mortal world and lives among us. The word "advent" translates to mean "arrival" or "coming."

Advent is a time when we reflect on the past and stand together with the Hebrew people from thousands of years ago as they lived as an oppressed nation, constantly enslaved and dominated by their surrounding kingdoms. We stand with them in their longing for deliverance and in their longing to be set free. We stand with them in their longing for everything to be made right; for their suffering to cease, their sickness to be healed, their lives to be made complete.

During Advent, we experience the tension between longing and expectation that the Hebrew people felt. They look forward to a day where they will be free, where the darkness that surrounds them will be expelled, and where light and peace will be their inheritance.

However, beyond this historic solidarity with an ancient people, Advent calls us to recognize the captivity that surrounds our world and our lives today. As we look around our world, it is not hard to see just how much captivity that we are in. When we turn on our televisions, it seems as if a mass shooting occurs daily. The threat of terrorism causes fear in the hearts of people around the world. We are divided by our politics, where we lose sight of the real issues that affect human lives. We need this holy season of Advent. We long for the days of old when life was simpler, safer and more straightforward. With hopeful expectation, we desire deliverance from the fear and darkness that surround us every day. We are longing for things to be made right, for peace to be ours. The prophetic and hopeful words of Isaiah ring true, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned."

It seems that, in the heart of every human being, there is a deep-seated desire to see a day like the one the Prophet Isaiah describes, which is a day where bloodshed and war will cease, and justice and righteousness are upheld throughout the earth. We long for a day when there will truly be goodwill between all people and peace shall envelop our world. The truth revealed in Scripture, which is the foundation of our faith, is that day is not far off. It is not merely a dream. It is a growing reality. The historical words ring true: "The moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice." This does not have to be supernatural. It does not have to take a miracle. The message of this season is that the same Holy Spirit that overshadowed Mary to conceive the Christ child, the same Spirit that descended upon Jesus at his baptism and empowered and guided him, dwells within you and me. That Spirit has already empowered us to give birth to the day that Isaiah prophesied about.

We have the power, the call, the commission by Jesus, and the ability to bring about a world of righteousness and peace. We do not need to wait for new legislation. It does not come through battles or even sermons. It comes through each of us working together, through one act of love at a time. Through one self-sacrificial act of service to another person, we can overturn injustice in our world and restore our world to what God intended. Every time we engage in these seemingly small actions, we are redeeming our world one person at a time.

May God Bless You Richly,

Pastor Rodney Brailsford

MISSION COMMITTEE CHRISTMAS DONATIONS

The Missions Committee will be bringing back our “Alternative Gift Giving Program” during the Christmas Season. Keep in mind that the Alternative Gift is a wonderful “Alternative” to an actual present (i.e. socks, a tie, or fruit basket). Donating money in someone’s name to your favorite Mission is the perfect gift to the person who already has enough of everything. Why not make a donation to help individuals and families in need in our local area or help a child receive proper education in Kenya on behalf of your favorite Aunt or Uncle? The Alternative Gift just might be the most meaningful gift you might give this year. Look for Janelle in the Narthex on Sundays in December to assist in your options.

We are presently accepting donations of toys for children, gift and gift cards for mothers and toiletries, new socks, and gloves for the homeless. There are toy and gift lists in the Narthex to help you pick the perfect present. They will be delivered to Methodist Home for Children and Mt. Zion Methodist Church. Please drop off your donations as soon as possible as they will be delivered the week of December 9th. Your generosity each year brings such joy and happiness to those who are less fortunate than us.

The Mission Committee thanks everyone for their generous support the past year and we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Through the generosity of a church member, we are able to offer a scholarship to cover some of the cost of domestic or international mission trips. If you are interested in participating in a mission trip, please see Rick Stoker, RickStoker@aol.com, 610-613-0335.



**THANK
YOU!**

The season of advent and Christmas, the approaching winter and the beginning of a new year ..as this blessed time approaches, we thank all of you for keeping me, Jack and our family in your thoughts and prayers throughout the past two years. I am looking forward to 2020 with optimism and a heart felt wish for all of us to celebrate our families, friends, and our church brothers and sisters with love and thanks and blessings to one and all. Janet Campbell



The nursery school is preparing for the upcoming holidays. We are asking the children what they are thankful for. It is always interesting to hear what young children appreciate in their lives, families are very important to them. We are asking our families to contribute to the church’s missions, asking for toys and toiletries in particular. December is a short month at Nursery School, we will be having our Holiday Show on Friday December 13th and all the children will be participating.

We would like to invite the church members to consider shopping at Barnes and Noble on Swedesford Rd, on Monday December 16th. If you mention BUMNS as you checkout, we will be receive a percentage of your total spend. This includes the café!

The Nursery School would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

'Tear Down this Wall': A Pastoral Letter by Bishop Peggy A. Johnson

This week is the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in Germany. This wall was erected after the second World War and it divided East and West Berlin.

During The United Methodist Church's Council of Bishops fall meeting our bishops from Germany testified about the jubilation and amazement felt when the wall came down. People were able to move about freely from one side to the other. Not a single shot was fired.

Humanity is well-acquainted with walls, not only physical walls but the walls of difference that are found in hearts and minds. We are quick to erect attitudinal walls around our differences and our beliefs.

Walls create alienation, separation, fear, distrust and violence. Such a wall stops ministry dead in its tracks, and it is never the will of God. God sent Jesus to deal with walls. Ephesians 2:14 says "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility."

A wall of separation in the UMC

United Methodists are well-acquainted with a wall of separation about the marriage and ordination of members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Our Book of Discipline states that all people are of sacred worth, but it includes a wall concerning the practice of homosexuality being "contrary to Christian teaching."

At the 2019 General Conference the traditional prohibition against the practice of homosexuality was maintained, same gender marriages continued to be banned, and it was expanded to include more enforcement and a broader scope of what defines homosexuality. There were also more additions to the process of filing complaints against people who engage in practices found in the list of "chargeable offenses." Being a self-avowed and practicing homosexual and performing a same-gender wedding are on that list. The added measures will be effective on January 1, 2020.

I write this pastoral letter to the flock of God in the Eastern Pennsylvania and the Peninsula-Delaware conferences, my beloved Philadelphia Area. It is a passionate plea that you do not engage in filing complaints around the issue of homosexuality. It simply exacerbates the painful, formidable wall that stands between people of good will who have different hearts.

Homosexuality complaints and trials do harm

Complaints and trials do an enormous amount of harm to everyone. Our baptism vows call us to "resist evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves." Nothing good can come from this battering. We can never legislate a heart.

As your bishop I am bound to receive and process complaints, but I do not believe it is helpful to engage in church trials. So, I will not refer any such complaints for a church trial. I say this not out of a sense of rebellion against the rules in our Book of Discipline but out of my pastor's heart that wishes to defend the people of our conferences against this destructive, divisive and expensive process.

The complaint paragraphs in the UM Book of Discipline call for a resolution that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities and that can bring healing to all parties. Instead of filing a complaint, I suggest that those who have experienced harm begin with a conversation.

Engage people with whom you disagree. Hear their hearts and engage in humble inquiry about a person's life story and perspective. Explain where the harm is and craft a peace plan. And most importantly, pray with each other!

Power of prayer to tear down walls, build a just peace

When I visited Germany last year and toured the former site of the Berlin Wall, our guide said that the Communist government was "no match for prayer and our candlelight vigils." The power of the risen Lord is available for us to tear down our walls, but we need to have the humble will to work at it and pray for it.

Is this not what Paul meant in Romans 12:18 when he said, "As far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all"? I humbly suggest that you engage in these steps before sending a complaint to my office.

We are living in a "liminal" (transitional) time as we prepare for the May 5-15, 2020, General Conference. At that conference delegates will consider how we as a denomination can maximize our witness and craft a form of unity that brings a new wind of hope for all people.

Catch sight of God's vision of a church that is busy making disciples of Jesus Christ, a church that is engaging in ministry and mission, a church striving for equality and equity for all people.

We can only get there as we employ with grace all of the giftedness of the Body of Christ, not just one "side" or the other. Dividing our church would cut off some of our needed giftedness. We can only accomplish this vibrant ministry as we take down the walls in our hearts and "do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God." (Micah 6:8)

I close this letter with two verses of a hymn that was sung in Germany during the dismantling of the Berlin Wall. It spread like wildfire around the churches, both East and West, as people yearned for freedom and unity. May it be a song in all of our hearts as well:

Have faith in God's new pathways, walk on in this new day.

God hopes you'll be a blessing for all upon the way,
The one who in the days gone by breathed life in us and hope,
Will lead us to the place where God wants and needs us most.

Have faith in God who shows us new paths that lead to life.

It's God who comes to meet us, the future is in God's hand.
Who follows God is full of hope, now and forevermore.
The door for us is open, the land is bright and free.

*"Tear down this wall" was the appeal U.S. President Ronald Reagan made in his Berlin Wall speech in West Berlin, Germany, on June 12, 1987.

Humbly submitted,

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson





United Methodist Women will meet on Saturday, December 7, 11:00 a.m. in the library. All women of the church are invited to join for a time of fellowship and devotions. We will then break into groups of two or three to visit some of our homebound members.



LAY LEADER'S LETTER

A book I read a few years ago comes to mind especially at this time of year by Patricia Wilson. The book is titled "Too Much Holly, Not Enough Holy?"

"Take time to Be Holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
abide in Him always, and feed on His word.
...the world rushes on ;
spend much time in secret with Jesus alone."

The Methodist Hymnal, page 395.

Take "time" at this time of year; we have the house to decorate, cards to buy and send, shopping, planning menus and cooking, entertaining, plans about the weather and maybe travel. "Take time to speak oft with thy Lord." Yes, at this time, maybe more so than other days. If necessary, write it on your daily to-do list. Perhaps, place the crèche in a more obvious place. Or place a Christmas card or picture in a place you'll see often. As you open Christmas cards, say a prayer for the sender. Listen to your favorite Christmas carols and music. Celebrate "Christ"mas!!

"When Christmas morn is dawning, I wish that I could be there by the manger-cradle, God's Son, new-born to see.

We need you , O Lord Jesus, to be our dearest friend.
Your love will guard and guide us and keep us to life's end."

The Methodist Hymnal, page 232

"We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel ! "

The Methodist Hymnal, page 230

Blessings, Lee Paylor

Ministry of the People is supported by the Staff

Pastor: Rodney Brailsford Children's Coordinator: Cindy Shallcross Lay Leader: Lee Paylor
Admin. Assistant: Veronica Mosley Organist/Director of Music: Amy McLoughlin
Nursery Assist: Eliza Chumpitaz Sexton: Roger Toro

Recordings of Sunday Services are available—Contact Jon Stockler, 610-348-3385 or JStockler@aol.com

SOUPY THURSDAY *Rick Stoker*

Soupy Thursday will be coming soon. Hope you are ready for some good homemade soups on the upcoming cold winter evenings.

Soupy Thursday will begin on Thursday, January 9, 2020 and continue each week through February 27. Take outs will be available each week beginning at 5pm. The soup will be \$5.00/quart, fresh baked bread will be \$3.00/loaf. We ask you to please bring your own container if possible.

If you prefer to eat in Schieck Hall with some others and have good fellowship the soup is available from 5:30 pm to 7pm. If you eat in there is a free will offering. Available will be the soup, fresh baked bread, a dessert and beverages.

If you would be willing to help please let Rick Stoker know. We start prep each week at 2pm, then we need servers and someone to wash the dishes at the end of the evening.

Please be sure to let the church office know of shut ins so we can get soup delivered to them. Thanks and see you in January!



ALL CHURCH POT LUCK DINNER

Sat. Feb. 15, 2020. 6PM

The adult council will sponsor an all church pot luck dinner with a program centered on the celebration of President's Day. Maybe you will want to dress up as a president or first lady. It will be fun to see what people come up with. Don't know the exact program yet but might be a presidential trivia night.

See more details in the Jan. 2020 Lighted Cross.

STAY CONNECTED



BUMCservice

Weekly E-newsletter

The Lighted Cross



bumcares

MISSION TRIP SCHOLARSHIPS

Thanks to memorial gifts in memory of Ruth Rumiano the Missions committee has been able to set up a mission trip scholarship fund. For those interested in going on either a domestic or international mission trip there are now funds available to help with those costs. We especially want to encourage our youth or people who have never been on a mission trip before to take advantage of this opportunity.

There will be a short form to fill out asking how much assistance you would like. This form is currently being formatted by the missions committee and will be available in the near future. You will be able to get this form from any mission committee member or from the church office.

We also want you to know that we will be coming up with some ideas on how to replenish the funds as they get used. Our hope is to have this fund continue for many years. Please feel free to contribute to this fund if you so desire.

This coming summer there should be an ASP trip so this will be the time to take advantage of the funds.



UPCOMING DISTRICT & CONFERENCE EVENTS

March 7, 2020 **Tools for Ministry** at Eastern University, St. David's, PA.

"A Time for Listening and Discernment" Four General Conference Listening Sessions

- March 25, 2020 Church of the Good Shepherd UMC, Lebanon
- April 2, 2020 Downingtown UMC, Downingtown
- April 4, 2020 Simpson House, Philadelphia
- April 20, 2020 Epworth UMC, Bethlehem



Our Mission Statement

God **CALLS** us to **Care, Accept, Love, Laugh and Serve**

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

8:30 AM	Early Worship
9:15 AM	Sunday School
10:30 AM	Traditional Worship with Choir

Berwyn United Methodist Church
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